



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Strengthening capacity for inclusive local development in Serbia and Montenegro – Final Joint Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Serbia and Montenegro*

Final Evaluation: *May 2013*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent, External*

**ILO Office Administratively backstopping the
Project:** *DWT/CO-Budapest*

ILO Technical Backstopping Office:
EMP/SKILLS

Evaluation Manager: *External/UNDP*

Evaluation Team: *A consortium of evaluators
under supervision of TARA IC d.o.o, Novi Sad*

Project End: *March 2013*

Project Code: *SRB/10/01/UND*

Donor & Project Budget: *Spanish MDG Funds,
Sweden, Norway, Switzerland: ILO Portion –
US\$ 1,015,408.90*

Keywords: *Armed conflict, economic reconstru
ction, local economic development*

Background & Context

The “Peace Building and Inclusive Local Development Program” (PBILD) is a joint UN initiative, implemented in Southern Serbia in the period of 2009-2013. It consists of two projects: “Strengthening Capacity for Inclusive Local Development in South Serbia” (SCILD), financed by the Government of Norway, the International Development Cooperation Agency of Sweden (SIDA) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) through the Multi Donor Trust Fund (MDTF); and “Promoting Peace Building in

South Serbia” (PB), sponsored by the Government of Spain through the Millennium Development Goal Achievement Fund (MDGF). Six participating agencies – UNDP, UN-HABITAT, UNICEF, UNHCR, IOM and ILO implemented the program activities. The Program worked in partnership with the Ministry for Public Administration and Local Self-Government, Ministry of Finance and Economy; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development; Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy; Ministry of Youth and Sports; institutions such as the Coordination Body, the Ombudsperson’s office, Commissariat for refugees and IDPs, 11 municipalities and 2 cities in the region, social service providers and a range of social agents from civil society, private sectors, other international and local organizations and citizens.

By implementation of the PBILD in a form of an integrated program, the UN responded to several fundamental issues currently existing in the Southern Serbia. The Southern Serbia refers to the 13 municipalities of the Pcinja and Jablanica Districts. Two of these municipalities have majority of Albanian population. Roma minority and IDP populations exists in all of them. The region faces a complicated matrix of adverse factors affecting social cohesion and economic development. It is the poorest area of Serbia.

Problems persist over inequalities, between communities in Southern Serbia and other parts of Serbia. Therefore, **the overall objective of PBILD** was “to reduce the discrepancies that currently exist between Jablanicki and Pcinjski Districts and the remainder of Serbia through forming a comprehensive and long-term partnership of local institutions that guide the development of the region and mitigate factors with potential to fuel the emergence of conflict”. This was expected to be achieved through following **outcomes** as supported by the MDTF and the MDG-F:

- **Outcome 1** - Community Cohesion and Human Capital: Communities in South Serbia are stronger, more integrated, and better able to reduce inter-ethnic tensions and conflict risk
- **Outcome 2** - Public Services: More equitable and improved access to public services and welfare benefits (including basic registration documentation, health and education)
- **Outcome 3** - Economic Development: Increased overall economic prosperity of the region, and reduced discrepancies in wealth and employment between ethnic groups, and with other parts of the country
- : **Outcome 4** – Migration Management: Migrants from the region fully participate in the social and economic life of the region and thereby contribute to the development of their wider communities and Serbia’s EU integration aspirations.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Final evaluation of PBILD presented in this document, was conducted with the purpose to inform the MDG-F, the Norwegian, Swedish, and Swiss governments and relevant aid institutions, involved UN agencies, Partners and stakeholders on the outcomes of this JP as well as different cooperation processes during its implementation; and to provide information on outcomes of the Peace-

Building and Inclusive Local Development (PBILD) program with the view to ascertaining interest of scaling-up the initiative in a second phase. The methodology used in this evaluation was discussed and agreed with the JP based on the original terms of reference. Considering weak of available quantitative data it was agreed to apply an integrated qualitative-quantitative methodology.

- **Relevance and validity of design** - The JP contributes to the issue of internal and/or external migration, youth and gender specificities of the program context, fitting supportively in the contexts of the MDG and UNDAF and aligns with the Paris Declaration and the Accra Agenda for Action. Strong involvement of national partners in programming and project design ensured full alignment of targeted PBILD’s impacts and outcomes with national development framework, as well as project logic and coherence on the level of impact and outcomes. Lack of local inputs in the programming stage was successfully solved with adjustments to local needs during the inception stage, as well as by efficient locally based operational planning. It ensured project’s logic and coherence on the result level. Though the project was designed in 2008, its relevance stands the test of time. Weakest point of the project’s design was M&E system. Nevertheless, even with weaknesses and justified failures to improve on time, the M&E system succeeded to provide sufficient inputs for operational planning and implementation management.

- **Effectiveness** - PBILD made a success in implementing two major and 66 grant sub-projects covering several areas of importance for communities and the entire region of Southern Serbia. Local Self-governments (LSG) capacities to reduce inter-ethnic tensions and conflict risk are enhanced by improvement of cooperation between political representatives of ethnic minority and majority, increased

percentage of women members in local assemblies, adoption of strategic documents recognizing existing gender and safety gaps and in strengthened infrastructure for local youth policy and program implementation in the targeted regions. Sustainable housing solution and full access to public services has been provided for almost 32 % of IDP's in the region. Access to health care for vulnerable groups was improved. The share of immunized children was almost doubled, increasing from 49% to 90%. The quality of education, especially for children from minority groups, and those with disabilities, has been improved. Better access to public services to all citizens, improvement of the level of human rights and promotion of better governance in the region have been achieved, with special focus on the position of national minorities and gender equality. The ability of municipalities to formulate, implement and monitor public policies has been strengthened due to improved capacities and increased availability of data at municipal level by introduction of Devinfo system. While the rest of the country experienced rapid growth migration potential in last two years due to economic crisis, in Jablanicki and Pcinjski districts migration potential in the same period was increased for only 1%.

- **Efficiency and management** - Multifaceted intervention structure required an implementing structure that was extremely complex. Operative level and JPMU's functionality were key elements of the overall intervention efficiency. During its implementation PBILD succeeded to develop a model for implementation of the complex multi-donor/multi-agency/multi-beneficiary intervention. This model could be widely used for channeling of bilateral donors' aid. PBILD funds and activities have been delivered by participating agencies in a timely manner, but certain justified delays of planned activities had occurred due to the prolonged inception period and elections held in 2012. Under a no-

cost extension of 6 months, PBILD succeeded to deliver not only initially planned, but also additional results, proving overall project efficiency. Overachievement of PBILD targeted results and initially set c/b rate is to a large degree based on a well-structured budget and efficient implementation structure.

- **Impact** - The PBILD has been a very relevant vehicle for enhancing capacities for inclusive development and peace building in Southern Serbia. The program implemented positive policy and institutional measures to protect and empower socially excluded groups such as minorities, young people, children, women and potential and returning migrants. PBILD's investment in building evidence base on social indicators and current status of vulnerable groups in the region has become valuable resource for national partners to develop interventions and measures to improve the status of vulnerable groups. Locally based implementation led to significant increase of local capacities through the on-job-learning approach. PBILD created the missing link between state and local administrations. The program contributed to overall political stability in the region, to strengthening capacities of national and local partners, and to development of effective and sustainable framework for protection of vulnerable groups and migration prevention.

- **Sustainability** – The main sustainability pillar of PBILD results is a full national ownership over the process and achievements, which is strongly founded and built over the entire intervention life. While PBILD succeeded to strengthen political stability in the region, economical unfavourable conditions still could be a main obstacle to reach expected level of sustainability. Having in mind that PBILD provided effective development concept, efficient model for implementation, and result-based action models, the optimal way to continue on-going

efforts is continue supporting the bilateral donors and UN agencies for new interventions.

Main conclusions

PBILD concept is proven as relevant and efficiently implemented. Developed implementation model through its complexity succeeded to derive strong synergy of involved donors and agencies, creating functional platform for utilizing bilateral donors' small-scale capacities. Good functional cooperation with national partners on both levels has been established. Therefore, further donor support in order to replicate and up-scale achieved results and to strengthen their sustainability by using developed PBILD model and mechanism, should be recognized as justified and recommendable.

Recommendations

1. *PBILD is on the verge of the Best Practice Case – it should be continued, with the same concept (based predominately on soft actions), as a single project.*
2. *Having in mind economic crisis and economic and political sensitivity of Southern Serbia region, new intervention should be developed in the shortest possible time as replication and up-scaling of models already developed under PBILD, and may incorporate some new actions based on good practices and good governance principles.*
3. *Capacities of LSG are now developed to the level that enables them to be included in programming, planning and development of future intervention, at least at the level they have been involved in the implementation.*
4. *PBILD represents successful model-platform for complex multi-donor/multi-*

agencies/ multi-beneficiary intervention, and its application should be further promoted.

5. *For the new stage of PBILD, implementation structure should be improved with introduction of new decision making levels and horizontal synergies at all levels should be strengthened.*

6. *Investment in new M&E system is strongly recommended. M&E system should be capable to follow and prove achievements to the level of the impact (more normative indicators on both outcomes and impact levels, system of continuous following and adjustments of reporting formats).*

Lessons Learned

1. *In cases of social inclusion and peace building interventions in “neuralgic” regions, intervention in broader territory creates added value through building of local partnerships.*
2. *It is possible to implement and coordinate two projects as one intervention, but it would be much more effective and efficient to design it from the outset as one joint intervention.*
3. *Under the PBILD two types of good practice models are developed:
a) Structural model for implementation and
b) Tailor made action-models at output levels*
4. *Programing should be based on balanced participation of both national and local partners.*
5. *Satisfactory level of intervention’s results sustainability could be achieved during the intervention. For durable solution under adverse intervention environment (devastated region, overall economic crisis, political tensions, strong migration trends) continual support over a longer period of time is necessary.*