



INSTITUTIONAL FLEXIBILITY IN CRISES AND POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

BEST PRACTICES FROM THE FIELD

United Nations Development Programme
Evaluation Office

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	1
Preface	3
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	13
Chapter I. Post-Conflict Situations and the Nature of Post-Conflict Challenges	19
Chapter II. A Typology of Operational Flexibility	27
Chapter III. Best Practices and Lessons Learned in UNDP Operational Flexibility	45
Chapter IV. Flexible Response and Institutional Learning	55
Annexes	
Annex I. Country Office in a Box Concept (Prepared by BOM)	57
Annex II. Terms of Reference: UNDP Crisis and Post-Conflict Evaluation Programme 2001-2002	59
Annex III. Bibliography	62
Annex IV. List of People Met	71

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Design: Suazion Inc., Staten Island, NY
Production: A.K. Office Supply, New York, NY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



*UNV volunteers continue to play a key role in re-establishing social services and helping affected Kosovars, including refugees and displaced persons.
Photo: Ky Chung/UNMIK/DPI*

A multi-country comparative analysis such as this one requires a considerable investment of time and energy from a large group of people. Close to 200 people in UNDP, government ministries and municipalities, donor agencies, UN agencies and international NGOs in eight countries agreed to meet the team for interviews and accompanied them on site visits. An even larger number of stakeholders and local partners took time to meet with the team, sometimes at considerable inconvenience. First and foremost we would like to thank the evaluation team for their invaluable work: senior consultants, Mr. Ken Menkhaus and Mr. Ben K. Fred-Mensah and research assistants, Ms. Nadja Schmeil, Mr. Charles Tanzer, Ms. Jessica Smith, Mr. Amitabh Khardori. An excellent team of research assistants at UNDP and Evaluation Office staff worked to collect relevant reference material and troubleshoot as the project took shape. We are indebted to all, and thank them for their time and energy, especially Mr. Douglas Keh, the task manager for this evaluation and the support team. The Evaluation Office would like to extend special thanks to the Bureaux and all the country offices that participated in this study.

One aspect of the field research that was especially moving was the combination of pain and determination that was encountered in the local communities recovering from armed conflicts. Though much of this report deals with fairly mundane organizational issues, such as accounting procedures, human resource management, project funding, the context in which these post-conflict programmes operate is anything but mundane. Most of the populations in the case studies under review have shouldered unimaginable losses. To meet with a village of war widows in Kosovo on the same day that a witness from their own region testified to a televised war-crimes tribunal in the Hague about the massacre which claimed their husbands' lives is to confront a depth of sorrow which words cannot easily describe. To witness these same community leaders set aside their sorrow, muster their strength, and organize their villages and neighborhoods to rebuild and reconcile is an inspiration, and a reminder that external support to these post-conflict processes cannot afford to fall short. The evaluation team and EO therefore wish to especially acknowledge those local community leaders who are on the frontline of post-war rebuilding and reconciliation.

We hope that the report yields a dividend in lessons learned and best practices which justifies the investment in the project.

PREFACE



*A UNDP-organised demining programme in Mozambique destroys unexploded mines.
Photo: UNDP*

FOCUS AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is a comparative analysis of the work of UNDP in eight post-conflict countries. It identifies emerging best practices and lessons learned in order to improve UNDP's organizational flexibility in responding quickly and effectively to the special challenges of post-conflict rehabilitation. The report is also meant to support UNDP's institutional learning process and internal discussions about its response capacity. The study was not tasked with the responsibility of recommending broad structural changes to improve UNDP's flexible response. It was instead mandated to explore innovations and adaptations to maximize institutional flexibility within the constraints of the organizational structure as it currently exists and has come up with timely and valuable lessons for the organization and its partners.

While this study was being conducted, UNDP was in the initial stages of developing a new approach to its business and management practices designed to increase efficiency and operational flexibility. The approach, which includes sharpening the programmatic focus of UNDP through the Multi-year Funding Framework, introducing results-based management, and promoting cost recovery practices throughout the organization, is being implemented with the help of a new strategic planning and monitoring software tool, Atlas. The new system which provides Country Offices with the capacity to reduce their response time to crisis, promises to have an important positive impact on UNDP's performance as a development agency.

The Evaluation Office hopes that the lessons emerging from the study will not only contribute towards strengthening UNDP's responsiveness but will resonate with other partners working in this important area of human security.

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study is designed to accommodate the learning styles and needs of different sets of readers, ranging from generalists to seasoned experts on post-conflict assistance. Chapter I places the issue of institutional flexibility and post-conflict assistance in broader context, reviewing the common features of post-conflict settings and the

special constraints and challenges they produce. In other words, it consists of the “statement of the problem” to be managed. For readers with extensive experience with post-conflict settings, most of the material in Chapter I is familiar ground; that section of the report is intended mainly for the benefit of non-experts in post-conflict situations. Chapter II presents the comparative assessment of UNDP’s institutional flexibility in eight countries. It synthesizes the most promising and innovative policies and practices which have enhanced UNDP’s flexible response capacity in post-conflict settings, and is structured to highlight specific “best practices” emerging from the field.

In addition, the report includes in the appendix in-depth case study summaries from each of the countries reviewed. These case summaries provide a narrative approach to the specific challenges posed by each situation and the flexible responses developed by UNDP staff to address those challenges. For readers who prefer the case method of learning, the case summaries in the appendix are designed to chronicle the recent history of each post-conflict situation and the innovations UNDP staff generated to overcome constraints.

A bibliography and list of persons interviewed are provided to facilitate follow-up research.

METHODOLOGY

The project combined a review of in-house documentation, field-based data-gathering, and consultations with the major stakeholders both within the UN system as well as in host countries. Two senior consultants were engaged by the Evaluation Office to undertake six of the eight field visits (three per consultant), write up case summaries, and prepare the draft of the comparative analysis. The two consultants were supported by four research assistants based in UNDP, one of whom conducted fieldwork for one country case study as well. The EO evaluation specialist overseeing the project also conducted fieldwork for one of the eight case studies. Initial planning and conceptualization of the project took place in a series of meetings from December 2001 through February 2002, during which time the selection of case studies was finalized, a division of labor created, and a template of common questions and issues

established, to render the field research conducted by different researchers as comparable as possible. An extensive literature review was also conducted during this period. Fieldwork was conducted by the four researchers from mid-February through mid-March, with country field visits ranging from five to seven days in duration. The sites selected included Kosovo, Macedonia (FYROM), Lebanon, El Salvador, Haiti, Rwanda, Mozambique, and Papua New Guinea. In the field, the researchers met with UNDP staff members, visited project sites, and interviewed local authorities, beneficiaries, donors, and peer agency personnel. A follow-up meeting in New York on April 1-2 convened the four field researchers for the purpose of sharing research results and identifying gaps in information needed to complete the study. Follow-up queries by electronic mail to UNDP country offices were used to clarify or supplement information and analysis.

In the conduct of the fieldwork, a premium was placed on securing detailed narratives of each project’s history. This was considered to be a critical aspect of the fieldwork methodology because the research project was seeking out innovations and tactics that were as yet unknown and hence could not be anticipated in a pre-determined line of inquiry. By allowing different participants in a project to “tell the story,” examples of post-conflict challenges and flexible response to them percolated out of the narrative, enabling researchers to capture important details and innovations that might have been lost in a more rigid questioning format. Close attention to the specific story-line of each project also improved the researchers’ ability to identify special cultural, social, or political settings which might render the case unique and hence of limited value as a transferable tool of flexible response. This was of great importance in the drafting of the comparative analysis in Chapter II. The research team was alert to the problems of comparability across different projects and country settings. The rationale for including detailed case summaries in the appendix of the report is to further safeguard against over-generalization, and to allow readers to cross-check policies and practices that yielded successful flexible response to insure that they are “exportable” to other settings.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



*Floods in Cap-Haïtien, Haiti, leave families without homes.
Photo: Michel Matera/UNDP*

Successful aid interventions in post-conflict situations place a premium on rapid and flexible response by development agencies. The current structures and modalities of most aid agencies are not conducive to flexible and fast response. For its part, UNDP's traditional role as a provider of technical cooperation assistance has only in recent years explicitly evolved into the area of post-conflict assistance and crisis response; this key phase in UNDP's recent institutional evolution has brought to the fore the central importance of flexibility and rapid response capacity.

A range of tactics have been developed in the field to maximize organizational agility within the constraints faced by country offices. This study explores eight post-conflict situations and UNDP's experience in developing and implementing flexible responses to the challenges posed by these situations.

CHAPTER I: POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS AND THE NATURE OF POST-CONFLICT CHALLENGES

SUDDEN CHANGES IN NATIONAL OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Countries emerging from armed conflicts are especially prone to shocks and setbacks, which can dramatically alter the operating environment of aid agencies.¹ Among the most common of these shocks include the following:

Influx of returnees. Armed conflicts almost always produce large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, often numbering in the hundreds of thousands or even millions.

Renewed armed conflict. "Post-war" countries may or may not be at peace. In some instances, cessation of hostilities is imposed by external intervention, in which case national reconciliation efforts occur simultaneously with rehabilitation and recovery programs. In other cases, reconciliation has been achieved but produces a fragile and uneasy peace.

Collapse of the government. State collapse is a growing phenomenon in the post Cold War era and is almost always accompanied by some level of armed conflict.

1. Most of these shocks are not unique to post-conflict countries – they can and do occur everywhere. But post-conflict countries tend to be much more vulnerable to dramatic and often negative changes in the operating environment.

National economic crisis. Because the risk of political reversals in post-conflict situations is high, economic confidence is typically fragile, making post-conflict situations especially prone to sudden economic crises.

Change of national government. Post-conflict situations usually involve the rebuilding of political processes that include elections. When elections produce a transfer of power, flexibility on the part of external aid agencies is essential.

Military occupation or withdrawal. Civil wars sometimes draw neighboring countries into the fray, creating unpredictable post-conflict situations involving a sudden foreign military occupation of part of a country, or a sudden withdrawal of a foreign force.

Change or collapse of local interlocutors/partners. Local administrations and civil society in post-conflict situations are often not highly institutionalized, and hence vulnerable to greater levels of instability and change than is often the case elsewhere.

Change of government policy. Sudden shifts in government policy which can impact development programs and which require flexible response by aid agencies are hardly unique to post-conflict situations; they are a common challenge in all development work.

Natural disasters. As with many of these other challenges, natural disasters are not unique to post-conflict situations but tend to be more disruptive and deadly when they occur in post-conflict settings, where local response capacity is weak.

ENDEMIC CONSTRAINTS IN THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

In addition to sudden surprises, post-conflict situations tend to reflect a syndrome of political and economic features which pose constraints on conventional delivery of rehabilitation assistance and which require operational flexibility on the part of aid agencies. Some of the more significant of these features include the following:

Weak baseline data. A common characteristic of post-conflict operating environments is weak baseline data, often a result of destroyed, long-neglected, or politically distorted socio-economic information as a whole.

Multi-stage project approval and resource allocation. Post-conflict assistance is a high-profile area of international cooperation, where the political stakes are high, and not only in the beneficiary country.

High turnover among international staff. Another constraint intrinsic to post-conflict situations is high turnover of international staff. Far more so than in non-conflict countries, UN-affiliated staff are usually posted in the crisis country for brief periods, due not least to the challenges – physical and emotional – that attend daily life in war-torn societies.

Limited public sector capacity. Governments in post-conflict situations are generally weak (especially when a civil war creates a brain-drain), politically tenuous and divided (if they reflect a power-sharing arrangement), and not always capable of extending their rule over former rebel areas.

Incomplete peace processes/divided communities. Post-conflict situations do not always include a complete and comprehensive national reconciliation. Far from following peace accords in a neat sequence, assistance programs often play an integral role in the peace-building process itself.

Lawlessness and criminality. Countries emerging from conflicts must demobilize militia and re-establish law and order in regions where warfare created environments conducive to the rise of armed criminality.

Erosion of trust and social capital. One recurrent concern in the post-conflict reconstruction is the fragility of the local social environment.

CHAPTER II: A TYPOLOGY OF OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY

This chapter describes the broad categories of flexible response required at the country level – a general typology of operational flexibility defined by information gathered during interviews for this exercise.

RAPID DEPLOYMENT OF UNDP EXPERTISE TO THE CRISIS AREA

Whether in response to a cessation of hostilities, which may open up a given province to international assistance, or the onset of a natural disaster, it is often the case that UNDP needs to mobilize and deploy expertise to an area where it has had no established presence – or even contact – hitherto. The related challenges are many, including those internal to UNDP itself, which may or may not have the staff or expertise readily available to occupy an “office” where none existed before.

REORIENTATION OF PROGRAMMES TO INCORPORATE NEW GOALS

One of the most impressive, widespread, and successful examples of institutional agility in the case studies under review was the ability of UNDP country teams to adjust projects in order to meet new and unexpected local needs. Because post-conflict situations are fast-moving targets, original project documents cannot be expected to predict changes in socio-economic needs. The ability to “tweak” existing projects or programmes to address an unexpected local need or crisis rather than initiate an entirely new project proposal or programme – which can take a considerable amount of time – gave UNDP country teams the flexibility they needed to respond effectively.

SECURING START-UP FUNDING

Rapid response to sudden crises requires immediate access to funds to cover start-up project costs. Those types of funds are very difficult to secure in a timely fashion, leading to delays which are politically costly and which can exact an unacceptable toll in human lives.

EXPEDITED PROCUREMENT

Procuring supplies and making logistical arrangements for delivery at short notice demands flexibility in unexpected crises.

MANAGING BUDGET SHORTFALLS

The uncertainty and unpredictability of post-conflict situations frequently result in vital projects and programmes facing depleted budgets before the project is completed, jeopardizing the project’s success. This is a common problem in development work, by no means unique to post-conflict situations; but post-conflict situations tend to produce conditions which make this scenario especially endemic.

ASSUMING NEW OR EMERGENCY-RELATED ROLES AT SHORT NOTICE

Crises in post-conflict settings frequently involved UNDP taking on new roles, sometimes considerably beyond the organization’s typical mandate, in order to facilitate a rapid collective response or to fill a vacuum in the administration or the aid community. Situations involving governments with weak capacity were especially likely to require UNDP country offices to play impromptu roles on behalf of or at the behest of the government.

STREAMLINING REPORTING: BALANCING ACCOUNTABILITY WITH SPEED

In the complex web of institutional relationships that are produced with most rehabilitation projects (involving the national government, one or several donors, UNDP, and international or local NGOs or other implementing partners), reporting requirements and contracts can produce a significant amount of paperwork and consume an enormous amount of time.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF EFFECTIVE PERSONNEL

Rapid and flexible response in post-conflict situations places a premium on an agency’s ability to assemble and retain a top team of project staff. Recruitment and retention of staff were two abiding concerns expressed in the field. A number of innovations and adaptations were also evident from the case studies under review.

FLEXIBLE PROJECT EXECUTION

Project execution modalities constituted one of the most important issues of flexible response in the case studies under review. Fortunately, this is an issue that has received extensive consideration within UNDP, producing a range of execution modalities that give country teams considerable flexibility to respond to constraints in the delivery of projects.

COORDINATION AND JOINT VENTURES

Coordination among aid agencies – both within the UN family and within the broader universe of donors, international NGOs, UN, and Bretton Woods institutions – has been a high priority in the wake of a decade of complex emergencies. Coordination is imperative in order to reduce waste associated with redundant projects, to minimize gaps in development assistance by region and sector, to pool information, and to standardize basic aid agency policies on issues ranging from local salary scales to response to security threats.

CHAPTER III: BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Two general types of best practices are identified in this study – “enabling” practices and specific “tools” of flexible response. The former are applicable regardless of whether a country

office is in crisis mode or not: indeed, they should ideally be in place long before the onset of an emergency. The latter group of best practices require decision-makers to match the tool to the specific problem created by an emergency or ascendant post-conflict need. In all cases, efforts to improve operational flexibility in such settings should be tempered by respect for other institutional core values, such as accountability, coordination, and capacity-building – which can at times place constraints on flexible response.

ENABLING PRACTICES

UNDP country offices that adopted measures to prepare themselves for flexible and speedy response were consistently more successful in coping with unexpected crises or rapidly shifting local needs. Among the most noteworthy enabling practices include the following:

- **Up-to-date knowledge on administrative rules and regulations.** Inasmuch as UNDP regulations on finance, procurement and personnel may sometimes be seen as part of the problem, they also comprise the organization's source of flexibility. Rules and regulations on these issues are frequently revised with a view to achieving the right balance between expedited and rapid assistance delivery and accountability.
- **Advanced Access to Information on Emergency Relief Suppliers.** Registering on websites such as that of UNDP's Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO) can be easily done prior to the onset of a crisis, thus facilitating and expediting procurement of essential goods when needed.
- **Contingency planning for "routinized" emergencies.** A sudden influx of returnees – both refugees and IDPs – is witnessed so frequently in post-conflict settings that the phenomenon can fairly be classified as a "routinized" emergency. As such, funds and contingency plans should be put in place in advance for this and other "routinized" emergencies.
- **Creating incentives for calculated risk-taking.** Calculated risk-taking and innovation by field officers are essential to overcoming the often burdensome bureaucratic procedures and delays that accompany project implementation in post-conflict settings. There is an urgent need to demonstrate tangible peace benefits

to former warring parties – through projects and programmes – so that they realize the benefits of peace. As such, creation of a set of incentives for field officers to take calculated risks – based on templates of lessons learned in other post-conflict settings, and with defined parameters for acceptable risk-taking – should become a priority.

- **Diverse backgrounds and expertise on project teams.** An ethnically diverse national team gives UNDP greater flexibility to work with different constituencies in countries where ethnic tensions are still high. Similarly, the wider the range of expertise UNDP possesses on its staff, the better prepared it is to respond to unexpected crises requiring specialized knowledge.
- **Infuse peace-building and reconciliation goals into rehabilitation projects.** Infusion of peace-building and reconciliation measures in rehabilitation projects can be essential to long-term success. Where armed conflicts are localized, this may be relatively easier to manage, but even when conflicts are geographically diverse, the need for a "peace dividend" as part of a rehabilitation programme remains strong, despite the greater operational challenges this may pose.
- **Contingency planning for natural disasters.** Natural disasters are often a common occurrence in post-conflict settings, and can pose serious challenges to effective rehabilitation efforts. Examples from this report's case studies include floods in Mozambique, Hurricane Mitch in El Salvador, and earthquakes in Kosovo, El Salvador and Papua New Guinea. Where post-conflict situations are located in zones particularly prone to natural disasters, advance contingency planning should be made to facilitate a smooth transition from rehabilitation to emergency response work.
- **Anticipation through strong field early warning capacity by national project officers.** Country offices that encourage all staff members to observe, assess, and report are better able to anticipate problems and crises. Anticipating and forecasting political, social, and economic trends should not be a compartmentalized task left to an early warning project; it should be seen as everyone's responsibility.
- **Pre-positioned funding.** Pre-positioned funds such as TRAC 1.1.3 funds are vital for rapid response and give UNDP a

response capacity it cannot otherwise enjoy. Unearmarked contributions to crisis prevention and recovery by BCPR can be used for rapid response initiatives.

- **Human resource management of national staff.** UNDP's response capacity in times of crisis is only as good as its personnel. International staff members play a vital role in creating an office environment and reward system conducive to calculated risk-taking and flexibility – they are the “enablers” of flexible response. But in the cases reviewed here, it was the quality of the national staff officers that determined UNDP's capacity for flexible response. Country offices that hire and retain entrepreneurial, dedicated, and honest staff capable of making independent decisions and taking calculated risks stand a much greater chance of success. Recruitment and retention of a highly dedicated and talented national staff is the single greatest source of institutional capacity to problem-solve in crises.
- **Evaluation criteria.** Project evaluations and individual performance reviews can either reinforce a culture of entrepreneurship or a preoccupation with conformity and risk-aversion. To the extent that both project evaluations and individual performance reviews can be geared toward rewarding flexible response and calculated risk-taking – or at a minimum not penalizing that behavior – evaluations can be made part of the enabling infrastructure to facilitate speedy and agile UNDP response.
- **Project execution modalities.** Country offices with advance approval for direct execution (DEX) enjoyed greater flexibility in the field. DEX is an important enabling practice, but is a tool best used as an option of last resort.

THE “TOOLBOX” OF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

Each new intervention in post-conflict situations produces new tactics and tools in an emerging toolbox of flexible response. Among the many useful tools of flexible response, a few of the most promising and replicable include:

- **Rapid deployment of expertise:** Whereas UNDP's need for rapid deployment of programme staff is well-developed in the form of BCPR's global network of available experts, country offices should not ignore the importance of operational staff with

expertise in areas such as financial monitoring, accounting, and oversight; procurement; and telecommunications. Until formal arrangements can be institutionalized by UNDP at the corporate level, country offices should be encouraged to establish informal arrangements for rapid transfer of essential expertise, perhaps among country offices working in the same region.

- **Modification of existing projects to meet challenges posed by economic and political crises.** Rapid response to new and unexpected situations is enhanced by modifying and expanding existing projects rather than initiating new ones. An example is the economic crisis that emerged as a result of the sudden outbreak of civil war in Macedonia in 2000. Aid agencies were forced to shift their focus from long-term rehabilitation to short-term income generation projects and provision of basic social services. These types of modifications should become part of the standard toolbox, to be rapidly deployed when crises emerge.
- **Compartmentalized project design.** Projects that are compartmentalized – that is, designed as a series of small, free-standing projects that can be successful and sustainable independent of the completion of the other projects – allow UNDP to proceed with projects even if additional pledges of funding from the government of other sources is delayed or cancelled.
- **Innovations to increase the fungibility of UNDP budgets.** In many post-conflict settings, humanitarian aid pours into high-visibility sectors and programmes – sometime more than is needed – while other sectors remain underfunded. In addition, strict donor accounting rules generally prohibit the use of residual funds from one project to finance another. Accordingly, innovations that can increase the fungibility of UNDP budgets without violating internal and donor financial restrictions are an important tool of flexible response. In several of the countries under review, including El Salvador, field officers were successfully able to make project budgets more fungible. The key in each case was immediate and persuasive consultations with donor representatives.
- **Circumventing funding delays by exploiting the fungible nature of “pooled” donor funding.** When a budgetary constraint is produced by a donor's funding delays, projects

that are supported by multiple donors can avoid costly delays by taking advantage of the fungible nature of pooled funding. Although a donor may earmark funds for one specific component of a project, those funds can be “borrowed against” to cover urgent aspects of the project that are experiencing delayed funding from another source. When the delayed funding finally arrives, it can then replace the borrowed funds. This often-used tool of flexibility must be accompanied by consultations with donors.

- **Innovative ways to streamline reporting, contracting, and accounting.** The complex web of institutional relationships associated with post-conflict rehabilitation – involving the national government, donors, UNDP, and international or local NGOs – often leads to reporting requirements and contracts that produce a large amount of paperwork and consume precious time. Although these requirements are designed to promote the important goal of accountability, in certain instances a degree of flexibility can be introduced to speed up and streamline these processes in the interest of rapid response. Examples include Rwanda, where beneficiaries (community project managers) lacked the capacity to produce required standard financial reports on previous tranches of funds; UNDP adjusted to this and allowed them to produce a simple narrative report instead. In El Salvador, a similar adjustment was made, allowing implementing partners to concentrate detailed accounts of expenditures and activities in one single annual report, as opposed to the standard quarterly reports – thereby freeing more of their time for actual project implementation.
- **Use of “spin-off” technique to preserve institutional memory and capacity when projects are completed.** A common dilemma faced by UNDP country offices occurs when the office trains an excellent pool of local project officers; these officers and their institutional memory are then lost once the projects are completed and the team disbanded. UNDP Macedonia’s response to this dilemma was to consider the possibility of “spinning off” the assembled local expertise from a UNDP project unit into an independent local research institute, think-tank or consultancy firm. In this way, the institutional memory and capacity of the unit is preserved and available for hire to other donors and agencies.

This is an approach that remains unconventional but merits further attention.

- **Flexible use of NEX and DEX and co-direct execution (“CODEX”).** Although national execution (NEX) of projects is UNDP’s standard approach, in some instances local implementation capacities – particularly for large-scale projects – may not be sufficient. In these cases, direct execution by the UNDP office (DEX) is often used; DEX requires approval from UN headquarters in New York. However, it should be noted that NEX and DEX are not mutually exclusive: DEX in Lebanon, Macedonia, Rwanda, and Mozambique involved UNDP retaining control over project funds but working in close concert with the relevant government ministry. Indeed, the Lebanese country office considered their execution modality to be an example of CODEX (co-direct execution), while in Macedonia the modality was considered a “hybrid” of national and direct execution. Flexible use of NEX and DEX, and various combinations of the two, are therefore a valuable tool that can improve UNDP’s capacity for fast and flexible response.
- **Reliance on local experts/government in areas where peace processes are incomplete.** Where peace processes are incomplete, aid agencies’ interventions can unwittingly trigger renewed conflict. One approach to this dilemma is to use national experts/government authorities (when available) to complete the process in unsettled areas before beginning rehabilitation. In Lebanon, UNDP designated certain areas as “conflict villages” and did not undertake rehabilitation efforts in those areas until the national government completed a reconciliation process there. In Rwanda, UNDP promoted peace-building through support for the Centre for Conflict Management at the University of Butare.
- **Use of project “templates.”** Project proposals borrowed from a recent and similar crisis in another post-conflict country reduce time devoted to writing up proposals and can secure quick donor funding when donors are already familiar with the template.
- **Funding and procurement.** Advances Recoverable Locally (ARLs) is an accounting device that under certain circumstances serves as a valuable tool of financial flexibility to deal with sudden start-up costs. Purchasing waivers – that allow COs to approve major

purchases without direct headquarter oversight on bid processing – are another tool for providing flexibility at the outset of a crisis, and unbeknownst to many offices, can be used by UNDP even in the absence of an emergency or disaster. Administrative procedures allowing funds not immediately needed for disbursement to be placed in a special “rainy day” account can become a lifeline in emergency settings.

- **Local partnerships.** Project execution that maximizes a sense of local ownership enhances flexible response; when local leaders and communities are strongly invested in projects, they become an important source of innovation and adaptation to unexpected obstacles.
- **Volunteers.** When faced with budget and labor constraints, selective use of qualified international volunteers (in addition to UNVs) can help UNDP country offices staff projects and keep offices functioning.
- **Learning processes.** Practices such as workshops or retreats that are used to expose international and national officers to lessons learned from other countries and other agencies

can expand the range of policy options the team draws upon, encouraging flexible response and strengthening institutional memory.

CHAPTER IV: RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Institutionalize knowledge sharing on flexible response.** Dissemination of this report should be seen as the first, rather than the final, step in establishing an institutional culture of knowledge sharing.
- **Reorient performance monitoring to reward flexible response.** Within UNDP’s performance monitoring infrastructure, steps should be taken to explicitly capture, and reward, flexible response.
- **Periodic workshops on the latest operational innovations.** Few country offices have the spare capacity to update staff on the latest revisions in the rules and guidelines that guide institutional conduct in finance, administration and procurement.

INTRODUCTION

'[Reconstruction] is a matter of the utmost urgency and importance where we should, therefore, press forward to reach agreement on methods and on details... The countries chiefly concerned can scarcely begin to make their plans until they know upon what resources they can rely. Any delay, any avoidable time lag will be disastrous to the establishment of good order and good government.'

Lord Keynes, remarks at the first meeting of the second commission on the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Bretton Woods (3 July 1944.)

'Good management in post-conflict situations requires lateral thinking and attention to the rapidly shifting windows of opportunity that open up.'

World Bank, "The Transition from War to Peace: An Overview" (1999), p. 8.2.

'Flexibility is the single most important attribute for providing relevant, effective and sustainable rehabilitation assistance in post-conflict situations.'

UNDP-Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Joint Evaluation (2000), p. 49.



Prosthetics are made and fitted at the central hospital in Maputo. Photo: Robert Semeniuk/UNDP

Post-conflict situations constitute an increasingly common type of operating environment for UNDP and other development agencies. The political, economic, and social settings of countries emerging from armed conflict pose special challenges for rehabilitation and development initiatives. One of those challenges is the need for flexible response. It is now conventional wisdom that flexibility – manifested in rapid response, capacity to readjust to meet rapidly changing local needs, and ability to respond to unexpected changes in the operating environment – is essential for successful post-conflict assistance.

Recognition of the need for greater institutional agility in post-conflict situations is, however, only a beginning. The next step is to operationalize the goal of flexibility more effectively by identifying and assessing specific innovative policies, strategies, and practices that can enhance and inform flexible response. Numerous steps – some the result of careful policy reforms, others a reflection of ad hoc decisions – have already been made to promote greater operational agility in UNDP. This study is intended to advance that agenda. It explores the experiences of UNDP post-conflict assistance programs in eight countries with the aim of identifying emerging best practices and innovative strategies to improve flexible response.

RISKS AND STAKES IN POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Both the stakes and the risks are high in post-conflict situations. Stakes are high because rapid rehabilitation is a central pillar of both local and external efforts to consolidate peace, demobilize militia, create employment, reabsorb returnees, build legitimacy and capacity of local governments, and defuse ethnic and political tensions. Post-

conflict assistance is, in short, a major part of the “peace dividend” without which countries can quickly slip back into renewed armed conflict, radicalism, or lawlessness. The 1990s have demonstrated all too clearly that international emergency relief and/or peace operations that are not coupled with sustained, well-funded, and effective rehabilitation assistance stand little chance of success. In post-conflict settings, rehabilitation assistance simply cannot afford to fail.

Yet the risks of failure in complex and politicized post-conflict situations are also high. Local politics and security are often in flux. Local needs change rapidly. The need for speedy response produces little time for information gathering, analysis, and assessment, even as existing databases are often weak. Projects must be conceived and executed while organizations are scrambling for funding and personnel. A cacophony of external actors can make coordination difficult. Local power disputes can render operating environments polarized and insecure. And major decisions must be made in environments of considerable uncertainty and inadequate information. Collectively, these factors raise the risk of failed and frustrated assistance. Just as generals must make crucial decisions in the “fog of war,” the fog of post-conflict often confronts aid agencies.

Where risk is high, stakes are high, and time is short, the burden for effectiveness falls squarely upon individual decision-makers in the field. In UNDP, this responsibility falls to the Resident Representative, his or her deputy, and programme managers. Their ability to innovate with inadequate resources, to seize windows of opportunity, to make sound policy decisions on the basis of imperfect information, and to adapt to changing needs, shifting circumstances, or unexpected constraints can make the difference between success and failure. Above all else, they must be astute risk-managers and must be willing to take calculated risks. In urgent post-conflict situations, falling back upon standard operating procedures and the slow pace of routinized project funding and implementation guarantees failure.

is not always easy to accommodate within the structures and procedures of these organizations. Many of the constraints to flexibility emanate from within development organizations. Lack of core funding, long delays in placing staff in the field, cumbersome reporting obligations that pull staff away from projects, painfully bureaucratic procedures both within and between aid agencies and donors, delays in project approval and release of funds by donors, and evaluation procedures that tend to penalize rather than reward flexibility are among the many structural constraints field officers face. The extent to which calculated risk-taking and innovation can damage rather than enhance an individual career is especially important; project officers and their superiors are much more likely to consider flexible and innovative responses if incentives are in place for that behavior. One step in creating incentives for calculated risk-taking is identification of emerging best practices; they can provide a template of successful risk management approaches in post-conflict settings, and help to establish parameters for acceptable risk-taking in the field.

Flexibility is also constrained by the legitimate claims of other important institutional goals and principles. Equally compelling values such as accountability, coordination, sustainability, strategic coherence, local ownership, and capacity building all require time, vetting procedures, and inclusion of a wide range of actors whose input or partnership must be secured. Collectively, these additional concerns tend to work against institutional agility, reducing the “wobble room” and autonomy of UNDP field officers. Flexibility is from this vantage point an important value, but not one that can be pursued in isolation from a basket of other institutional and development values. Indeed, unfettered flexibility can quickly slip from virtue to vice. If taken too far, it can serve as an invitation to strategic incoherence and lack of accountability. The challenge for UNDP and other development agencies is finding new ways to reconcile institutional agility and risk-taking with other core values that tend to constrain and limit flexibility.

Another challenge in adapting development programmes to rapidly changing post conflict situations is the multiplicity of actors whose activities and decision-making institutions are often intertwined with one another. The overarching institutional framework for UNDP in-country activities is circumscribed by the UN

CONSTRAINTS ON FLEXIBILITY

For UNDP and other development agencies, however, the kind of operational agility that is essential for success in post-conflict situations

Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the Common Country Assessment (CCA), two planning mechanisms that place a premium on integrated programme design and implementation modalities. Key actors, such as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the International Financial Institutions also strongly influence the institutional framework in which UNDP must operate. Though the merits of unified action speak for themselves, integrated institutional arrangements can also limit the range of flexibility and speed required of one actor. For better or for worse, in this regard, the reality that UNDP works in anything but an institutional vacuum has real implications for its ability to achieve its goals on the basis of flexible response.

Risk-taking behavior can slip from virtue to vice, especially when risky ventures produce failures the costs of which are borne by local populations. Indeed, risk-taking in post-conflict rehabilitation co-exists uneasily with the “do no harm” principle to which most aid agencies aspire. Development assistance in post-conflict settings navigates very dangerous shoals; local communities are often traumatized, local politics deeply polarized, and local authority shaky. Mistakes by aid agencies in these circumstances can not only lead to failed projects – they can get people killed. Risk-taking must therefore be founded on close knowledge of local situations and on astute calculations of likely outcomes.

FLEXIBILITY AND BUDGETARY REALITIES

Flexibility is also dramatically impacted by budgetary realities. In recent years, non-profit agencies and UN development agencies have been confronted by a troubling paradox. Even as the number, urgency, and complexity of post-conflict situations have grown, placing much greater demands on agency resources, external funding for post-conflict assistance has generally not kept pace. Emergency relief aid is almost always available in generous amounts, but funding for reconstruction and rehabilitation is much less reliable. And in cases where rehabilitation funding is plentiful – invariably because of the strategic importance accorded to the country in question – competition for access to the funds is intense. The often severe budgetary strains which are produced by

this situation have tended to produce operational flexibility, but for all the wrong reasons – namely, to access donor funds to stay solvent and to keep offices open. Aid agencies are at times compelled to agree to undertake whatever type of post-conflict assistance donors demand, even when that assistance may be inappropriate or does not match the agency’s competency. Reward structures in most aid agencies are designed to encourage national offices to aggressively pursue contracts and increase budgets, adding pressure on national offices to take on inappropriate projects. In this situation, aid agencies can run the risk of being reduced to rudderless sub-contractors, driven more by the imperative of institutional survival than by a post-conflict development vision and strategy. A certain level of pragmatic flexibility on this score is entirely justifiable, particularly if it helps an agency stay afloat to do important and needed work. But knowing when the line has been crossed from justifiable pragmatism to unjustifiable expediency is not easy.

INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

“Flexible response” implies a certain degree of improvisation, an ad hoc reaction to a unique and unexpected set of circumstances. Routinized flexibility is, in one sense, a contradiction in terms. Yet it is also the case that post-conflict settings tend to produce a syndrome of challenges that, while not entirely predictable, are also not altogether surprising – *if* the principal actors have had the benefit of exposure to lessons learned from other post-conflict settings. Anticipating possible surprises – expecting the unexpected – is an important prerequisite for effective and flexible response. Taking certain steps in advance of crises to prepare the office to respond more quickly – what this study calls “enabling practices” – also can and should be routinized. Finally, the capacity to borrow and adapt successful response techniques and strategies from other UNDP post-conflict missions is essential. Otherwise, UNDP field offices are placed in the untenable and counterproductive position of having to “reinvent the wheel.”

The ability to anticipate crises, prepare for crisis response, and choose wisely from an evolving “toolbox” of flexible responses requires three distinct capacities: (1) institutional learning (the ability to draw on previous experience – both

UNDP's experience and the experience of peer organizations – to garner accurate and potentially exportable lessons); (2) institutional memory (efficiently stored, effectively analyzed, and easily accessible knowledge of the lessons learned); and (3) a dissemination or teaching mechanism (a means of exposing staff members to lessons learned across different field offices). Without all three of these capacities in place, agencies and firms run the risk of losing invaluable lessons and innovative responses as soon as an experienced staff member is reassigned or leaves the organization.

How, then, can UNDP and peer agencies improve their capacity to learn, store, and disseminate lessons on flexible response in post-conflict situations? Institutional learning is a preoccupation in every sector and in every firm, and virtually every organization has some mechanism to promote institutional learning and to serve as a repository of institutional memory. Some organizations are much more committed to the process than others, and some are more effective than others. Among the mechanisms firms have at their disposal to execute this task include:

- Routinized “after action reviews” and “lessons learned” exercises. The military is perhaps the most rigorous in this regard.
- Evaluation units and procedures. If properly structured, project evaluations can generate valuable lessons learned and case studies.
- Workshops and seminars. Project officers are gathered together to compare and discuss experiences, allowing them an opportunity to learn from one another and return to their projects with responses adapted from other settings.
- Outsourcing. Some firms rely on outside consulting groups to provide expertise in state-of-the-art responses to particular operating challenges.
- Case study and other written reports. Many large development agencies and NGOs (World Bank, UNDP, Oxfam) produce published studies intended to capture emerging best practices and disseminate the findings.
- Sabbaticals. Some firms try to provide an occasional period of reflection and research for select staff members.

UNDP and its peer agencies are not structured in ways that match up well with many of these tools and techniques. Too often, for example, demonstrated flexibility during the implementation phase of a given programme is viewed as a sign of poor planning – this, despite the intrinsic vagaries and unpredictable vicissitudes of post-conflict and crisis situations. Moreover, the core staff of UN specialized agencies is often small and tends to be permanently deployed, as organizations scramble to respond from one crisis to the next; there is little of the “down time” that the military has between deployments which can be put to use in reflecting on lessons learned. The number of individuals with deep, comparative field experience in post-conflict assistance is low, and staff turnover is relatively high, especially at the field level, where flexible response capacity is most needed.

UNDP itself has until only recently operated primarily as an international organization specialized in the design and provision of so-called technical cooperation assistance, which although defined in many ways throughout the years, can safely be assumed to be quite distinct from crisis and emergency aid. Most of UNDP's field staff consists of national officers who rarely have the opportunity to gain comparative experience outside of their home country. Much of UNDP's work is either national execution (by the government) or, if direct execution, outsourced to local or international NGOs. Such short-term contractual relationships are themselves an important tool of flexibility, but tend to work against the accumulation of knowledge on flexible response at the implementation level.² Likewise, written studies on flexible response are of use only inasmuch as they are distributed to the field and when field officers have the time to read them. The hectic nature of post-conflict assistance often robs staff members of time to devote to reflection on lessons learned.

What all this suggests is that for agencies working in post-conflict situations, identification of emerging best practices in flexible response is only one step in building an effective flexible response capacity. Issues related to institutional memory and dissemination are equally important lest lessons learned become lessons forgotten. Direction from the highest levels of management

2. This depends in large part on the degree to which programme managers follow the projects closely, and the depth of written project evaluations.

must explicitly encourage pragmatism and resourcefulness on the part of staff working in crisis and post-conflict situations. In cases where country offices may be inclined to adopt an overly cautious approach, too easily viewing rules and regulations as nothing more than an excuse to move slowly, management needs to step in, and point out that the rules are meant to enhance accountability, not to prevent a timely response.

It is also important to note the inherent limitations of exercises to compare responses from one case to the next, and to cull transferable strategies and practices from one case to the next. While post-conflict situations tend to exhibit a similar set of dynamics and challenges, each setting is unique, and demands close attention to tailored responses appropriate to that setting. While it is obviously wrong to claim that nothing can be learned across different cases, practitioners must exercise caution and common sense not to export wholesale flexible response tactics that may be inappropriate in a new setting. The lessons learned and the emerging best practices highlighted below must be handled with these caveats in mind.

STRUCTURE OF THIS STUDY

This study draws on eight case studies of UNDP's work in post-conflict situations to draw lessons learned and identify emerging

best practices in organizational flexibility. Chapter One consists of an overview of post-conflict situations. Specifically, it inventories the key characteristics of post-conflict situations, and identifies the most common challenges aid agencies face in post-conflict settings. This chapter is intended to provide basic background material for readers who are not already intimate with the nature of post-conflict settings. In Chapter Two, the study explores the specific issue of organizational flexibility in post-conflict situations, highlighting both the most common organizational constraints to flexible response and the most useful innovations and adaptations in the field. The conclusion draws on this comparative analysis to identify emerging best practices in flexible response, with a focus on two levels of response – one, “enabling” practices and policies that improve a country office’s capacity to respond flexibly, and two, specific “tools” of flexibility.

This study should be seen as a preliminary point of departure for discussion of flexible operational response. It is the first word, not the final word. This document, and the discussions that it reflects, are intended to initiate a process of internal knowledge sharing. As additional experiences from other post-conflict situations are collected, the toolbox of flexible response introduced here will accumulate new innovations and techniques to increase fast and flexible response. It is crucial that the process of dialogue initiated with this document be continued and seen as the real “deliverable” from this exercise.

CHAPTER I

POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS AND THE NATURE OF POST-CONFLICT CHALLENGES

DEFINING POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS

One of the more perplexing aspects of post-conflict assistance is coming to terms with the concept of a post-conflict situation. Different conceptions and uses of the term have created confusion among those who attempt to generalize across different cases. For practitioners with long experience in these settings, discussions devoted to defining this term are tedious and repetitive. What follows is a brief treatment of the definition of post-conflict situations for the benefit of readers new to the issue. Readers who are already intimate with post-conflict settings and the challenges they pose as operating environments for development agencies are invited to proceed directly to Chapter II, where specific best practices from the case studies are explored.

The expression “post-conflict” suggests a linear progression of conflict, from pre-conflict to armed conflict to post-conflict. From this perspective, each phase of the conflict cycle requires different types of assistance. Pre-conflict aid is “normal” development assistance and/or conflict prevention policies; aid in armed conflict is typically emergency relief; and aid in post-conflict situations tends to emphasize rehabilitation and reconstruction. The general public tends to understand and use the term in this way.

In reality, contemporary armed conflicts and the development challenges they produce are not so easily defined and compartmentalized. Contemporary intra-state wars rarely produce outright victories and unambiguous post-conflict environments. Instead, truces, national reconciliation, and even the introduction of UN peacekeeping forces often exist in a context of continued episodic armed clashes, incomplete peace processes, and the threat of renewed clashes. As a result, aid agencies working in what appear to be post-conflict situations are



*Ice candy being distributed free of charge to children traumatized by the earthquake in El Cafetalón, El Salvador.
Photo: Pedro Cote/UNDP*

often simultaneously dealing with active conflict zones as well as the threat of renewed violence in other areas. So it is that post-conflict assistance includes a strong emphasis on conflict prevention – a recognition of the fact that post-conflict situations are simultaneously pre-conflict situations as well.

In addition, post-conflict situations vary significantly, defying easy definitions and generalizations. Post-war situations in relatively developed countries, where a skilled labor force and a long history of effective government exists, are an entirely different challenge than post-conflict situations in third-world settings, where external assistance must begin from scratch. In this study, for instance, the post-conflict challenges of Macedonia were only remotely similar to those that faced Mozambique and Haiti. Likewise, situations in which war damage and displacement were the result of an external actor (for instance, East Timor or the West Bank) constitute a dramatically different setting than countries torn apart by internal warfare.

Despite these variations, several features are typical of contemporary post-conflict situations. The wars themselves have tended to be intra-state conflicts of protracted duration; ethnic and/or religious identity politics, including ethnic cleansing, are common; militias in combat are often unpaid, fighting in order to secure war-booty as their pay; non-combatants have been targeted, and massacres are common; massive and widespread population displacement has occurred in almost every case; war economies have emerged in most instances, in which important elements of society profiteer from and become stakeholders in continued violence and lawlessness; warfare itself is unconventional, sporadic, generally fought with small arms; respect for the neutrality of international aid agencies is weak, and struggles to control aid resources are often an important component of armed conflicts; health care systems are pushed to the brink of collapse, exposing the population to the risk of epidemics; malnutrition is usually widespread; and governmental authority has been weak to non-existent, including situations of state collapse.

The post-war contexts that emerge from these protracted conflicts also share a set of typical, though not universal, political, social, and economic features. These characteristics are essential to understand, as they shape the operating environment for international aid agencies and

determine the priority rehabilitation needs of the country.

POST-CONFLICT ECONOMIC FEATURES

- Widespread damage to the economic infrastructure, resulting in dramatically reduced productivity and high transaction costs in countries that are usually already quite poor
- Loss of business confidence; risk-averse investment patterns
- The rise of illicit economic activities and interests, often with the involvement of powerful transnational criminal elements
- Dependence on remittances sent by the Diaspora, which sustains a large balance of trade deficit
- Very high unemployment
- Very high national debt burden
- Weaknesses in key pillars of the economy – financial services and banking, government capacity to manage money supply (and hence inflation), insurance services, utilities, postal services.
- Deferred maintenance of infrastructure left undamaged by the war; aging and deteriorating roads, runways, ports, buildings, national fleet of vehicles, ships, and planes, telecommunication grids, hospitals, and schools.
- Weakened human resource base; many educated professionals have fled the country.

POST-CONFLICT POLITICAL FEATURES

- National government with very limited means (due to low tax revenue) and capacity
- Fragile or incomplete national reconciliation in a highly polarized political environment
- Weak legitimacy and capacity of police and judiciary
- Warlordism; political leaders and their followers who may not share a commitment to return to the rule of law
- Consolidation of reconciliation process, including disputes related to compensation for losses, property disputes, war crimes tribunals
- Restructuring of political system as part of reconciliation and accommodation typically including power-sharing arrangements and political decentralization
- Weak local (municipal) capacity to administer
- Strong, even hegemonic influence of external political and economic actors such as the World Bank or powerful states
- Armed rejectionist groups that pose an active threat or that possess the potential to destabilize

POST-CONFLICT SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT FEATURES

- Weak baseline data on key economic and social trends
- Widespread and massive population displacement
- Weakened or non-existent public social services; heavy reliance on international relief and development funding, privatization of most of the social service sector
- Challenges of reintegration of the “lost generation” of youth who were unable to attend school and who were recruited into militias during the war
- Erosion of social capital and social trust
- Unresolved local disputes, divided villages and communities
- Heavily armed criminality; gang formation by ex-militiamen
- High levels of rural-urban migration
- Weak commitment to public goods and to national, as opposed to parochial sub-national, interests
- A large diaspora, which can play an important role – both positive and negative – in politics and the economy

UNDP WORK IN POST-CONFLICT SITUATIONS AND “COUNTRIES IN SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES”

UNDP, like other UN specialized agencies, has had to adapt to the reality that growing numbers of countries qualifying for overseas development assistance are also countries with a recent history of armed conflict. By one count, fully one-quarter of UN member-states are embroiled in marked internal conflicts; during the period 1989-1996 there were 101 armed conflicts worldwide, of which 96 were essentially intra-state.³ The realization in the 1980s that emergency relief could not be decoupled from development assistance gave impetus to greater UNDP engagement in situations that previously been considered inappropriate sites for development aid.

Since the early 1990s, UNDP's expenditures for countries in special circumstances have soared. In the 1992-1996 period alone, total UNDP budgets for countries in special circumstances reached \$8.7 billion.⁴ UNDP's role in post-conflict assistance has expanded as well. The UNDP Resident Representative serves as Resident Coordinator of all of the UN system's operational activities for development, and as Humanitarian Coordinator. UNDP's Emergency Response Division – ERD (recently expanded as the BCPR, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery) – was established to serve as an “in-house mechanism set up to provide a quicker and more effective response in UNDP's Country Offices in Countries in Special Development Situations.”⁵ Its expansion in year 2001 into the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery is further testimony to both the commitment to, and importance of, UNDP's assistance to countries in the process of recovering from natural and man-made disasters.

Five percent of total core resources in UNDP are now devoted to TRAC 3 funding, designed as seed money to be used as a catalyst to attract additional donor funding to high priority projects in post-conflict countries. TRAC 3 funds are allocated to, and administered by, BCPR. Total annual TRAC 3 funds totalled about \$19 million for year 2002; the figure is expected to reach \$24 million in 2003 and \$27 million in 2004, 27.7 2005,⁶ for a total of about 98.6 million for the 2002-2005 period.

Core themes of UNDP work in post-conflict settings have been established as “programming for peace and recovery; the building of justice systems; the improvement of governance; government management of external resources; and the organization of elections.”⁷ In practice, UNDP's work in post-conflict situations has been quite broad in scope. A basic profile of the types of programmes UNDP has initiated in post-conflict countries includes planning and economic management; facilitation of donor and NGO coordination; area rehabilitation and development; basic social services; reintegration;

3. UNDP, Management Development and Governance Division, *Governance Foundations for Post-Conflict Situations: UNDP's Experience* (UNDP, November 1999), pp. 5-6.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

5. UNDP CPC, “About the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery.” <http://www.undp.org/erd/about.htm>

6. Forecast, BOM/OBR, Nov 2002.

7. DP/1997/CRP.10, “Further Elaboration on Follow-Up to Economic and Social Council Resolution 1995/96 – Strengthening of the Coordination of Emergency Humanitarian Assistance” Executive Board of the UNDP, 1-14 March 1997.

mine-clearance; elections; rebuilding institutions of governance (including capacity-building of the judiciary, legislative, and executive branches of government); strengthening capacity of civilian police; managing delivery of programme aid; and emergency response and crisis management.⁸

UNDP's wide range of programs and projects in post-conflict situations have generally been centered on the goal of capacity-building at the national, municipal, and civil society levels, and on the goal of prevention of the reemergence of conflict. Capacity building is imperative in most war-torn settings, where protracted conflict often results in low capacity due a variety of factors:

- the loss of many of the country's most skilled professional to exodus abroad (the "brain-drain");
- an entire 'lost generation' of young adults whose access to education has been restricted by protracted war;
- weak, non-existent, or out-of-date baseline data on which governments depend for programme and policy planning;
- eroded standard accounting and reporting procedures due to years of warlordism and state collapse;
- decentralization programs (a typical feature of reconciliation packages), which expose the weak capacity of local or municipal authorities.

COMMON CHALLENGES IN POST-CONFLICT OPERATING ENVIRONMENTS

Despite the unique aspects of each post-conflict situation, they tend to share similar characteristics that produce challenging operating environments for aid agencies. These broad situational challenges have as their common denominator an operational backdrop of rapid change, typically driven by the opportunities created by the cessation of hostilities, or in the case of natural disasters, the conflagration of needs. In both cases, another driving force for change is the large-scale influx of programming assistance by the international community.

What follows is a brief profile of the most common types of situational challenges encountered in these settings. They are broken down into two general categories: (1) sudden surprises or rapid changes in the operating environment; (2) endemic constraints and challenges in the operating environment. Familiarity with these challenges can help project staff anticipate and

assess situations requiring flexible response, thereby strengthening institutional capacity to fashion appropriate and effective policy responses.

SUDDEN CHANGES IN NATIONAL OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Countries emerging from armed conflicts are especially prone to shocks and setbacks, which can dramatically alter the operating environment of aid agencies.⁹ Among the most common of these shocks include the following:

- **Sudden influx of returnees.** Armed conflicts often produce large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, numbering in the hundreds of thousands or even millions. Though home and host governments and the specialized agencies which care for IDPs and refugees make attempts to manage the flow of returnees in an orderly fashion, in many instances IDP and refugee return is spontaneous, massive, and uncontrolled. They return to villages and towns that are often war-damaged and unable to provide basic services; to homes that are uninhabitable or occupied; and to communities which are impoverished and stressed, and unable to provide vital temporary support to returnees. This situation can quickly transform post-war rehabilitation and reconstruction agendas into humanitarian response, requiring a great deal of flexibility on the part of aid agencies and donors alike. One of the most recent instances of this phenomenon was the dramatic return of 750,000 Kosovar refugees (of a total refugee population of 800,000) to their homes in the aftermath of the NATO bombings and Serb military withdrawal from Kosovo in 1999. Rwanda in 1996-97 also had to shoulder the unplanned flow of nearly two million returnees within the span of three months. A case can be made that large-scale, spontaneous influx of returnees and IDPs is so frequent in post-war countries that the phenomenon should be treated as a "routinized emergency" (comparable to UNICEF's preparation for seasonal cholera outbreaks in some countries) for which funds and contingency plans are put in place in advance.

- **Renewed armed conflict.** "Post-war" countries may or may not be at peace. In some instances, cessation of hostilities is imposed by

8. MDG, "Governance Foundations" p. 9.

9. Most of these shocks are not unique to post-conflict countries – they can and do occur everywhere. But post-conflict countries tend to be much more vulnerable to dramatic and often negative changes in the operating environment.

external intervention, in which case national reconciliation efforts occur simultaneously with rehabilitation and recovery programs. In other cases, reconciliation has been achieved but produces a fragile and uneasy peace. Some constituencies may remain deeply aggrieved by losses in the war, while some warlords and merchants of war may try to provoke renewed conflict in pursuit of their own parochial interests. Elections can trigger renewed conflict, when a losing candidate rejects the outcome and resorts to warfare. In virtually all instances, post-conflict situations are exceptionally prone to renewed armed conflict. Where armed conflicts are localized, they produce relatively manageable challenges for aid agencies, including the need to infuse peacebuilding and reconciliation goals into rehabilitation projects. This was the situation in Rwanda where until 2001, there were serious and constant clashes and insurgencies in the northwestern section of the country. Where renewed armed conflicts are serious, they produce immediate humanitarian emergencies (IDP flows, war casualties), create dangerous operating environments for aid agencies which can lead to suspension of projects, and politicize aid agency partnership with local actors. Cambodia, Liberia, Angola, Somalia, and Sierra Leone are but a few of the many instances of post-conflict situations degenerating back into armed conflict.

- **Collapse of the government.** State collapse is a growing phenomenon in the post Cold War era and is almost always accompanied by some level of armed conflict. Post-conflict situations, then, often involve the revival of central government structures and capacity, and an operating environment typically featuring a weak and fragile state. In some cases, weak or fledgling administrations are confronted with crises that erode their ability to perform the most basic administrative functions. Where state collapse occurs quickly, aid agencies are confronted by a host of challenges – the loss of a competent national authority as partner, rising lawlessness and security problems, sharp disputes over authority, and autonomous or secessionist regional authorities. In Rwanda, for instance, before the Rwandan Patriotic Force (RPF) could consolidate itself as an alternative government in a few months following the genocide in 1994, there was a total collapse of central authority. For aid agencies, this scenario requires project execution modalities which increase flexibility and

effectiveness – via direct execution, or execution by other UN agencies or international NGOs. This can reduce problems associated with competing local claims on authority and low governmental capacity. Flexibility is also required to manage the disruptions caused by intermittent suspension of aid projects for security reasons. Liberia, Congo-Brazzaville, and Afghanistan are but a few examples of sudden state collapse requiring flexibility on the part of aid agencies.

- **National economic crisis.** Because the risk of political reversals in post-conflict situations is high, economic confidence is typically fragile, making post-conflict situations especially prone to sudden economic crises. Hyperinflation, capital flight, debt burdens, and loss of revenue due to corruption, threat of war, or other political crisis can quickly reduce a national government's capacity to co-finance and execute projects, and in severe cases can lead to the need for aid agencies to shift focus to short-term income generation and provision of basic social services. In Macedonia, an economic crisis provoked by sudden outbreak of civil war in 2000 created precisely such a challenge to UNDP, which had to shift its focus to income generation. An even more severe economic crisis in Lebanon in the late 1990s forced UNDP to engage in creative financing arrangements. Very poor countries enduring economic crises also present a problem of limited absorptive capacity of rehabilitation aid and other economic distortions. In Rwanda, for instance, the high flow of foreign aid reduced incentive for the government to adjust its exchange regime to reflect its market value, thus creating an overvalued national currency.
- **Change of national government.** Post-conflict situations usually involve the rebuilding of political processes that include elections. When elections produce a transfer of power, flexibility on the part of external aid agencies is essential. In transitional democracies, transfers of power can lead to wholesale removal of civil servants in ministries (either because the previous administration used positions in the civil service for political patronage or because the new administration seeks to dole out positions in the civil service to its clients). Unless partnerships and working relationships between aid agencies and their government counterparts are highly institutionalized (as opposed to highly personalized, which is the more common situation), the aid agencies must cope with disrupted

projects, long transitional periods in which key posts may not be filled, and in some instances grave suspicion by the incoming administration toward any project or program which its rival initiated. Aid agencies can even come under suspicion of having supported individuals or administrations through their partnerships, engendering distrust and obstructionism. In Lebanon, a 1998 change in government resulted in a decline in delivery of projects. UNDP/Ministry of Displaced project used that period to catch up on internal reporting and statistical analysis, thus using its time effectively to analyze the wealth of demographic data it had collected earlier gave it a very impressive capacity to move quickly and with first-rate knowledge of local communities once the period of paralysis ended. As is noted in the conclusion, this was a good example of an “enabling” practice that gave UNDP better capacity for fast response.

- **Military occupation or withdrawal.** Civil wars sometimes draw neighboring countries into the fray, creating unpredictable post-conflict situations involving a sudden foreign military occupation of part of a country, or a sudden withdrawal of a foreign force. These situations require flexibility from aid agencies which must establish understanding with an occupying power or which must cope with the power vacuum that can ensue when an external military quickly withdraws. Southern Lebanon presented UNDP and other aid agencies with just this situation in 2000, when Israel abruptly terminated a twenty-year military occupation of the area. It was only because of an impressive level of institutional agility that UNDP was able to manage the many challenges the Israeli withdrawal posed (see chapter III and Appendix C). The withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo, and the Indonesian military from East Timor, created political vacuums which were eventually filled by UN trusteeships, but which posed daunting short-term challenges.
- **Change or collapse of local interlocutors/partners.** Local administrations and civil society in post-conflict situations are often not highly institutionalized, and hence vulnerable to greater levels of instability and change than is often the case elsewhere. Aid agencies rely heavily on local partners – both municipalities and non-governmental organizations – which can experience turbulent changes in personnel or which are of short duration as functional institutions. This forces aid agencies to be flexible in their partnerships with local inter-

locutors. This is especially common in countries with weak human resource levels; good local partners are often hired away by international aid agencies.

- **Change of government policy.** Sudden shifts in government policy which can impact development programs and which require flexible response by aid agencies are hardly unique to post-conflict situations; they are a common challenge in all development work. But because post-conflict situations typically feature less institutionalized governance and more volatile politics, significant shifts in government policy are especially prevalent in post-conflict situations. These policy shifts can be directed at a particular project, at a sector, or at the UN itself. It can also include sea changes in the government’s own administrative structures. One example of particular relevance to post-conflict situations is the announcement of a policy of political decentralization. Political decentralization is popular with donors as a means of promoting good governance and accountability and of diffusing lingering communal tensions in the aftermath of a war. In quite a few post-conflict situations (including Macedonia and Lebanon in this study) this has led to shifts in administrative responsibility to the local level. As will be seen below, UNDP has been uniquely well placed to adapt to this particular change in policy.
- **Natural disasters.** As with many of these other challenges, natural disasters are not unique to post-conflict situations but tend to be more disruptive and deadly when they occur in post-conflict settings, where local response capacity is weak. An impressive number of the case studies reviewed here feature sudden natural disasters that required immediate and flexible response on the part of UNDP and its peer agencies. Flooding in Mozambique, the impact of Hurricane Mitch in El Salvador, and earthquakes in Kosovo, El Salvador, Papua New Guinea all required shifts to emergency response at short notice, testing the organizational agility of UNDP. Where post-conflict situations are located in zones especially prone to natural disasters, contingency planning to facilitate shifting gears from rehabilitation to emergency response work is prudent.

ENDEMIC CONSTRAINTS IN THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

In addition to sudden surprises, post-conflict situations tend to reflect a syndrome of political and economic features which pose constraints on

conventional delivery of rehabilitation assistance and which require operational flexibility on the part of aid agencies. Some of the more significant of these features include the following:

- **Weak baseline data.** A common characteristic of post-conflict operating environments is weak baseline data, often a result of destroyed, long-neglected, or politically distorted socio-economic information as a whole. In places such as Kosovo, East Timor (now Timor Leste), and Afghanistan, for example, ruling groups that distinguished themselves by means of ethnic, political, or religious differences actively sought to eliminate any historical trace of those outside, or opposed to, their grouping. Particularly when UNDP seeks to assist a beneficiary group long oppressed by an erstwhile ruling power, the likelihood of unreliable – or altogether absent – baseline data is high. The UNDP-Japan joint evaluation on East Timor and Kosovo noted that the systematic destruction of historical archives on socio-economic information created a vacuum of reliable baseline data. In such contexts, the only solution is to undertake a rapid needs assessment; and in view of the constantly changing and at-times hostile working environment, to seek to update such baseline data with intermittent follow-up needs assessments. In Afghanistan, UNDP, led by its Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery and the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, in December 2001 and January 2002 carried out an extensive assessment of social and infrastructure needs that provided a basis for donor pledging at the Tokyo donor conference in January 2002. The Afghan administration, working with the international community, has recently launched another round of needs assessment.
- **Multi-stage project approval and resource allocation.** Post-conflict assistance is a high-profile area of international cooperation, where the political stakes are high, and not only in the beneficiary country. Indeed, donor governments and development organizations themselves have strong incentives to make sure that all goes according to their plans; the problem is that, given the diversity in institutional interests, the priorities that drive donors and international organizations are not always consistent. For this reason, the process of approving post-conflict assistance projects can be relatively long and cumbersome; normal

time lags suddenly become problematic in view of the emergency needs and high level of desperation of post-conflict communities, both requiring accelerated response time. For its part, UNDP is often at the center of a thick web of institutional review mechanisms that include itself (and the various entities therein), the UN (the UN Controller often being the guardian of Trust Funds) and donor capitols. Given the stakes involved, as well as the technical complexity of the projects being proposed, the vetting process is often guided by the proverbial fine-toothed comb. Whereas such delays may be taken with an air of resignation in non-crisis situations, they suddenly constitute a major problem – and a cause for at-times irreversible disillusionment among target beneficiaries – in crises that beckon for immediate programme implementation.

- **High turnover among international staff.** Another constraint intrinsic to post-conflict situations is high turnover of international staff. Far more so than in non-conflict countries, UN-affiliated staff are usually posted in the crisis country for brief periods, due not least to the challenges – physical and emotional – that attend daily life in war-torn societies. In addition to the rapid turnover of international staff, the pool of potential national programme officers may be depleted as well, due to low levels of education (attributed to systematic repression or full-scale diversion of resources to the military), large-scale displacement and/or killing of particular groups, brain drain, and heightened competition among international organizations for the limited pool of skilled individuals. These dynamics constrain the accumulation and maintenance of an institutional memory, key to operational consistency and agility in post-conflict situations.
- **Limited public sector capacity.** Governments in post-conflict situations are generally weak (especially when a civil war creates a brain-drain), politically tenuous and divided (if they reflect a power-sharing arrangement), and not always capable of extending their rule over former rebel areas. These woes are compounded by typically high levels of public distrust and low levels of tax revenues, either because of an impoverished economy or a low capacity to collect taxes (or both). This situation makes it very difficult for UNDP and other agencies to rely on the government to directly execute projects. Use of “DEX” or direct execution

modalities by UNDP is the instrument providing the organization the flexibility to work in such exceptional circumstances effectively. Most of the cases studies explored here involved country offices that had been granted the right to directly execute projects.

- **Incomplete peace processes/divided communities.** Post-conflict situations do not always include a complete and comprehensive national reconciliation. Far from following peace accords in a neat sequence, assistance programs often play an integral role in the peace-building process itself. This places aid agencies and their projects in zones where communities remain divided and tense, making communal cooperation difficult. Mistakes by aid agencies in such environments can actually trigger renewed conflict. Because aid agencies rarely possess the level of intimate knowledge of local conflicts to step into these situations without making potentially costly mistakes, flexibility is required to draw on outside sources for that expertise. In Mount Lebanon, villages which were still not formally reconciled after the war were designated “conflict villages;” UNDP did not initiate any rehabilitation work there until the national government had completed a reconciliation process with the political and religious leaders. This flexible response to a delicate political situation proved to be a valuable mechanism for shifting primary responsibility for reconciliation into the hands of local authorities. In Rwanda, UNDP helped to promote peacebuilding by supporting for the research and implementation of the country’s “gacaca” law – the indigenous judicial system – through the Centre for Conflict Management at the National University of Rwanda in Butare.¹⁰
- **Lawlessness and criminality.** Countries emerging from conflicts must demobilize militia and re-establish law and order in regions where warfare created environments conducive to the rise of armed criminality. Unpaid and unemployed militiamen often contribute to criminality in the immediate aftermath of a cessation of hostilities, especially in counties where recruits have little education and few prospects for work. In some cases,

war zones can foster the rise of local mafias and even transnational criminal rings. Aid agencies dangling jobs, contracts, and money in these settings run the risk of serious run-ins with criminal elements, and must learn how to work around a range of problems – extortion, protection money, kidnapping, death threats, and theft – which tend to be less prevalent than in other development settings.

- **Erosion of trust and social capital.** One recurrent concern in the post-conflict reconstruction was the fragility of the local social environment. Conflicts normally shatter people’s concepts of trust and leave social scars, bad memories and mistrust, which do turn the post-conflict era into contending issues even among a people in a dire need of relief. Even when open hostility is declared to be over, a sense of insecurity continues to loom over the community. Thus, in some instances in the post-conflict reconstruction, the people must be assisted in their attempt to rebuild social trust and networks for collective problem solving. As has often been noted, the voluntary convergence of diverse groups of people who share a common interest and concern is a strong indication of the move toward civic solidarity and collective action. The strategy for building this social resource for development rests on a framework that builds on “social capital.”

There are many other important situational challenges common to post-conflict situations. Corruption, weak civil society, shortages of skilled professionals in the local labor market, and a host of factors also require agility and flexibility on the part of aid agencies. Many of these conditions, however, are constraints faced in conventional development settings as well, and cannot be isolated as post-conflict challenges.

Collectively, this syndrome of conditions and constraints common to post-conflict situations places enormous pressure on UNDP and peer agencies to respond flexibly to circumvent and avoid obstacles to fast and effective assistance. The particular types of organizational challenges these situations create, and some innovative sources of operational flexibility to meet those challenges, are the subject of Chapter Two.

10. Centre de Gestion des Conflits, “Les Juridictions Gacaca et le Processus de Reconciliation Nationale,” *Cahiers du Gestion des Conflits*, No. 3 and “Raptures Socioculturelles et Conflit au Rwanda,” *Cahiers du Gestion des Conflits*, No. 2, Université Nationale du Rwanda, Butare.

CHAPTER II

A TYPOLOGY OF OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY



Small arms laid out for destruction in the former Yugoslavia. Photo: UNDP/Serbia and Montenegro

The preceding chapter defined post conflict situations and the constraints that complicate flexible operational performance therein. The next chapter (III: “Best Practices and Lessons Learned”) will provide a detailed inventory of best practices and lessons learned in flexible response. What follows below, in the present chapter, is a discussion on the broad categories of flexible response required at the country level – a general typology of flexibility defined by information gathered during interviews for this exercise. Whereas this chapter defines, in broad terms, the kinds of flexibility required during UNDP response formulation and implementation, the subsequent chapter provides more detailed information on the precise practices at the disposal of country offices.

Over the years UNDP’s procedures and modalities have, like those of other large firms, grown increasingly complex and intertwined. Donor governments, responsible for providing an ever greater share of UNDP resources, are demanding to be kept informed of how their contributions are being used. With each passing year, additional reporting requirements, greater demands for coordination and accountability, and new development agendas to be incorporated into projects all contribute to institutional sclerosis. Yet in the new post-conflict situations in which UNDP now works, where rapid and flexible response is vital, these organizational features constitute more than an inconvenience – they can actually be a barrier to effective action.

During this exercise, UNDP staff regularly acknowledged the need for UNDP to operate more quickly and with greater agility in response to crises and post-conflict situations; rather than pointing blame, however, many attributed this need to the ongoing evolution of UNDP, accelerated in recent years, from an organization that once specialized exclusively in the provision of technical cooperation assistance to one that is now increasingly being tasked with rapid provision of emergency assistance in fast-moving post-conflict contexts. Many staff point out that, at the end of the day, the question of whether a country office meets the challenge of operational flexibility depends not so much on existing institutional constraints or administrative rules and regulations but rather on whether the Resident Representative

and his or her staff are willing to take the risk to circumvent long-ingrained bureaucratic obstacles in order to get the job done *responsibly yet resourcefully*. In this light, the question at hand is not whether the rules prevent operational flexibility or not, but whether, in acting expeditiously and pragmatically, staff have achieved the right balance between speed and accountability. Whether with regard to redirecting budgetary resources to emergency needs, procuring supplies rapidly, or mobilizing the right team of experts, the collective attitude of country office staff, in this light, is even more important than the administrative obstacles inherent in a system traditionally geared to slow-moving technical assistance.

Many of the examples of flexible response were driven not by the need to cope with bureaucratic obstacles, but rather with funding problems. Budgetary constraints constituted the single most important obstacle demanding innovation and flexibility to execute missions, and in field interviews were consistently the overriding preoccupation of UNDP officers. Quick access to greater levels of unrestricted funds was viewed as the single most important tool for promoting organizational flexibility in post-conflict situations. Ironically, though, it was precisely the absence of adequate and timely funding which in some cases yielded the most innovative and flexible responses.

The following are broad categories of flexible response, including examples from country office experience that clarify the problems at hand as well as useful solutions. The following narrative is aimed at distinguishing the various phases of response formulation and implementation that are required in order to effectively respond to crisis and post-conflict situations.

1. RAPID DEPLOYMENT OF UNDP EXPERTISE TO THE CRISIS AREA

Whether in response to a cessation of hostilities, which may open up a given province to international assistance, or the onset of a natural disaster, it is often the case that UNDP needs to mobilize and deploy expertise to an area where it has had no established presence – or even contact – hitherto. The related challenges are many, including those internal to UNDP itself, which may or may not have the staff or

expertise readily available to urgently deploy to a crisis situation.

The Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) is the linchpin of UNDP's global network of experts who can be rapidly deployed to crisis areas.

UNDP is currently addressing the question of how to more effectively deploy staff with expertise in non-programming areas such as procurement, finance, logistics and accounting. Though such skills may not often be recognized as key to effective crisis management, in reality, they constitute the crucial organizational foundation on which programming staff can do their job. In the autumn of 2002, BOM was in the midst of carrying out an internal capacity assessment aimed at identifying UNDP staff within such areas as procurement, finance, personnel, who could be easily deployed to crisis areas on short notice.

2. REORIENTATION OF PROGRAMMES TO INCORPORATE NEW GOALS

One of the most impressive, widespread, and successful examples of institutional agility in the case studies under review was the ability of UNDP country teams to adjust projects in order to meet new and unexpected local needs. Because post-conflict situations are fast-moving targets, original project documents cannot be expected to predict changes in socio-economic needs. The ability to “tweak” existing projects or programmes to address an unexpected local need or crisis rather than initiate an entirely new project proposal or programme – which can take a considerable amount of time – gave UNDP country teams the flexibility they needed to respond effectively. As our field research on El Salvador noted, “to the extent that their objectives are consistent with those which emerge in the immediate aftermath of a crisis, existing projects can provide a sufficient vehicle for the application of emergency donor funding”.

The need to adjust project and programme goals tended to occur for one of three reasons. First, programme reorientation was sometimes required in order to enable a rehabilitation and development project to address a sudden humanitarian emergency. In Macedonia, for instance, UNDP's original CCF of September

1997 identified the environment as one of four priority areas, and 41% of its expenditures through 1999 were targeted at several environment-related projects.¹¹ When war in neighboring Kosovo triggered a massive flow of Kosovar Albanian refugees into Macedonia in March 1999, the already strained Macedonian economy (which was coping with unemployment levels between 25% and 31%) had great difficulty absorbing the costs. At the household level, many Macedonians of Albanian ethnic origin provided food and shelter for refugees, but were increasingly unable to cope. In response, UNDP and the municipalities of the two largest and most vulnerable cities, Tetova and Skopje, developed the “Clean and Green” project. It was an innovative attempt to fold a critical and immediate emergency response – the creation of short-term employment opportunities in the midst of an economic and social crisis – into a project that also included environmental improvement and municipal capacity building. Thanks to access to TRAC 1.1.2 funds, UNDP was able to assemble an initial \$300,000 project within two months of the outbreak of the refugee crisis. Its successful marriage of emergency employment generation with longer-term development goals earned the Clean and Green project high marks and garnered it additional funding from donors, so that the project eventually expanded to 80 municipalities in a four-phased project. UNDP was able to sustain the project beyond its initial phase in part because donors were acutely aware of the crisis, were heavily invested in the political and economic stability of Macedonia, and were eager to assist projects which enjoyed such high visibility and clear success in easing the strain caused by the refugee crisis. It was a textbook example of rapid response to a sudden emergency need through astute programming to fuse rehabilitation and relief goals in a single project. Far from encountering donor resistance (a factor discussed below), this type of flexible response was applauded and supported by donors.

Another example of adjustment of projects to meet immediate emergency response occurred in Mozambique. There, catastrophic flooding in March 2000 compelled UNDP to redesign one of its ongoing projects – Assistance to Post-Conflict Capacity Building for Provincial Authorities – to include the objective of

rehabilitating flood-damaged areas and infrastructure. In this instance, the temporary shift in objectives led to a delay in the project implementation as a whole, but the government and donors recognized and supported the flexible response by UNDP.

Second, project and programme goals must sometimes be recalibrated in order to respond to urgent political and reconciliation priorities arising from ongoing efforts to consolidate a fragile national or local post-war peace. Rehabilitation aid is often viewed as a crucial ingredient in a “peace dividend” in post-conflict situations. In the immediate aftermath of a Peace accord, aid can and should serve as a political tool for confidence building and to help build bridges of sectoral cooperation across old conflict lines, as part of a “peacebuilding” mandate. In some cases, projects that were originally designed with a strictly sectoral rehabilitation focus are called upon to play a broader political role in this manner. In a post-conflict situation where peace or renewed war hangs in the balance, the call to harness rehabilitation projects to build confidence and peace is imperative.

Where political factors constitute the overriding concern of post-conflict initiatives, confidence building and peace-building goals can come to play a much more significant role than the original sectoral rehabilitation objectives of a project. Weaving confidence-building and peace-building themes into existing sectoral projects faces few organizational and financial constraints; it is generally limited only by the responsiveness, ingenuity, and risk-management instincts of the UNDP country office. In Lebanon, the second phase of the “Socio-economic Rehabilitation Programme for Southern Lebanon” began in September 2000 in the immediate aftermath of the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon; its stated goal was to catalyze economic and social rehabilitation of a region which had been severed from Lebanon for almost two decades, and which is the poorest region of the country. But over time it quickly became apparent that the most important function the UNDP programme played was as a confidence-building measure for communities where the Lebanese government has as yet had little capacity to project a presence following the Israeli withdrawal.

Similar adjustments were in ample evidence

11. Gallagher, Dennis, et al., *Country Programme Review of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje: UNDP, Feb. 2000), p. 1.

REORIENTATION OF PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES TO INCORPORATE NEW GOALS: MACEDONIA'S "CLEAN AND GREEN" PROJECT

During the 1990's, Macedonia had relatively high development indicators, and UNDP's initial presence in the country centred on conventional development objectives such as environmental protection. Indeed, the 1997 Country Cooperation Framework (CCF) highlighted the environment as one of four key priority programme areas, and 41% of UNDP's expenditures through 1999 were devoted to several key environmental projects.¹² In 1999, however, with the onset of the Kosovo refugee crisis, UNDP was suddenly forced to reorient its programme focus to assist Macedonia's crisis management efforts.

An example of successful programme reorientation in this context was the project "*Municipal Employment Assistance Programme: Clean and Green Macedonia*." *Clean and Green* was conceived prior to the refugee crisis, and originally had two interrelated goals. The first was to generate short-term employment by hiring unskilled workers for labor-intensive solid waste removal projects. The second was to improve environmental management in municipalities and improve the quality of the environment through proper disposal of solid waste.

With the onset of the refugee crisis, *Clean and Green's* focus shifted dramatically. Although its environmental objectives were still pursued, the primary focus of the project quickly became the urgent need to provide stressed local households with cash income. *Clean and Green* eventually became UNDP's most visible and arguably most successful project in Macedonia. It also proved to be one of the most flexible of UNDP's interventions, a factor which contributed to its strong reputation. Flexibility was enabled in large part because *Clean and Green* was built around a series of short-term, localized employment projects that could easily be transferred to whichever region or vulnerable population needed it. Its success was also due to its ability to provide large numbers of badly needed jobs very quickly. In addition, flexibility was further enabled by the relatively streamlined and "doable" small projects involved, which did not require extensive design and feasibility studies.

That same flexibility of objectives was successfully exploited again in early 2001, when the outbreak of armed conflict between ethnic Macedonians and Albanians created a large group of IDPs. The conflict immediately brought emergency need objectives back to the forefront of the project, and once again, *Clean and Green* was able to refocus its environmental orientation towards the immediate need of job creation. The lesson learned was that flexibility in the reorientation of projects and programmes to meet new goals can pay large dividends when crises emerge.

in other cases under review. In Haiti, UNDP was forced to shift programme aids towards greater advocacy for human rights following political crackdowns on human rights groups. In the aftermath of unexpected civil war in Macedonia, UNDP's projects with municipalities suddenly took on an important new purpose as a conduit for communication across conflict lines and as one of a handful of functional activities that fostered gradually confidence-building measures between the government and ethnic Albanian officials. In Mozambique, UNDP had to undertake some unexpected tasks during the start-up period of the project – National Integrated Programme for Social Action, Employment and Youth – in order to reduce a risk of failure emanating from conflicting political objectives between the two previously warring factions of FRELIMO and RENAMO. In Papua New Guinea, where the problems of fear and lack of trust continued to militate against collective action and social interdependence, it became necessary for UNDP to support social capital development as confidence and peace-building mechanisms. This was integrated into the Bougainville Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Development Project, UNDP's main post-conflict assistance in the country. This assistance to social capital formation in Bougainville was in the form of support for the promotion of unity-building through sports and courses in skill training, both of which brought together people of differing and sometimes hostile political persuasions. The main initiative in this direction was the Arawa Soccer Association, a product of an innovative sub-project called the Community Development through Sport Initiative, which has attracted men and women of different clans and districts and political backgrounds.

When project goals evolve from primarily sectoral rehabilitation to a more political purpose such as confidence-building, peace-building, or human rights, and are openly recognized as such by local and national partners, donors, and project officers, a shift occurs in the way projects are conceived and implemented. Specifically, while comprehensive confidence-building takes time, its immediate outputs may often be short-term, so projects which were adapted to this end tended to be less consumed by concerns over sustainability and output.

12. Gallagher, Dennis, et al., *Country Programme Review of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (Skopje: UNDP, Feb. 2000), p. 1.

One major concern that arose in interviews was the need for evaluation teams to recognize the value of confidence building even when original project documents do not explicitly identify that as a goal. Likewise, the growing preoccupation of evaluators and some donors on “measurable outputs” is seen as discouraging this kind of flexible response to an urgent peacebuilding goal, in that confidence-building is an intangible. Projects that come to include political objectives such as peacebuilding need to be measured with a different yardstick.

Third, project goals must sometimes be adjusted in light of rapidly changing economic or social conditions in post-conflict situations. Strict adherence to project documents when a project goal is no longer relevant or when greater rehabilitation needs arise would constitute a waste of scarce resources. This situation is especially common in high-visibility post-conflict situations that attract a large influx of donor funds and international aid agencies that may not coordinate effectively; the result is often redundant projects and embarrassing gaps if agencies are not sufficiently flexible. But it can occur quite easily even in the most well coordinated emergency settings, due to the rapidly changing needs common in humanitarian emergencies. In El Salvador, UNICEF secured funds for a major water supply project in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, only to realize through an updated needs assessment that clean water was less urgent a need than latrines. Consultations with the donors enabled UNICEF to reroute the funding to the appropriate need. This particular case highlighted the need to inform donors of the possible weaknesses of needs assessments in the immediate aftermath of a major disaster, when reliable information is not always available. Once kept informed, donors usually prove to be more flexible themselves and not a major impediment to shifting of resources. Another example occurred in Kosovo, where the sizable flow of external aid money to rebuild and repair housing damaged in the war led to a situation where aid agencies were in possession of funds for housing renovation which was not needed in their area of operation.

Whatever the reason for adjustment of project objectives, a crucial parameter of flexible response is the donor. As a general rule, donors have strict regulations about deviations from stated project aims, and sharp restrictions on how funds can be expended. From a donor perspective,

accountability generally trumps flexibility in the disbursal of project funds. Yet the field studies explored here suggest that donors are generally much more receptive to, and even advocates of, project adjustments in mid-stream – if those adjustments focus on emergency response or consolidation of political confidence-building measures in a country in which the donor has strong political interests. In the two Balkan states of Kosovo and Macedonia, for instance, European donors have an enormous political and strategic stake in response to emergencies and to peacebuilding through aid. Donors in those settings tended to be quite amenable to project and programme adjustments which showed flexibility in addressing those concerns. In the case of Mozambique, the revision of UNDP’s “Post-Conflict Capacity Building in Provincial Governments” not only received the endorsement of the donors but even attracted additional donors.

The case studies explored here suggest a four-step process to the practice of programme reorientation and project adjustment: (1) ensure a firm commitment to the new changes from the donor source; (2) revise the project document to adapt objectives or introduce new ones; (3) gain formal approval of project revision, by means of government signature; (4) apply donor deposit to replace resources consumed by the emergency response.

3. SECURING START-UP FUNDING

Rapid response to sudden crises requires immediate access to funds to cover start-up project costs. Those types of funds are very difficult to secure in a timely fashion, leading to delays which are politically costly and which can exact an unacceptable toll in human lives. The established process of seeking funding – conducting a needs assessment, drawing up a project proposal, seeking donor approval, awaiting donor release of funds, and fielding a team or arranging for local subcontracting to execute the project is even in the best of situations cumbersome, and in worst-case scenarios disastrously late to the scene. Purchase on credit is strictly prohibited by UNDP and UN financial rules, making access to start-up funds even more imperative. Constraints and delays associated with start-up funding were one of the most commonly cited frustrations in the case-studies

under review, and were viewed by most individuals interviewed both in and out of UNDP as a principle obstacle to flexible response.

Yet the cases under review also unveiled numerous tools and techniques for securing start-up funding, sometimes in unconventional ways:

USE OF TRAC 3 FUNDING

This budget line, allocated by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, is UNDP's institutional source of start-up funding in post-conflict situations. Though it is viewed internally primarily as "seed money" – that is, funding which enables UNDP to start up a project which will then, hopefully, attract donor funding and lead to others – it can also play a vital role in enabling UNDP to move quickly in response to unexpected crises. In Lebanon, for instance, TRAC 3 funds in the amount of \$1 million were earmarked for UNDP's "Socio-economic Rehabilitation Programme in the South," enabling UNDP to establish a rapid response to the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon despite other financial constraints (delays in the release of a matching \$1 million from the cash-strapped Lebanese government, and cautiousness on the part of donors to release funds into a volatile region). Were it not for TRAC 3 funds, UNDP would have had no means of working in southern Lebanon at all. In Mozambique, too, UNDP was able to assist the Government put in place a anti-disaster preparedness measures through its project – Capacity Building of the National Disaster Management Authority – by making available a start-up fund of almost \$700,000 from its TRAC 1.1.3 funds. The main limitation of TRAC 3 funding is that the total annual amount of funds earmarked for that budget worldwide is only around \$9 million. It is thus a tool available to a select number of post-conflict situations in any given year.

TRUST FUNDS

Rwanda and Kosovo are among several post-conflict situations in which a donor or donors have created a UNDP trust fund for the country's post-war rehabilitation. Trust funds are intended to provide a stable source of funding to promote rapid response by UNDP and to allow UNDP and the host government a more predictable

base of revenue so that rehabilitation strategy and planning is more viable. They tend to be established in countries with a very high strategic or political value to major donors; they may also be more likely in countries where a lingering sense of guilt for earlier inaction exists in donor circles. The UNDP Trust Fund for Rwanda was established in 1995; by mid-2000 contributions had totaled \$108 million dollars. This provided two-thirds of the financial resources available to support UNDP's activities in Rwanda, and eliminated the problem of securing start-up costs. UNDP's work in Kosovo enjoyed trust fund access via the UN Human Security Trust Fund, financed by the Government of Japan. These trust funds may or may not be able to release funds quickly, depending on the specific arrangements unique to each fund. In the case of the Human Security Trust Fund, efforts have been made to "fast-track" urgent project requests and streamline the decision-making process for release of funds.¹³

USE OF RESIDUAL PROJECT FUNDS

Leftover funding is not a common problem for development projects, which if anything tend to be constrained by inadequate funding or cost overruns. But responses to humanitarian emergencies can sometimes generate more donor funding than is actually needed – not in the aggregate, but in specific high-visibility sectors – usually because of the difficulty of accurate needs assessment in emergencies and because donors are generous with humanitarian aid in high visibility-crises. As a rule, donors generally prohibit the use of residual funds to be used in another project. Indeed, many donor agencies are barred by legal constraints at home from allowing this practice. This places country offices in the frustrating position of having extra funds locked into one budget while the budget for an urgently needed response is dry. Innovations that can increase the fungibility of UNDP budgets without violating donor and in-house financial restrictions are therefore an important tool of flexible response. In the case studies under review, a number of country offices found ways to make their project budgets more fungible to provide urgently needed start-up costs. The key in this regard was immediate and persuasive consultations with the donor

13. UNDP-Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Joint Evaluation, "Post-Conflict Assistance of the Government of Japan Through UNDP in Kosovo and East Timor" (New York: UNDP, October 2001), p. 53.

representatives. In El Salvador, World Food Programme's regional office consulted at length with donors in 2001 when it became clear that the country was facing a major drought, convincing them to permit funds left over from the Hurricane Mitch response.

USE OF PREEXISTING PROJECT

When time to prepare a project document is not available in an emergency response, a second budget for a pre-existing project can be integrated into the project financial infrastructure. The use of two budgets is often appealing to donors who are prepared to quickly allocate funding to confront an emergency, as the use of those funds can be followed more easily.

PHYSICAL DELIVERY OF CASH: CHALLENGES

In some cases, the absence of a functional banking system raises the need for actual delivery of cash – as was the case in the extremely ambitious, yet ultimately successful, distribution of salaries to the civil service of Afghanistan Interim Administration Fund (AIAF) engineered by the Bureau for Crisis Recovery and Prevention (BCPR) in February 2001, when nearly \$6 million had to be transported from UNDP headquarters to Afghanistan and parceled out on an individual basis. As regards large-scale infusion of notes into areas where no banking system exists, it is important that the Bureau of Management's Office of Finance and Administration, the institutional entity that handles the management of finances in such contexts, be involved as early as possible in planning of a particular initiative; insurance schemes need to be devised, in addition to actual logistical planning in getting the cash physically delivered.

4. EXPEDITED PROCUREMENT

Procuring supplies and making logistical arrangements for delivery at short notice demands flexibility in unexpected crises. Advance authorization for expenditure of project funding allows the Resident Representative to expend resources during a sixty-day interim phase at the end of which the project document must be approved. An initial draft of the project document must be ready at the outset of the sixty-day period; with this condition satisfied,

advance authorization allows the CO to incur expenses quickly. In Rwanda, a waiver was granted by UNDP headquarters to the Resident Representative in Rwanda to directly authorize disbursement rather than passing through the typically slower UN execution modalities. It was intended that for purposes of emergency contracting competitive bidding was to be waived as provided in the UNDP Finance Manual up to \$99,999. The objective was to reduce any financial risk that could threaten successful implementation of Rwanda's Consolidation of Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Sustainable Development project.

Interviews held with the Bureau of Management helped to identify some basic steps that country offices could take when responding to immediate procurement needs. One preparatory measure is to have access, either in hard copy or electronically, to two documents: i) the list of standard emergency relief items, prepared by Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (<http://www.iapso.org/>), and ii) the list of indicative prices prepared by BOM's Office of Legal and Procurement Support. The first document on relief items includes the generic specifications for emergency relief items, thus answering questions such as "What size of blanket should we order". The second document provides the international prices offered by suppliers of emergency items. IAPSO as well has an up-to-date website, <http://www.unwebbuy.org/> that has the latest in international prices for emergency items; another preparatory measure is to ensure that the country office is registered with the IAPSO website, so that with the onset of a crisis, a user id and password are already on hand. Information on international freight delivery of goods can be found on the IAPSO website or at BOM/OLPS.

In addition to having access to these information resources, one other useful practice is to ensure sufficient knowledge of the country office authority to make purchases (see above point on purchasing waiver), at what level, under what terms, and under what circumstances involvement of headquarters is truly necessary. At present, there continues to be a so-called "communication gap" between headquarters offices and country office in terms of what level of authority the latter have in making purchases; it is the view of some headquarters staff that Resident Representatives have much more authority than they realize. Purchases of up

to US\$30,000 can be made independent of headquarters oversight. Country offices can, up to contracts of \$300,000 give approval, with requisite waivers and authorization that can be solicited and approved before the onset of an emergency.

5. MANAGING BUDGET SHORTFALLS

The uncertainty and unpredictability of post-conflict situations frequently result in vital projects and programmes facing depleted budgets before the project is completed, jeopardizing the project's success. This is a common problem in development work, by no means unique to post-conflict situations; but post-conflict situations tend to produce conditions which make this scenario especially endemic. Expenses can be far greater than anticipated; delays due to political constraints can eat into budgets; political factors may require enlarging a pool of beneficiaries or making other costly adjustments; co-funders may delay or fail to deliver on funding; donors may have unexpectedly lengthy procedures for release of funds; or rushed needs assessments may simply have underestimated the scale of needs or the costs of meeting those needs.

Depending on the particular type of post-conflict challenge faced by UNDP, the agency has a number of tools at its disposal for dealing with cost overruns. Some are preventive in nature – that is, building into projects safeguards to minimize the impact of budget shortfalls – while others are reactive, or forms of crisis management where the viability of a programme is immediately threatened because of budget shortfalls.

One successful preventive strategy is designing emergency response programmes with an eye toward compartmentalization. That is, a series of small stand-alone projects are better able to survive budgetary shortages. In the event that funding falls short, those projects left uninitiated or incomplete do not jeopardize the viability of the completed ones. In south Lebanon, for instance, at the time of writing UNDP's current programme was faced with a budgetary shortfall of \$500,000, or close to 25% of the total two million dollar programme. The outstanding budget has been committed by the government of Lebanon but, at the time of writing, has not yet been received by UNDP. Fortunately, UNDP's work in southern Lebanon consists of small, stand-alone, village-based projects that

will endure even if the programme is unable to complete all the small-scale work it intended to do. This stands in sharp contrast to projects that deliver benefits only if entirely completed (such as a dam, a connector road, or a canal).

Another type of project design which is built to survive a budget shortfall is one which involves a multiplier effect, or, in the case of Rwanda, a “cascade” method to the project. That is, the project generates a core group of trained individuals who are then charged with training others. In this way, even if UNDP lacks the requisite funding to complete all the training itself, it has created a corps of trainers who can do the training themselves. In Rwanda, UNDP took on the mandate to reform and train the police, but the project was delayed and then costs rose beyond the project's budget. UNDP, in consultation with the Rwandan Ministry of Internal Affairs and the project donors (Ireland and Denmark) adopted a cascade method of training policemen in lieu of conducting all the training directly. In this case, a core group of 25 officers were fully trained and then sent out to train the rest. Key to this exercise in flexible response to budget shortfalls is astute projection of budget shortfalls. The sooner budget shortfalls are forecast, the more feasible this kind of project revision is.

Still another preventive action on this score is the tactic of building socio-political considerations as well as technical ones into project planning. Certain types of rehabilitation work – for instance, almost any project involving land use and alienation – tends to engender greater levels of political complications and objections, which can lead to revised project designs and delays. Often, the cost-effectiveness of infrastructure projects is calculated solely on technical grounds, without adequate regard for socio-political issues. When political complications are successfully anticipated, projects can be designed to avoid or minimize those complications, thereby avoiding cost overruns later. In El Salvador's Nahuizalco municipality, an aqueduct was originally designed on solely technical considerations, but it was quickly realized that the aqueduct would become embroiled in territorial disputes between two communities. It was redesigned along a more circuitous but less politically problematic route to avoid what might otherwise have created a serious delay.

Finally, when a budgetary constraint is produced by a donor's funding delays, projects that are

supported by multiple donors can avoid costly delays by exploiting the “fungible” nature of pooled donor funding. A donor may earmark funds for one component of a project, but those funds can be “borrowed against” to cover urgent aspects of the project covered by delayed funding from another source. When the delayed funding finally arrives, it then replaces the borrowed funds. This very common tool of flexibility must be accompanied by consultations with the donors in question.

6. ASSUMING NEW OR EMERGENCY-RELATED ROLES AT SHORT NOTICE

Crises in post-conflict settings frequently involved UNDP taking on new roles, sometimes considerably beyond the organization’s typical mandate, in order to facilitate a rapid collective response or to fill a vacuum in the administration or the aid community. Situations involving governments with weak capacity were especially likely to require UNDP country offices to play impromptu roles on behalf of or at the behest of the government. Nearly all of the case studies explored here produced evidence of such flexible role-playing. In Haiti, UNDP had to fill the void left by a combination of departure of the UNMIH operation, the suspension of aid by donors, and the non-functioning of government institutions to take on a wide range of coordinating roles. In the aftermath of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the Rwandan government was so weak and stretched by the enormous tasks it faced that some of its own officials referred to it as a time of “statelessness.” UNDP stepped into partnering roles with the government that at times moved UNDP into “areas that were politically sensitive, helping the government with recovery strategy and prioritization of needs.”¹⁴ In both Rwanda and Mozambique, UNDP played a major impromptu role in aiding the government with donor conferences. And in two of the cases under review (El Salvador and Macedonia), UNDP was asked by governments overwhelmed with emergency response to play the unusual role of broker for the purchase of food imports. This is not a role UNDP normally plays and is not in its sphere of expertise, but the country offices

in question reacted positively to the needs of governments that had reached the limits of their capacity to respond and were eager to farm out responsibilities to willing partners.

There are situations where this type of flexible response could do more harm than good, and UNDP country offices must take care to avoid them. These include situations where UNDP is asked or tempted to perform roles which could be better played by a peer agency with greater expertise; where UNDP lacks the staff or expertise to handle a complex role and hence runs a strong risk of failure; where UNDP assumes roles which the government simply must be made to take responsibility for (in the interest of capacity-building); and where UNDP is asked to accept funding for a dubious project by a donor with questionable motives. Though unusual, some donors have been known to ask UNDP to accept funds for work on an unusual project out of UNDP’s normal range of expertise, with the request that UNDP subcontract out the work to NGOs from the donor country. When UNDP country offices face severe funding constraints, this kind of easy money is very tempting to take, but it comes at a cost of institutional integrity.

7. STREAMLINING REPORTING: BALANCING ACCOUNTABILITY WITH SPEED

In the complex web of institutional relationships that are produced with most rehabilitation projects (involving the national government, one or several donors, UNDP, and international or local NGOs or other implementing partners), reporting requirements and contracts can produce a significant amount of paperwork and consume an enormous amount of time. When agencies are trying to respond to an unexpected crisis with little time and an already overstretched staff, time-consuming reporting can become a constraint, and the generation of contracts can involve lengthy bureaucratic protocols designed to promote accountability, not speed. For obvious reasons, standard reporting and contracting are essential – particularly in that they promote accountability, which is crucial – but in certain instances a degree of flexibility can be introduced

14. UNDP Evaluation Update, no. 6, September 2001.

to speed up and streamline these requirements in the interest of rapid response. In Rwanda, UNDP found that beneficiaries (community project managers) lacked the capacity to produce the standard financial report on a previous tranche of funds released to them. Rather than suspending urgently needed local projects because of this reporting failure, UNDP adjusted, asking the community project managers instead for a simple narrative report. In El Salvador, a similar adjustment was made to save implementing partners time with quarterly reports; instead, detailed accounts of expenditures and activities was concentrated in a single annual report. Likewise, the country office in El Salvador relied on letters of agreement (rather than contracts) with primary NGO counterparts to provide the official basis for collaboration; letters of agreement take far less time to prepare than contracts, and are less costly, but serve the same legal purpose.

8. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF EFFECTIVE PERSONNEL

Rapid and flexible response in post-conflict situations places a premium on an agency's ability to assemble and retain a top team of project staff. Recruitment and retention of staff were two abiding concerns expressed in the field. A number of innovations and adaptations were also evident from the case studies under review.

NATIONAL STAFF

UNDP country offices in most situations rely heavily on national officers and staff members. Without question, the quality, experience, and commitment of the national staff constitute one of the top sources of flexibility. Where UNDP country offices have been able to recruit and retain national officers with deep knowledge of their country and government, with a strong instinct for how to “get things done” in their home country, and with an extensive network of contacts (or social capital), they are able to create opportunities for flexible response which would otherwise go unseen. Recruiting and retaining this kind of entrepreneurial national officer is thus an issue of vital importance; there is no substitute for a creative, dedicated, and experienced national staff.

UNDP's ability to recruit and retain top

national officers varies from place to place. In some war-torn countries, especially poorer states that have experienced a significant brain drain, the principal constraint is a scarcity of qualified professionals. The smaller pool of top professionals is sought after by other aid organizations, by the government, and in some instances by private sector firms. Because UNDP and its peer agencies can often pay much higher salaries than ministries in a low-income country, efforts to recruit top staff can actually have the unintended consequence of robbing the national government of its best people. Where UNDP cannot easily recruit highly skilled national officers, training programs are essential in order to prepare the country office team to be effective in rapid and flexible response. In other cases, UNDP enjoys a plentiful supply of excellent national job candidates, due to high levels of unemployment common in post-conflict settings and the relative attractiveness of a UNDP post. These two situations create very different capacities for UNDP. UNDP's experience with staffing in southeastern Europe is instructive on this score. In Macedonia, a highly skilled national labor force exists in a context of very high unemployment, giving UNDP's country office there a capacity to hire a first-rate national team – one that endows the country office with a capacity for flexible response it would be difficult to produce otherwise. But in nearby Kosovo, several factors have created a shortage of skilled national officers – a lower level of educational achievement among the Kosovars, a much higher brain-drain to Europe, and much greater competition for top professionals thanks to the very large presence of UNMIK and countless aid organizations.

Different categories of national staff members play different roles in flexible response, and pose different challenges for recruitment and retention. Senior national officers play a critical role in flexible response in several ways, including as the chief source of institutional memory for the office, and as the main source of personal networks with government officials and other key players. Though they may have little or no experience in other country settings, they have deep experience in flexible response in their own country. Because flexible response almost always involves extensive negotiations with other actors, including the government, senior national officers can help a Resident Representative navigate the complex terrain of internal governmental

politics, steering the Resident Representative to the right individuals and away from those who would throw obstacles in the way, and assisting with the cultural dimensions of negotiations in their particular country setting. Senior national officers can, however, occasionally serve as impediments to flexible response, particularly if they have over the years developed political rivals or enemies with other actors whose cooperation is necessary for flexible response. Resident Representatives must possess a keen understanding of the political history of their national officers, and those national officers must be forthright about when their involvement might complicate rather than expedite cooperation with other actors. Because of the long tenure senior national officers typically have, recruitment and retention is not a major issue with this group.

National programme and project directors are usually shorter-term team members, brought on board for the duration of a particular programme. Because they are handling the day-to-day operational aspects of a programme, their capacity to envision and execute flexible responses is vital. Moreover, because UNDP projects are often regionally based and increasingly decentralized, the programme director's close knowledge of the communities in the area of operation is of critical importance. A programme director who possesses deep knowledge of his or her project area, close and neutral networks within those communities, and an astute entrepreneurial instinct within the bounds of UNDP regulations constitutes an invaluable tool of flexible response. Hiring and retaining such a person, however, is not always easy, because those very qualities give the individual a high market value to others, and because the position UNDP offers can be relatively short-term (depending on the nature of the programme), so that job security is not always high. UNDP country offices have demonstrated creative responses to this dilemma. In the case of Lebanon, the country office understood at the outset that the programme in south Lebanon would be politically delicate and would require someone with close knowledge and contacts in the predominantly Shiite community a capacity to engineer flexible and creative solutions to impasses in the field. The answer was to expand the search beyond Lebanon itself.

UNDP's Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery agreed to second to UNDP-Lebanon an international officer of Lebanese origin, giving the programme a depth of knowledge and networks in the South that could not have been accrued otherwise.

Just as important for flexible response is the recruitment of national project officers, especially when a country office is engaging in direct execution (DEX) (see below). A clever programme director will assemble a project team that possesses both a diversity of sectoral expertise (giving the director more flexibility in his or her human resource "toolbox") and a diversity of ethnic backgrounds in post-conflict situations where simmering ethnic tensions can create obstacles for team members of the "wrong" ethnic identity. UNDP's programme in south Lebanon again serves as a useful example. UNDP recruited a team of young Lebanese university graduates with a wide range of backgrounds, from engineering and architecture to social work to serve as UN volunteers. Though individual team members were assigned to follow specific projects, they could call on the technical expertise of another team member whenever needed. This practice mirrors closely the conclusion reached in a recent analysis of development aid, which argues that aid agencies "must have sufficient depth and breadth of staff skills to be able to accompany a community constructively over a reasonable length of time and to have the sensitivity to ascertain the proper moment of intervention."¹⁵ Because the UNDP team's store of community and professional networks, or "social capital," is so essential in successful flexible response, hiring of national officers needs to take that hard-to-measure factor into account if at all possible. Recruits with strong university transcripts but weak contacts reduce UNDP's own social capital in the field. UNDP leadership must be quick to appreciate and exploit a staff member's personal networks when they are needed. In more than one instance in the case studies under review, astute UNDP officers promoted national officers who were initially hired on as drivers once they came to appreciate the extensive social networks and local knowledge they possessed.

In post-conflict settings with a rich supply of trained professionals (in this study, Lebanon

15. Ramon Daubon and Harold H. Saunders, "Operationalizing Social Capital: A Strategy to Enhance Communities' Capacity to Concert," *International Studies Perspectives* vol. 3, no. 2 (2002), pp. 188-89.

and Macedonia fit this description), another tool of flexibility for human resource issues was the time-honored use of local consultants. Consultants can be brought on for short-term needs and usually at short notice, at less cost than full-time staff. In Lebanon, programme directors maintained a list of national consultants available out of Beirut when specific expertise was needed for their projects. In a geographically concentrated setting like Lebanon or Macedonia, consultants based in the capital could work countrywide without incurring major travel expenses or relocation.

One intriguing possibility for a new type of flexible response in UNDP human resource management was under discussion in Macedonia. There, the UNDP country office faced a common dilemma; namely, it had created and trained an excellent team of project officers that it stood to lose once the projects were completed. This constitutes a double loss – UNDP loses a valuable internal capacity and institutional memory, while the nation loses the synergy and potential created by a team of trained professionals, all of whom scatter to separate jobs upon the end of the project. In the case of Macedonia, the country office’s National Implementation Unit – a group of professionals tasked with monitoring and assessing UNDP’s Municipal Development Programme and the “Clean and Green” Programme – had accrued invaluable and unmatched expertise in the working of Macedonia’s municipalities just at the moment when the country was moving (under donor pressure) to adopt a major political decentralization programme shifting the locus of most development planning and implementation to the municipal level. UNDP’s fortuitous mandate to work with municipal authorities in some of its biggest projects had produced an unexpected windfall in the form of its national implementation unit. One approach to the eventual termination of the unit’s contracts under discussion was the possibility of “spinning off” this local expertise from a unit of UNDP into an independent local research institute, think-tank, or consultancy firm. In that way, the institutional memory and capacity of the unit would be preserved and available for hire to other donors and agencies. This “spin-off” approach to capacity-building of national research institutes is a flexible and

innovative response to the common human resource dilemma of disbanding trained and experienced national project teams upon completion of their work. Though groups such as the War-Torn Societies Project have promoted this approach for a number of years, it remains an unconventional policy that merits much closer attention.

INTERNATIONAL STAFF

Flexible response to unexpected post-conflict situations also places a premium on recruitment of effective international staff in the country office. UNDP’s chronic funding constraints have reduced the number of personnel at senior levels it can move quickly into appropriate positions in the field. In some instances, important country offices have zero core funding. This can create a situation in which UNDP is scrambling to fill critical positions at the Resident-Representative or Deputy Resident-Representative positions in moments when leadership is needed to address urgent crises.

The case studies under review here reinforce the good news that UNDP possesses a very strong core of international officers with experience in post-conflict situations. The organization thus possesses the required human resources at that level, but is not always capable of placing them in the field in a timely manner, requiring a certain amount of flexibility in its recruitment and placement procedures. In Macedonia, UNDP had to call on a retired UNDP officer to serve as acting Resident-Representative, and then-ERD had to second a staff-member to serve as acting deputy, a placement which was supposed to be a fast response but which took six months. High turnover of international staff – admittedly an endemic aspect of post-conflict setting due to their inherent hardships – tends to compound the problem. In Rwanda, eight Resident-Representatives served between 1994 and May 2002. This can lead to weak institutional memory, delays, administrative lapses, and lack of strategic continuity.¹⁶

In some situations, a shortage of qualified national professionals requires UNDP to hire international officers as programme and project directors. In Kosovo, the country office faced

16. Several donor representatives believed that some of the perceived delays and administrative lapses noted about the UNDP office in Kigali during the peak of the crisis could be attributed to the rapid turn-overs in the country office.

a problem of a severe shortage of national professional (for reasons noted above), yet at the same time was constrained by zero core funding. Unable to hire qualified national officers and unable to afford international staff members, UNDP – Kosovo opted for an unusual response to its human resource impasse by taking on a half dozen international volunteers from a Canadian government programme designed to place recent Canadian graduates into internships in international development organizations (with basic living and travel costs paid for by the Canadian government). The move to place young and inexperienced international volunteers into positions as project and programme directors was a risk; possibilities for procedural and programmatic errors were high. But the country office provided strong training and oversight until the volunteers were comfortable with their work, and the quality and commitment of the volunteers were extremely high (the selection process by the Canadian government was very competitive). As the six-month internships came to an end, UNDP demonstrated additional flexibility by arranging for some of the interns to stay on as UN Volunteers, thereby retaining an increasingly experienced country team while managing the chronic human resource crisis its funding problems posed. Not all the case studies reviewed in this study yielded such positive experiences with the use of UN Volunteers; in one country, the inexperience of UNVs contributed to the closure of a project. Careful mentoring and oversight is essential when this staffing option is chosen.

9. FLEXIBLE PROJECT EXECUTION

Project execution modalities constituted one of the most important issues of flexible response in the case studies under review. Fortunately, this is an issue that has received extensive consideration within UNDP, producing a range of execution modalities that give country teams considerable flexibility to respond to constraints in the delivery of projects.

National execution (NEX) is the standard modality for UNDP project execution; UNDP's mandate to partner with national governments and build governmental capacity makes this approach mandatory except in exceptional circumstances. The kinds of special development circumstances that warrant direct execution

(DEX) include very weak national governments with low capacity to implement projects (Mozambique, Rwanda); complete state collapse (Kosovo); incomplete reconciliation processes, in which a government is unable to work in a particular region (Papua New Guinea, Lebanon); or political paralysis and gridlock, leading to an inability of the national government to perform (Lebanon, Haiti). DEX, a modality that must be approved by headquarters in New York, is widely viewed in the field as a critically important tool of flexible response.

In practice, DEX is usually pursued in a flexible combination with NEX; the two are by no means mutually exclusive modalities. DEX in Lebanon, Macedonia, Rwanda and Mozambique involved UNDP retaining partial control over project funds but working in close concert with the government ministry concerned. The Lebanese country office considered their execution modality an example of partial direct execution as the decision making still involved the government; evaluation reports on UNDP's projects in Macedonia routinely refer to the execution modality there as a "hybrid" of national and direct execution. Flexible use of DEX is a valuable lesson learned – it is a tool of last resort, always used with an aim towards maximizing government partnership to the extent possible. When approached in this spirit, DEX can dramatically improve UNDP's capacity for fast and flexible response in certain circumstances, but without necessarily gutting longer-term objectives of capacity building.

UNDP country offices make use of other execution modalities in order to enhance flexibility. Outsourcing of project implementation to other UN agencies (especially UNOPS) or to international agencies is a common tool of flexibility. The choice to outsource, and if so to whom, involves case-by-case considerations. In settings where the UNDP county office faces both weak governments and weak or low numbers of local partners (such as international or local NGOs), it is appropriate for UNDP to maintain the kind of direct execution of the project that requires fairly large project teams. But where UNDP offices lack staffing or capacity, and other potential partner agencies possess such capacity, it makes more sense to outsource. In the case of Kosovo, for instance, the newly established UNDP office was mostly staffed by a small corps of Canadian volunteers and had limited operational capacity, making it

imperative to adopt an outsourcing approach for most projects. A similar case can be made for Rwanda and Mozambique where rapid staff turnover often left senior positions unoccupied for some time. Thus, outsourcing to experienced NGOs enabled these offices to make up for the absence of regular UNDP staff.

The key to effective decision-making on outsourcing for flexible response is calculation of the “value-added” that the proposed executing agency would bring to the project. In the cases reviewed here, several types of value-added proved to be especially attractive: (1) agency knowledge of and experience in the targeted communities; (2) agency expertise in the targeted sector; (3) agency reputation as reliable partner. Of these, agency knowledge of the local communities to be targeted was the most valued – and often scarce – commodity, suggesting that outsourcing as a tool of flexibility is of special use when it provides UNDP with greater knowledge of and networks in local communities. Here again, area expertise and social capital (i.e. networks in local communities) constitute two crucial pre-requisites of flexible response.

SUB-CONTRACTING TO UNOPS

UNOPS was originally intended to serve as the operational arm of UNDP and though the two entities now possess separate status UNOPS remains a standard outsourcing option for UNDP. Whether this option is appropriate depends mainly on the operational capacity of UNOPS in the country in question and whether the project requires expertise in a field of competence for UNOPS. In Papua New Guinea, UNDP turned to UNOPS mainly because it was able to operate efficiently in a politically fragile environment. This was due to the fact that UNOPS already had a well-established presence on Bougainville, where hostilities both with the mainland government and within Bougainville society made entrance into that community with new aid projects an extremely delicate proposition. To reduce the time and complications involved in negotiating its way into a direct presence on Bougainville, UNDP expedited delivery of its main aid programme, the Bougainville Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Development Project, by making UNOPS the executing agent. Making astute use of an agency which has succeeded in walking through the local political minefields and has a strong knowledge of the local political

situation is a useful replicable practice elsewhere, as most delays and political mishaps occur when agencies first enter a new region or country.

SUB-CONTRACTING TO INTERNATIONAL NGOS

The case studies under review here provided a wealth of examples of successful outsourcing to international NGOs to enhance flexible response. In Kosovo, UNDP made ADRA-Japan its executing agency for the Housing and Electrification in Kosovo (HEIK) project, in part because ADRA had already established itself as a reliable implementer of construction projects in Kosovo, and in part because ADRA could cope with sticky sovereignty issues related to property deeds in an unusual political setting – one in which Kosovo retains an ambiguous status as an autonomous region of Yugoslavia but under the trusteeship of a UN authority, UNMIK. UNDP-Kosovo also relied on International Rescue Committee as executing agent for a number of its community-building projects, primarily to tap into the experience and expertise of the IRC staff in this sector. Similar logic brought UNDP-Lebanon into partnership with Mercy Corps International for a micro-credit project, a sector in which Mercy had amassed considerable experience.

UNDP must in some instances rely on an international NGO as executing agency as a precondition imposed by a donor; typically, this occurs when a bilateral donor wants its funds to benefit one of its own national NGOs. This study encountered such “tied aid” in Mozambique, Macedonia, Rwanda, and Papua New Guinea. Such donor conditionality on execution modalities is politically unavoidable and usually benign. In some instances, though – as was the case at times in East Timor – it can limit UNDP’s range of executing options and has the potential to tether UNDP to a less than desirable implementing partner. In at least one instance, UNDP country officers suspected that the donor agency was using UNDP to “launder” money to one of its national NGOs, a clearly undesirable scenario. Clearly there is a tradeoff involved – the quality of international NGOs can vary widely, as can their performance. They often provide much-needed speed and flexibility, as well as knowledge of local communities. At the same time, some international NGOs do not always know the local terrain well, which can lead to wasted resources

and donor frustration.

Judicious use of international NGOs as executing agents to maximize flexible response – to enhance sectoral expertise, knowledge of local communities, speed of delivery, and management of political complications, among others – is a practice which is likely to grow in coming years. But problems with this option are likely to grow as well, if UNDP resorts to outsourcing to NGOs too uncritically. International NGOs vary enormously in quality and reliability, and must be carefully assessed as partners. A small but worrisome portion of the new NGOs on the scene in post-conflict situations are little more than sub-contractors, focused almost exclusively on securing contracts from donors, producing output of variable quality. Most NGOs tend to keep their staff small and streamlined, which can produce a lack of institutional memory and long-term capacity when the top individuals move on to new posts. A number of the cases reviewed here included examples of NGOs as executing agencies for UNDP that resulted in less than ideal results mainly due to personnel turnover within the NGO. This observation mirrors the conclusion reached in the UNDP-Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Joint Evaluation, which noted that “when there were weaknesses in coordination between international organizations or in continuity within international organizations because of the rate of staff turnover, then plans and interests conflicted, slowing implementation, and raising the price of delivery.”¹⁷

SUB-CONTRACTING TO LOCAL NGOS

Local NGOs – community outreach organizations, social advocacy groups, and non-profit research institutes and “think-tanks” – have also mushroomed in number over the past decade, primarily in response to a market demand for them by international donors and NGOs seeking local partners and implementers. When a local NGO possesses a professional and committed staff, this is one of the most rewarding options for project execution. A good local NGO adds enormous flexibility to a UNDP project, as its staff are members of the target communities and possess far more knowledge of the local situation than any

outsider – foreign or national. Using local think-tanks or research institutes for project research and social outreach organizations for project implementation has the added virtue of building local capacity and employment generation for nationals rather than foreigners.

As with international NGOs, however, the quality and dependability of local NGOs varies enormously, and must be carefully scrutinized. In some settings, formal NGOs are essentially a foreign concept, not a reflection of indigenous community organization, and those which operate tend to be little more than sub-contractors seeking foreign aid funds. Some can even be fronts for warlords and Mafioso elements, or can be “paper NGOs” – existing on paper only, quick to appear when foreign aid money appears and then quick to disappear when aid funds stop flowing.

The case studies reviewed here confirm what is already widely understood about local NGOs – that they tend to be much more robust, indigenous, and dependable in some parts of the world than in others. In El Salvador, for instance, local NGOs were relatively reliable and established partners, which would seem to confirm the conventional belief that Latin America’s grassroots organizations and civil society have relatively strong capacities in relation to other regions. By contrast, in the former communist countries of southeast Europe, local communities were only beginning to appreciate the concept of a local NGO, and were as a result somewhat less adept as an implementing partner in those post-conflict situations. In Lebanon, where patron-client relations are a strong component of sectarian politics, many of the large and influential local foundations and NGOs are financed by a single “strongman” who often appropriates the structure of NGOs to use as a vehicle for reinforcing patronage politics in his constituency.¹⁸ Astute programme officers can still work with these organizations successfully and employ them to enhance UNDP’s flexibility, but need to enter into relations with these NGOs well aware of their nature, affiliations, and limitations.

One relatively new avenue of outsourcing to local NGOs is the growing use of national research institute and think-tanks for generation

17. UNDP-Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Joint Evaluation, “Post-Conflict Assistance of the Government of Japan Through UNDP in Kosovo and East Timor” (New York: UNDP, October 2001), p.12.

18. Peter Gubser, “The Impact of NGOs on State and Non-State Relations in the Middle East,” *Middle East Politics* vol. 9, no. 1 (March 2002), p. 142.

of baseline data, feasibility studies, evaluations, and early warning reporting. Not all post-conflict countries possess high-quality national research institutes, but the number and quality of such centers is growing. In Macedonia, UNDP subcontracted out the monthly production of a survey-based Early Warning Report to a national research institute with solid results.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES AS PROJECT CO-IMPLEMENTERS

Execution modalities increasingly involve partnerships with local municipalities or other local authorities in aspects of project design, targeting of beneficiaries, and management. This reflects UNDP's emphasis on capacity-building as well as the growing trend toward political decentralization. The fact that UNDP has strong institutional expertise in local-level governance has given UNDP a powerful comparative advantage in working with municipalities at a time when power and responsibility is increasingly being shifted to that level of government. Not surprisingly, the case studies assessed here are replete with examples of successful partnership with municipalities. UNDP's expertise in and comfort with working at the municipal level for project implementation gives it an added tool of flexibility which other aid agencies may not enjoy.

In El Salvador, for example, UNDP worked closely with local authorities in ten municipalities to provide rehabilitation of basic infrastructure – housing in particular – that was damaged by the devastating earthquakes of January and February 2001. A direct line of communication with local authorities was established (a central office located in one of the municipalities). Local authorities were relied upon heavily to select programme beneficiaries. Although this approach runs the risk of patronage and political favoritism influencing the selections, the familiarity local authorities have of the immediate environment is a major asset. The key to success for UNDP's collaboration with Salvadoran local authorities as co-implementers – and to the general use of local authorities as project co-implementers – is to ensure that a comprehensive risk assessment from both a technical and a political/socioeconomic perspective is made before co-implementation begins. This is necessary to ensure that abuses of power by local authorities in the allocation of project benefits are prevented.

UNDP experience with municipalities in the cases reviewed here confirms the conventional wisdom that local level government is a “work in progress” in most developing countries and former communist states. They tend to enjoy relatively high levels of local legitimacy and possess more knowledge of and commitment to local development needs than ministries in distant capitals, but at the same time typically have weak capacity and very limited budgets. At their best, the municipal authorities have risen to the challenge posed by post-conflict situations and proved to be invaluable partners in project implementation. In Macedonia, for instance, mayor's offices and local unemployment bureaus managed most of the administration of UNDP's Clean and Green projects very effectively, thereby allowing UNDP to simultaneously pursue an emergency goal (employment creation), a sectoral goal (environmental protection), and a governance goal (capacity-building of municipalities). In other situations, municipalities are “willing but not able” – in Lebanon, for instance, newly-established municipalities simply lacked the capacity to manage projects, but were nonetheless valuable partners in planning and public dissemination.

Some post-conflict situations, however, involve very inauspicious conditions at the local level, requiring a great deal of flexibility on the part of UNDP project officers. In collapsed states and in some post-conflict situations, formal local authorities (municipalities) either do not exist at all or are the subject of intense local disputes. In those instances, careless reliance on a self-declared mayor runs the risk of embroiling the agency into a local political dispute that can derail the project.

In these cases, UNDP and its peer agencies must proceed with great caution in the identification of local authorities. There is no substitute in these situations for close knowledge of the communities in question, and more time may be needed to negotiate such relationships than a crisis will allow for. For this very reason, many aid agencies prefer to avoid the question of local authority altogether by working with presumably “apolitical” local NGOs. While this is not a bad tactic under such circumstances, UNDP and other agencies have also devised other tools of flexibility in identifying local authorities.

One of the more successful tactics is a request to a local community to create a broad-based community development committee or focus

group which acts as the local interlocutor and organizer of small-scale projects and which is intended to provide local communities with a degree of voice and ownership of rehabilitation projects without necessarily taking on a formal political role which would invite conflict. UNDP has engaged this technique in parts of Mount Lebanon and in a number of other countries (such as Afghanistan and Somalia) that are not a part of this assessment. Indeed, in Mozambique, UNDP even employed this technique at the national level, inviting the government, civil society groups, the private sector, and the opposition to form a broad-based 14-member project organizing group, administered by a full-time Executive Committee, made up four of its members. Their main responsibility was to collect and collate views on a national level, from which they were to design and implement the country's core development policy framework – Agenda 2025: Vision and Strategies of the Nation. One of the key ingredients of this project was its emphasis on the formation of social capital to ensure citizen participation in the creation and implementation of the national development framework and strategy and, in doing so, enhance the chances for the success of the country's ongoing economic liberalization programmes.

Another alternative source of local authority are functional or sectoral organizations – farmers' cooperatives for projects in agriculture, parent-teacher associations for education projects, and health worker groups for health projects. This too was a common practice in many of the cases under review, and provided UNDP with a flexible option to local partnerships without embroiling UNDP in local political disputes.

10. COORDINATION AND JOINT VENTURES

Coordination among aid agencies – both within the UN family and within the broader universe of donors, international NGOs, UN, and Bretton Woods institutions – has been a high priority in the wake of a decade of complex emergencies. Coordination is imperative in order to reduce waste associated with redundant projects, to

minimize gaps in development assistance by region and sector, to pool information, and to standardize basic aid agency policies on issues ranging from local salary scales to response to security threats. In a growing number of post-conflict settings, inter-agency coordination has led to shared resources (a single UN air service, or a shared inter-agency compound) as well.

However, coordination, for all its obvious virtues, can have a negative impact on organizational flexibility by limiting agency sovereignty and locking agencies into collective response mechanisms which tend to be slow, committee-driven, consensus-oriented processes – hardly ideal for fast and flexible response. As mentioned earlier, the UN Development Assistance Framework and Common Country Assessments are two prominent mechanisms meant to take the UN system further in the direction of coordinated needs assessment and planning. As crucial as the need for coordination has proven itself to be, it is also worth considering that coordination and integration can also create constraints to flexible response.

Coordination mechanisms need not be antithetical to flexible response, and in some of the cases reviewed here were enablers of greater flexibility. Inter-agency coordination can dramatically improve access to information and databases generated by other organizations, reducing the time and expense of preliminary research. As an example, in Kosovo, the new and small UNDP office lacked an internal capacity to generate extensive databases but could rely on UNHCR's major survey of housing damage nationwide as a benchmark for project proposals.

A similar case can be made for the Joint Reintegration Programming Unit (JRPU) devised by UNDP and UNHCR in Rwanda between 1996 and 1997, which in spite of its problems and relatively short life span, was a step in right direction.¹⁹ The innovative value of the JRPU lay in the fact that it was founded at a time when the Rwandan Government's capacity and programming skills were very weak and fragile while the problems it was confronted with were multi-dimensional and overwhelming.²⁰ Inter-agency coordination

19. As observed in a recent World Bank publication, "If anything is evident from the growth of post-conflict units, it is that development agencies are seeking to merge several distinct development cultures: including conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, human rights monitoring, and traditional development." See [www.wbi01n0018.worldbank.org/Networks/ESSD/icdb.nsf/D4856F112E805DF4852566C9007C27A6/B86BCB448F0C5E9E85256849007831ED/\\$FILE/ParisReport.pdf](http://www.wbi01n0018.worldbank.org/Networks/ESSD/icdb.nsf/D4856F112E805DF4852566C9007C27A6/B86BCB448F0C5E9E85256849007831ED/$FILE/ParisReport.pdf)

20. Similar conclusions were reached in *The Joint Reintegration Programming Unit Evaluation Report*, Oct 2000.

can also allow agencies to enjoy the benefits of comparative advantage in their respective sectoral specialties, a tool that adds to flexible response. UNDP's emerging expertise on decentralization and municipal administration, for instance, is likely to become a growing entry point for mutually beneficial and flexible joint projects with other UN agencies.

CHAPTER III

BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED IN UNDP OPERATIONAL FLEXIBILITY



Rebuilding work begins after a landslide in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Photo: Michel Matera/UNDP

Two broad categories of best practices for improving flexible response emerge from comparative analysis of the eight post-conflict situations reviewed above. First are the “enabling practices,” preparatory measures that position UNDP offices to respond more rapidly and flexibly to unforeseen crises. Instances of successful flexible response in the case studies under review rarely occurred in the absence of these preparatory measures. Enabling practices constitute a necessary but not sufficient condition for successful organizational agility.

A second set of best practices are more directly operational, the specific tools of flexible response. Collectively, these practices constitute a “toolbox” of flexible tactics, policies, and innovative responses. Unlike enabling practices, which tend to be fairly universal in scope, tools of flexible response tend to be more case specific, placing a premium on the practitioner’s ability to match the appropriate tool to the specific task at hand. As UNDP and its peer agencies gain more experience in post-conflict situations, their toolbox of flexible response will accrue greater numbers of and more refined tools. But these tools will be of limited use unless knowledge of their use is broadly disseminated to practitioners. An important aspect of flexible response in post-conflict situations is ongoing training, education, and discussion so that good ideas and new innovations are shared and country offices are afforded an opportunity to “cross-pollinate” with one another.

I. ENABLING PRACTICES ESSENTIAL FOR FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

The case studies strongly reinforce the conclusion that country offices that take actions to prepare themselves for rapid response are much

more successful than those that do not. Among the most important enabling practices are the following:

ANTICIPATION

While it is impossible to *predict* the course of political and economic events in any country, let alone in the more volatile settings of post-conflict situations, it is not impossible to *anticipate* a range of likely scenarios. Anticipation is the first step toward preparation; without a capacity to anticipate, agencies cannot prepare, and without preparation, an agency's capacity to respond quickly and flexibly is reduced.

UNDP and its peer agencies in development and rehabilitation are not in the business of political, social, and macro-economic analysis, and lack the capacity to gather the appropriate information in a systematic manner. But the agency does have field staff positioned in ministries and throughout the countryside, and can also tap into the views of embassies and other aid agencies in order to generate a solid flow of information about trends and indicators that might precipitate a crisis requiring rapid response. Several specific tools that improve UNDP's ability to anticipate crises have been developed and refined in the cases under review:

Early Warning Systems. In an effort to improve its capacity in conflict prevention, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan proposed in 2000 an early warning system capacity within the UN, an idea that has begun to be operationalized in a few UNDP country offices.²¹ In Macedonia, UNDP has funded an early warning project that produces a monthly report based on survey data in the country. More such early warning projects are in planning stages in other post-conflict settings and when operationalized should provide UNDP with an additional tool to anticipate crises. But a single, formal early warning project is by no means adequate. UNDP country offices must also fully avail themselves of other early warning devices that currently exist as part of a loose network of early warning.

A number of non-profit groups produce early warning reports. In Macedonia, for instance, the NGO International Crisis Group wrote and distributed an excellent analysis in August 2000 which accurately predicted renewed ethnic conflict in the country, even though other analyses – including UNDP's own Early Warning reports, as well as the prestigious Economist Intelligence Unit – missed the signs of mounting tensions.²² The lesson learned is that accurate anticipation requires broad monitoring of external sources of information and analysis. It has been emphasized by the Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery that the importance of anticipating crises is such that early warning and preventive capacities should become an operational standard for countries offices in crisis and post-conflict countries; though political analysis per se may in some situations be best handled by other parts of the UN system, UNDP should not shy away from ensuring that the relevant information, however gathered, is ultimately seen and used as a basis for contingency planning.²³

The fact that UNDP's early warning capacity failed to pick up on imminent hostilities in Macedonia also suggests that UNDP's attempts to engage in early warning analysis should not be held captive to rigid – and in this instance inappropriate – evaluation standards that put a premium on methodologies based on “measurable” data and output. The EWS reports for UNDP Macedonia appeared to be so preoccupied with quantitative survey data that they missed worrisome indicators that could only be revealed through close contact with opposition leaders. At this point in time, the most revealing and accurate political and social forecasting is produced by immersion, interviews, and qualitative, not quantitative, approaches. UNDP should be sure that its evaluation criteria do not inadvertently encourage EWS reporting to adopt inappropriate methods simply to meet the demand for “measurables” that is currently fashionable. The only yardstick that ultimately matters in early warning is whether – not how –

21. UNDP has embarked on several activities meant to promote early warning mechanisms in its operations. For example, 50 UNDP staff were trained in early warning systems at the UN Staff College in Turin with financial support from the United Kingdom Government.

22. International Crisis Group, “Macedonia's Ethnic Albanians: Bridging the Gap” (Skopje/ Washington/Brussels: ICG Balkans Report no. 98, August 2 2000. The Economist Intelligence Unit's “Macedonia Country Report” of February 2001 failed to appreciate the significance of the armed conflict even after it had begun in late January of that year.

23. Stakeholders Consultation, 31 October 2002.

the system accurately anticipates trouble.

Anticipation of political, social, and economic surprises also requires that UNDP country offices encourage more internal reporting and make full use of their national officers who are positioned in the field and in government ministries. These officers are often in an ideal position to pick up on trouble or trends long before such news reaches the stage of cocktail party gossip at embassy functions. Anticipation and early warning should be understood to be everyone's job at UNDP, not a compartmentalized task for a single analyst or project. For this to occur, UNDP offices must adopt a culture that rewards and encourages political reporting and discussion. Where an integrated presence in-country may leave other UN entities – such as Department of Political Affairs officers – better placed to take the lead, UNDP staff may wish to leave the political analysis to them; indeed, though the merits of early warning political contingency planning are self-evident, there is in some cases a need to proceed cautiously.

At present, from the perspective of UNDP's field network as a whole, there is clearly room for more, not less, political reporting. At present, UNDP country offices tend to be imbued with a "culture of immediacy" that rewards a strict focus on today, not tomorrow. They are also often infused with an office culture that rewards strict emphasis on narrow, technical specialization and an inward preoccupation with UNDP internal procedures. In some instances UNDP leadership can actively discourage reporting about political analysis and trends in the office.²⁴ In this setting, national officers who could be a potential goldmine of information and analysis go underutilized, and UNDP programmes can then become entangled in otherwise avoidable local political issues. The difference in "office culture" from one UNDP country office to the next can be dramatic. Where country offices encourage the entire staff – right down to the driver – to observe, assess, and report, the office's capacity to anticipate problems is dramatically improved. This is a "best practice" that draws on existing resources and costs virtually nothing, but one that can yield significant and valuable results.

THE MERITS OF USING POLITICAL ANALYSIS IN TECHNICAL PLANNING: THE EXPERIENCE OF NAHUIZALCO

In response to the devastating earthquakes suffered by El Salvador in 2001, UNDP initially worked with UNOCHA, bilateral donors and the UN's Emergency Response Division (now BCPR) to address humanitarian needs. When immediate humanitarian needs (such as food distribution) were adequately addressed, UNDP shifted its focus to the rehabilitation of basic social infrastructure, including housing, water, and sanitation facilities. An instructive example of building socio-political – as well as technical – considerations into project planning soon emerged from UNDP's water system rehabilitation efforts.

In the Nahuizalco municipality, an initial decision was taken – based purely on technical considerations – to build a direct water line between the target community and a nearby source of potable water. However, it soon became clear that another community, much nearer to the water source, objected to sharing it with the target community.

Based solely on technical and legal considerations, the logical decision would have been to construct an aqueduct between the target community and the water source. Instead, UNDP factored in the political issues and decided to build a more circuitous aqueduct route that bypassed the community closest to the water source. In so doing, UNDP averted a potential problem among beneficiaries and also avoided what might have been a serious delay in essential service rehabilitation. In retrospect, the decision saved considerable time, and the additional resources required to build a longer aqueduct system were negligible, particularly when compared with the political difficulties this strategy avoided. The key lesson learned was that flexibility in project planning often requires taking socio-political factors into account along with technical factors.

PREPARATION

Practices that strengthen anticipation enable UNDP to better prepare for sudden changes in the operating environment or unexpected crises. There are a number of "enabling practices" that UNDP country offices have adopted that better prepared them to respond flexibly and quickly.

(1) Up-to-Date Knowledge on Administrative Rules and Regulations. Inasmuch as UNDP regulations on finance, procurement and personnel may sometimes be seen as part of the problem, they also comprise the organization's source of flexibility. Rules and regulations on these issues are frequently revised with a view to achieving

24. In a UNDP country office not among the cases under review but one familiar to the authors, staff members who were producing excellent political trend analyses were actually admonished not to do so, on the grounds that that was not part of their terms of reference, and because it threatened the prerogatives of another UN office. A critically important forecasting tool was thus lost in the process.

the right balance between expedited and rapid assistance delivery and accountability. Key internal websites include the following:

- UNDP Procurement Manual:
<http://intra.undp.org/bom/olps/procurement/pdf/procuremanual.pdf>
- UNDP Finance Manual:
http://stone.undp.org/maindiv/manual/fm_view_toc.cfm
- UNDP Rules and Regulations:
http://stone.undp.org/maindiv/manual/view_toc.cfm?language=english
- List of Procurement Forms:
http://intra.undp.org/bom/olps/ptools_list_km2.html

Country offices, for example, should be aware, far in advance of the onset of a crisis, that Resident Representatives are authorized to waive short-listing and competitive bidding in procurement for contracts up to \$30K, and that, to the extent that advance authorization can be secured from BOM, bid waivers can be used for procurement purchases up to \$300,000.²⁵ Field staff need to know that, in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster, Resident Representatives are automatically given “blanket authority” to expend funds up to \$100,000 over and above what they may have available in existing budgets.²⁶ During interviews for this exercise, Bureau of Management (BOM) staff often expressed consternation that more field-level staff were not familiar with the full range and extent of expedited processing that is now available to countries in special development situations; the UNDP procurement manual describes various “modifications” that may be made in “emergency situations with a need for quick action and immediate results”.²⁷

(2) Advanced Access to Information on Emergency Relief Suppliers. Registering on websites such as that of UNDP’s Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO) can be easily done prior to the onset of a crisis, thus facilitating and expediting procurement of essential goods when needed. Offices should have access to information resources such as the Compendium of Generic Specifications (BOM/OLAPS), and updated price lists. Useful websites in this regard are the following:

- Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office:
<http://www.iapso.org/>
- United Nations Common Supply Database:
<http://www.uncsd.org/>
- UNOPS: <http://www.unops.org/textimageflashfiles/webpage11.htm>
- United Nations “Web-buy”:
<http://www.unwebbuy.org/>

(3) Contingency planning, particularly for “routinized emergencies.” When indicators point to a possible crisis, disaster, or major change in the operating environment, an important but underused enabling practice that strengthens UNDP’s capacity to respond quickly is contingency planning. Organizations that tend to be “front-line” or lead agencies in disaster response – such as ICRC, UNICEF, MSF, and national armed forces – routinely engage in contingency planning, even to the point of pre-positioning emergency supplies to respond to the “routinized emergencies” of cholera outbreaks and floods in rainy seasons.

UNDP does not engage in this advanced level of contingency planning for disaster relief, nor should it. But UNDP offices have in some instances taken stock of a possible shift in their operating environment and devoted resources to the development of a strategic development plan that later proved invaluable in giving UNDP speed and flexibility. One such instance was UNDP-Lebanon in the late 1990s. There, the Resident-Representative acted on the growing possibility of an Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon and instructed his staff to create a strategic development plan for that eventuality which was a creative and flexible use of a period of delay. When Israel did in fact withdraw from south Lebanon in 2000, the UNDP development plan served as a blueprint not only for fast response on UNDP’s part, but also as a base planning document for the Lebanese government. Similarly in Mozambique, UNDP’s assistance to the National Disaster Management Authority predated the 2000 floods. This helped to build the capacity of the government to prepare national management policy that would put in place a disaster management information system, which could then be used for disasters such as the 200 floods.

However, it should be noted that contingency

25. UNDP Procurement Manual, BOM, February 2002, section 5.2.

26. BOM/OFA interview, 13 November 2002.

27. UNDP Procurement Manual, February 2002, par 5.2.1

planning is costly in that it diverts scarce and usually over-stretched human resources away from immediate project work and into preparation for a hypothetical situation. It is therefore not always appropriate or even feasible. Where UNDP enjoys the services of an inter-agency UN coordination mechanism, it is probably better to rely on that unit to produce contingency plans. But whenever the situation presents itself – when, for instance, UNDP project staff are temporarily idle due to a delay of some sort – contingency planning is a useful means of preparing for the most likely natural disasters or political crises.

(4) Creating incentives for calculated risk-taking. Calculated risk-taking and innovation by field officers are essential to overcoming the often burdensome bureaucratic procedures and delays that accompany project implementation in post-conflict settings. There is an urgent need to demonstrate tangible peace benefits to former warring parties – through projects and programmes – so that they realize the benefits of peace. As such, creation of a set of incentives for field officers to take calculated risks – based on templates of lessons learned in other post-conflict settings, and with defined parameters for acceptable risk-taking – should become a priority.

(5) Advance identification of deployable operations staff. In the fall of 2002, a BOM proposal to establish a cadre of rapidly deployable staff with expertise in areas such as finance, procurement and personnel was being considered at UNDP headquarters. At the time of writing, it was not possible to know the outcome of that proposal, but what is clear is that UNDP is indeed seriously focusing on the importance of minimizing the time required to identify and deploy operations staff to crisis areas, an area long overshadowed by the organization's increasingly successful deployment of programme staff.

As mentioned earlier, one of the main bottlenecks in UNDP response to crisis and post-conflict situations is accounts monitoring, so-called “book-keeping”, which includes the authorization to write checks and make payments to suppliers. Unfortunately, history tells us that this is also one of the most commonly abused areas for illegal outlays of cash. An important “enabling practice” for UNDP is clearly the early identification of staff – field-experienced staff – who can be deployed from one part of the organization to the crisis area.

(6) Infuse peace-building and reconciliation goals into rehabilitation projects. Infusion of peace-building and reconciliation measures in rehabilitation projects can be essential to long-term success. Where armed conflicts are localized, this may be relatively easier to manage, but even when conflicts are geographically diverse, the need for a “peace dividend” as part of a rehabilitation programme remains strong, despite the greater operational challenges this may pose.

(7) Diverse expertise on project teams. The wider the range of expertise UNDP possesses on its staff, the better prepared it is to respond to unexpected crises requiring specialized knowledge. This is an instrument of flexible response already discussed at length in chapter two.

(8) Established pool of local consultants. Some UNDP programme officers maintained and actively cultivated a list of national consultants with expertise in a variety of fields, allowing them to draw on a pool of experts at short notice. This is a relatively easy and low-cost enabling practice for country offices in states with a relatively strong pool of trained professionals.

(9) Established and updated database and close knowledge of regions. UNDP offices that invested heavily in gathering, storing, and analyzing baseline development and demographic data found that that investment paid big dividends in times of crisis, when time is too short to initiate information gathering. Likewise, where UNDP showed a commitment to maintaining close knowledge of regions where rapid response might be needed, this proved to be a vital enabling practice later on. In Lebanon, UNDP worked quietly with the UN peacekeeping mission in the south, UNIFIL, to maintain a low-level presence since 1996, even though conventional development work was not feasible in that setting. This investment paid off following the withdrawal, when UNDP enjoyed close knowledge of the communities and key political players in the area. Conversely, where UNDP lacked access to baseline data or close knowledge of regions of operation, this created delays and exponentially increased the likelihood of errors. The UNDP-Japan Joint evaluation reached this same conclusion: “Weak baseline data and incomplete information on damage or needs meant revising premises, plans, and budgets. ... These delays in turn increased costs. ... The evaluation recognized the importance of well-grounded pre-conflict and conflict-related research, and post-conflict data and

information, and the need to develop this information base quickly and systematically.”²⁸ UNDP country offices exhibit a wide range of capacities in this regard. Some, such as Lebanon, possess a very robust database, have a strong commitment to field-based knowledge of regions, and utilize any period of downtime to update and analyze their demographic and socio-economic database. Other country offices lack the level of human resources required to house their own database, and must rely on others. In both Kosovo and Macedonia, UNDP did not even have a country office until recently, forcing those offices to draw on pre-existing data from peer agencies. Accessing and using data from other agencies requires a spirit of inter-agency cooperation that should be more universal than it is. In practice, many of the most detailed and useful studies conducted by agencies tend to have very limited circulation – some agencies are in fact quite reluctant to share their unpublished “gray literature.” For example, in Lebanon, a number of UN specialized agencies and the World Bank share a common UN building in the center of Beirut, providing them an excellent opportunity to cooperate in information sharing. Yet each maintains its own separate library of reports, a practice that was necessitated by the fact that each agency had developed its own separate system of project and information cataloging.

Flexible approaches to available data can also yield unexpected dividends for “dual use” of data collected by one UNDP project utilized in another. In Mozambique, information generated by an aerial global positioning system (GMS) survey originally intended to assist with the country’s elections was recycled as critical information in response to a crisis of flooding that followed the elections two months later.

(10) UNDP expertise in local governance and decentralization. This comparative advantage that UNDP enjoys has already been treated in chapter two, but bears repeating here as an important ingredient in institutional preparedness for rapid response. The close contacts with and knowledge of local power structures that UNDP has earned through its work at municipal levels better prepares it for rapid response at the grass-roots level. These

ties should be closely cultivated and maintained, even when projects are completed or dormant.

(11) Networks and social capital. In crisis situations, a disconcerting aspect of vital information flows, coordination, and deal-making is its informality. The more extensive UNDP’s own store of social capital and personal networks – in government, in local communities, in NGOs circles, in embassy and donor circles, and of course within the family of UN agencies – the better prepared the country office will be to respond flexibly and rapidly in concert with others. This intensely social and informal aspect of crisis response is not usually accorded the importance it deserves, but it is immediately recognizable in successful UNDP offices.

PRE-POSITIONED FUNDING

Pre-positioned funds that can be drawn upon at short notice constitute another “enabling practice” that can facilitate rapid and flexible response. The case studies reviewed here strongly underscore the extent to which trust funds and TRAC 3 funds afford UNDP a response capacity it cannot otherwise enjoy. The core allocation of TRAC 3 funds, which are under BCPR management, are expected to rise from \$19 million in 2002 to \$24 million in 2003, \$27 million in 2004, and 27.7 2005.²⁹

Country Offices should be aware of the authority that Resident Representatives have in the immediate aftermath of a major crisis, namely, the spending authority to incur emergency expenses of up to \$US100,000 for essential supplies etc.³⁰ In parallel to use of such funds, Resident Representatives should seek out additional authorization from BOM for authorization for additional spending if needed.

The possibility that there is no banking system in the programme area can be ascertained prior to the onset of a crisis. Arrangements with BOM/OFA should be entered into regarding contingencies of cash delivery modalities, financial volume, risks, insurance, and staff security.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

International staff members, usually holding top management positions, play a vital role in creating an office environment and reward

28. UNDP-Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan Joint Evaluation, “Post-Conflict Assistance of the Government of Japan Through UNDP in Kosovo and East Timor” (New York: UNDP, October 2001), p.12.

29. BOM/OBR, Nov 2002.

30. BOM/OFA

system conducive to calculated risk-taking and flexibility – they are the “enablers” of flexible response. But in the cases reviewed herein, it was the quality of the national staff officers that determined UNDP’s capacity for flexible response. Country offices that hire and retain entrepreneurial, dedicated, and honest staff capable of making independent decisions and taking calculated risks stand a much greater chance of success than those that employ individuals with a narrow view of their job and a nine-to-five approach to working hours. Socialization matters. Offices imbued with a strong sense of mission and vocation to the work of human development and post-war rehabilitation are much more likely to respond enthusiastically to the challenge of flexible response; offices preoccupied with reporting procedures and protocol are not.

To the extent that flexible response involves giving project officers more latitude to negotiate local arrangements, UNDP management must in some cases become more comfortable with delegation of authority as opposed to micro-managing. Where authority is delegated and flexible response is encouraged, however, UNDP staff must also be strongly socialized into a commitment to honesty and ethical conduct, lest flexible response be seen as an invitation to unaccountable behavior. Staff members whose behavior suggests they cannot be entrusted to pursue flexible responses ethically should not be retained.

With regard to staff with expertise in finance, logistics, IT, etc, country offices can enter into informal arrangements with UNDP offices in neighboring countries such that such staff can be quickly and smoothly, if temporarily, deployed at the outset of a crisis.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation processes are one of the most powerful indicators to staff members of corporate priorities. Standardized tests that are used as yardsticks to measure output in schools tend to encourage teachers to “teach to the test,” as opposed to teaching more important but less measurable skills such as critical analysis. In the same way, project evaluation criteria can heavily drive decision-making in the field, and not always in ways that promote flexibility and innovation. Depending how they are designed

and what yardsticks they choose to use to measure success or failure, project evaluations and individual performance reviews can either reinforce a culture of entrepreneurship or a pre-occupation with conformity and risk-aversion. The trend in evaluation processes towards heavy emphasis on “measurable outputs” in this regard is unfortunate, as it discourages deviation from stated project goals and timetables, even if events reduce the relevance of those goals and timetables. In the past, the evaluative infrastructure at UNDP has been strongly oriented to OECD-DAC criteria such as relevance, impact, and sustainability; though recent shifts towards outcome evaluations are a welcome step toward gauging progress in UNDP assistance, the particularities of crisis and post-conflict situation require further fine-tuning of evaluative approaches.

To the extent that both project evaluations and individual performance reviews can be geared toward rewarding flexible response and calculated risk-taking – or at a minimum not penalizing such behavior – evaluations can be made part of the enabling infrastructure that will help facilitate speedy and agile UNDP response. At present, for example, there is little institutional consensus on whether, let alone how, to capture the so-called “peace dividend” that follows in the wake of conflict. How to measure progress in areas such as confidence-building, local conflict reconciliation – for which UNDP assistance increasingly plays a role – are not regularly captured in the evaluative approaches used by UNDP. Advocating and rewarding flexible response must replace a culture that often views programme reorientation as a reflection of poor planning. A recent evaluation on Direct Execution, for example, undertaken by the UNDP Evaluation Office, stated that “success of project and programme delivery ... has been shown to be related to vision, entrepreneurship and innovation – the willingness to ‘break out of the box’ and to experiment, try new things and learn from mistakes.”³¹

PROJECT EXECUTION MODALITIES

Country offices that had gained approval for direct execution (DEX) enjoyed greater flexibility in the field. DEX in this sense is an important enabling practice. But as the cases reviewed herein strongly demonstrate, DEX is a tool best used as an option of last resort. Even

31. UNDP, Evaluation Office, “Evaluation of Direct Execution”, May 2001, p52.

when country offices were granted approval for DEX, they sought to use it flexibly, integrating it as much as possible with national execution.

In addition, UNDP country offices maximized their options for project execution by maintaining good working relations and good channels of communication with the entire spectrum of possible implementing agencies – including other UN agencies, international and national NGOs, municipalities, local development committees and cooperatives, and government ministries.

II. “TOOLBOX” OF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE

Dozens of useful tools of flexible response, some well-known to the UNDP family and others quite unique, were identified in the course of this study. A few of the most promising and replicable are highlighted again below:

RAPID DEPLOYMENT

- **BCPR and International Experts.** In two cases under review, UNDP had to move quickly into areas where no UNDP country office existed. In several others, a country office was in place but needed quick additional human resource mobilization to meet urgent needs. The BCPR’s capacity to deploy international experts for temporary posting to such emergencies, and the use of a short-term team of sectoral experts from New York to assist in project design, are practices of rapid deployment worth reinforcing.
- **BOM and Administrative Staff.** In view of the need for finance, logistics, and other non-programme staff, pre-identified networks of UNDP staff, possibly at the regional level, should be mobilized in advance, and relied upon to provide a source of temporary assistance until others can be brought on.

PROJECT MODIFICATION AND DESIGN

- Rapid response to new and unexpected situations is enhanced by modifying and expanding existing projects rather than initiating new ones. Close and early consultations with donors is imperative in this instance.
- Projects that are compartmentalized – that is, designed as a series of small, free-standing projects that can be successful and sustainable independent of the completion of the other projects – allow UNDP to proceed with projects even if additional pledges of funding

from the government or other sources is delayed or cancelled.

- Projects that are designed with multiple objectives are intrinsically more flexible than those with single objectives, enabling project teams to shift emphases as circumstances dictate. In particular, projects that integrate long-term objectives such as capacity-building with components that can be harnessed to address emergency response (such as short-term employment) are consistently better able to adjust to sudden emergency needs.
- Use of project “templates” – project proposals borrowed from recent and similar crises in other post-conflict countries – reduce time devoted to writing up proposals and help secure quicker donor funding when donors are already familiar with (and satisfied with) the project in question.

START UP FUNDING

- Use of residual project funds as start-up funding for a new project is difficult due to donor regulations, but under certain circumstances can be negotiated.
- Inter-agency partnerships can allow an agency with expertise but no start-up funds to work with an agency that has available funds but which lacks the required expertise.
- **Advances Recoverable Locally (ARLs).** ARL is an accounting device which is well known to country offices, and which can under certain circumstances serve as a valuable tool of financial flexibility to deal with sudden start-up costs. The UNDP Finance manual states that “there are a number of purposes for which funds may be paid out or received by a country office which cannot be immediately debited or credited to the country office budget or on IOV. They are to be recorded in a set of accounts known as ARL.” The UNDP ARL may be used to make advances recoverable locally to staff and exports against entitlements, including travel advances. The establishment of a “UNDP Other ARL” used to operate a Petty Cash fund, and of an “Agency ARL” used to record funds handled on behalf of UN agencies or other external organizations (e.g. NGOs) must be specifically authorized by the Treasurer/BOM. ARL accounts to make other advances as may be necessary for the proper conduct of the country office operations such as Petrol ARL, dispensary facilities, and common services may be

authorized by the Chief of Administrative Services Division/BOM. The El Salvador experience attests to the importance of the ARL, which was repeatedly cited as a key tool to facilitate UNDP action at the outset of an unanticipated crisis.

FUNDING AND PROCUREMENT

- **Purchasing waiver.** The waiver, which can be approved by BOM prior to the onset of an emergency situation, gives the Resident Representative authorization to approve contracts up to a certain value, without headquarters involvement. The precise channels for securing this authorization, however, are not always well known to the CO prior to an emergency response. The lesson is to insure that the appropriate communications channel and authorization procedures are well understood as a matter of course.
- Innovations that can increase the fungibility of UNDP budgets without violating internal and donor financial restrictions are an important tool of flexible response. Early consultations with donors are essential.
- Circumventing funding delays by exploiting the fungible nature of “pooled” donor funding is an important tool of flexibility. When budgetary constraints are produced by a donor’s funding delays, projects that are supported by multiple donors can avoid costly delays by taking advantage of the fungible nature of pooled funding. This often-used tool of flexibility must be accompanied by consultations with donors.

PROJECT EXECUTION

- Flexible use of NEX and DEX and co-direct execution (“CODEX”) is important. NEX and DEX are not mutually exclusive: DEX in Lebanon, Macedonia, Rwanda, and Mozambique involved UNDP retaining control over project funds but working in close concert with the relevant government ministry. Indeed, the Lebanese country office considered their execution modality to be an example of CODEX (co-direct execution), while in Macedonia the modality was considered a “hybrid” of national and direct execution.
- Both international and national non-governmental organizations are building increasingly specialized expertise; if carefully selected, NGOs

REORIENTATING PROGRAMMES IN THE FACE OF POLITICAL CRISIS: HAITI

Haiti easily ranks as one of the most challenging operating environments in the world for UNDP. The combination of political instability, donor retreat, collapsed state authority, violence, and acute poverty have placed a premium on flexible and innovative response, but have also served to constrain UNDP’s flexibility. The Haitian case study is a sobering reminder of the limits political factors can place on UNDP’s flexibility in settings where post-conflict countries slide back towards, if not into, active conflict zones.

The political impasse and stalled political reform in Haiti meant that certain UNDP sectoral projects – especially those related to governance – were forced to proceed in a high risk environment. The fact that UNDP remained in Haiti as the lead agency on governance and rule of law, but with few resources and support, seemed to compound the problem. UNDP employed several tools of flexibility that facilitated at least incremental improvements in these troubled sectors. One such tool was the use of pilot projects in local governance and justice, which enabled UNDP to learn lessons from a “zone de test” without risking large amounts of scarce project funding or triggering political problems.³² In the justice project, where UNDP lacked a functional national partner in the judiciary, it shifted its work to preparatory technical work that would better enable the judiciary to function once the political impasse was resolved.

The Justice project also demonstrated a flexible response to a common but often unappreciated problem – namely, tensions between modern, formal rule of law practices and institutions and traditional, customary practices and preferences. In the case of Haiti, much of the population continues to prefer consultations with traditional religious chiefs to solve conflicts. The formal judiciary is widely distrusted and avoided both because its laws and language are alien to many people and because of its corruption. To improve this situation, UNDP has sought to support studies by the State University in Haiti to integrate aspects of formal and informal law and legal practices in Haiti.

The dramatic decline in external aid and the fast pace of the political crises in Haiti have also required UNDP to refocus project orientation at short notice to meet new needs. For example, following a government crackdown on human rights organizations in late 2001, UNDP shifted its assistance at the Office of the Protection of the Citizen to training investigators to conduct human rights investigations. Likewise, when political impasse prevented the passage of legislation, the Justice project switched from work on legislative reform and assistance in drafting laws to more participatory and enabling work such as seminars. In addition, UNDP was able to meet an immediate need at short notice in 2000 by deploying UNV’s as election monitors at a time when international monitors were in short supply.

OPERATIONAL
FLEXIBILITY IN
CRISIS AND
POST-CONFLICT
SITUATIONS
Lessons Learned
from the Field

Chapter III.
Best Practices
and Lessons
Learned
in UNDP
Operational
Flexibility

32. United Nations Development Programme, “Deuxieme cadre de cooperation avec Haiti (2002-2006),” 4 December 2001 DP/CCF/HAI/2001, p. 4

as implementing agencies give UNDP greater choice and flexibility in how it executes projects.

- When local capacity permits, greater use of national research institutes and think tanks for generation of baseline data can reduce the time and expense associated with international consultancies.
- Project execution that maximizes a sense of local ownership enhances flexible response; when local leaders and communities are strongly invested in projects, they become an important source of innovation and assistance in adapting to unexpected obstacles.
- Innovative ways to streamline reporting, contracting, and accounting. Although reporting requirements are designed to promote the important goal of accountability, in certain instances a degree of flexibility can be introduced to speed up and streamline these processes in the interest of rapid response. Examples include Rwanda, where beneficiaries (community project managers) lacked the capacity to produce required standard financial reports on previous tranches of funds; UNDP adjusted to this and allowed them to produce a simple narrative report instead
- When faced with budget and labor constraints, selective use of qualified international volunteers (in addition to UNVs) can help UNDP country offices staff projects and keep offices functioning.
- Recruitment and retention of a highly dedicated and talented national staff is the single greatest source of institutional capacity for problem solving in crises.
- The local networks and social capital that national staff members possess is a critical tool of flexibility and tends to be undervalued in the hiring process.
- Management policies that socialize project officers and directors to take calculated risks and explore innovative solutions to problems are an essential pre-requisite to flexible response. Staff members will respond to incentives and disincentives to flexible response.
- Policies that expose international and national officers to lessons learned from other countries and other agencies can expand the range of policy options the country team generates and can encourage flexible response.

HUMAN RESOURCES

- Maintaining diversified expertise on project staff affords UNDP more in-house flexibility to deal with a wider range of rehabilitation issues.
- Maintaining an updated list of national consultants by sectoral specialization allows UNDP projects to call on additional expertise as needed.
- Attention to maintaining an ethnically diverse national team gives UNDP greater flexibility to work with different constituencies in countries where ethnic tensions are still high.

PROJECT TERMINATION

When projects are completed, UNDP can help to avoid the loss of institutional expertise it has cultivated in its project teams by working (when appropriate) to “spin-off” project teams into freestanding and independent non-profit think tanks or consultancy firms. These firms can then continue to serve as a repository of expertise and can be hired by UNDP or others by contract for services as needed. This practice fosters both sustainability and flexibility, and is likely to improve employee morale – and reduce premature departure of personnel – as projects wind down.

CHAPTER IV

FLEXIBLE RESPONSE AND INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING



Children playing amid discarded trash signals the need for continuing efforts to re-establish basic social services in the still-tense Mitrovica. Photo: Ky Chung/UNMIK/DPI

An ongoing challenge for UNDP and its peer agencies is establishing better mechanisms for institutional learning about flexible response to post-conflict challenges. This study confirmed that country offices were almost entirely unaware of the kinds of problems faced in other settings, let alone the kinds of solutions generated in other UNDP missions, including those in close geographic proximity.

Innovations and enabling practices must be given a better vehicle for dissemination within the UNDP family. In particular, UNDP counterparts from different country offices should be given more opportunity to meet each other and share with one another their techniques for managing flexible responses to common problems. Administrative officers could learn much from one another about strategies for coping with some of the common funding constraints discussed in this study. National officers, who rarely have the opportunity to gain experience in other country offices, would especially benefit from this type of cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches. As these types of learning processes generate new knowledge and innovations, an ongoing process of documentation is needed to supplement and eventually replace this study, which is only an initial point of departure for a much larger institutional conversation about flexible response in the field.

CONSTRAINED FLEXIBILITY

The many examples of flexible response identified in this report are a testimony to the commitment and problem-solving spirit of UNDP field staff. But it must also be repeated that these innovations occur within a context of constrained flexibility. The enabling practices and tools of flexible response explored here can improve institutional response capacity up to a point, but the chief constraint will remain until tackled head on, namely a culture of conservatism that allows accountability to become an obstacle to pragmatism and resourcefulness.

The kinds of broader structural changes that would be required to transform UNDP into an organization built for speed are beyond the scope of this narrow study, but they constitute an issue that continues to require attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

By its tone and content, much of this report has presented “recommendations” for consideration by country offices. What follow below are several recommendations that highlight the need for UNDP to expand and accelerate the learning process initiated with this report:

- 1. Institutionalize knowledge sharing on flexible response.** Dissemination of this report should be seen as the first, rather than the final, step in an establishing an institutional culture of knowledge sharing. More is clearly needed, given the surprisingly limited extent of information sharing on this topic hitherto. The main institutional actors responsible for designing and implementing flexible response within UNDP – ie, BCPR, the Regional Bureaux, and BOM – should use this report as a basis to plan for a systematic exchange of information on flexible responses. One possibility is to organize a series of regional consultations, with EO support, at which programme officers from respective COs could
- 2. Reorient performance monitoring to reward flexible response.** Within UNDP’s performance monitoring infrastructure, steps should be taken to explicitly capture, and reward, flexible response. The assessment exercise that underpins preparation of the Results-Oriented Annual Report would offer an ideal channel to formalize encouragement of flexible response by means of devising indicators that would capture effective innovation of operational response at country office level.
- 3. Periodic workshops on the latest operational innovations.** Few country offices have the spare capacity to update staff on the latest revisions in the rules and guidelines that guide institutional conduct in finance, administration and procurement. This exercise has, nonetheless, demonstrated that such knowledge, shared among staff in the field, is crucial. The Bureau of Management should periodic workshops aimed at informing senior country office staff of the latest innovations/revisions in UNDP regulations and rules; such information workshops could be included in annual gatherings of resident representatives and/or deputy resident representatives.

exchange information on the innovations and best practices that they have developed in CPC situations.



*One of the biggest challenges facing countries such as El Salvador is demobilizing soldiers after armed conflict.
Photo: UNDP*

ANNEX I. COUNTRY OFFICE IN A BOX CONCEPT (PREPARED BY BOM)

At the time of writing, the Country Office in Box Concept is just that – a concept. However, it clearly holds potential for country offices in need of rapid deployment of office facilities.

In recent years, the situations in Afghanistan, East Timor and Kosovo have highlighted the critical need to move quickly in establishing a Country Office (CO) operational capacity to support UNDP's programme activities. In addition, emergency situations may arise at any time in any country that may force the evacuation of UNDP staff from their office premises. Telecommunications and financial and administrative systems are key requirements for UNDP to function in these and other situations, and yet they are often the most difficult and time consuming to establish.

“Country Office in a Box” (COINb) is a portable solution that provides pre-configured CO financial and administrative systems, and voice and data communications capacity. Several systems placed in strategic locations around the world can easily be activated and dispatched at short notice to any geographic location. COINb is designed to be plug-and-play and to work under harsh conditions. The system is not dependent on the local availability of electricity and technical expertise.

OVERVIEW

- Portable CO telecommunications and systems environment that can easily be dispatched to and setup in any location around the world.
- Fully self-contained with plug-and-play setup.
- Can start with “barebones” version – stand-alone configuration powered by car battery.

PRE-LOADED CO SOFTWARE

- FIM, WinFOAS and CO Suite pre-installed with generic (dummy) country code and US\$ cashbook established.
- Microsoft Project 2000
- Microsoft Office 2000
- Standard UNDP forms preloaded.
- Up to 5 pre-configured generic user accounts to work with FIM, WinFOAS, email and LDAP authentication. Email configured for offline use.

WIRELESS LAN ARCHITECTURE

- Connects via satellite to the Internet at 64kbps.
- LAN (between laptops on the field) connect between 1Mbps and 11MBps
- LAN is flexible and allows roaming (500 feet indoors, 1000 feet outdoors)
- Several LANs can be interconnected to cover a wider area.
- A beefier laptop on the LAN could act as local web/email server, router, web cache and firewall.
- Includes a network printer.

ACCOMMODATES VOICE AND DATA

- No physical limit on the number of laptops, although 16 per installation seems more practical.
- Up to 4 wireless phones/installation. More could be added with a PBX card.

SECURE

- A firewall is included in the design.
- LAN communications are encrypted.

ANNEX II. TERMS OF REFERENCE UNDP CRISIS AND POST-CONFLICT EVALUATION PROGRAMME 2001-2002

I. INTRODUCTION

UNDP has long experience in the development and provision of assistance in post conflict situations. What UNDP does not have, at present, is an empirically-based blueprint that explains how UNDP programme managers can and should react to the unforeseen circumstances that are part and parcel of post-conflict situations. Indeed, it is often stressed that “flexibility” on the part of UNDP is a crucial pre-requisite for successful post-conflict assistance programmes; yet what such “flexibility” actually entails has hitherto never been defined on the basis of a systematic empirical analysis such as the present one.

Rather than offering generalizations on the nature of conflicts, this exercise will document UNDP programming and managerial responses, with a focus on instructive examples of effective institutional flexibility demonstrated during the implementation of UNDP programmes implemented in post conflict situations.

II. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Adopted at the Millennium Assembly in August 2000, the *Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations*, often referred to as “the Brahimi Report”, stated that “UNDP has untapped potential in [the peace-building] area, and UNDP, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and the World Bank, are best placed to take the lead in implementing peace building activities.”³⁵ The *Role of UNDP in Crisis and Post-Conflict Situations* report, adopted by the UNDP Executive Board at its January 2001 session, acknowledged the continuing need for UNDP to “improve the programming tools it deploys to respond to the (CPC) environment and the way in which it manages (CPC) challenges to ensure coherence, discipline and greater integration within the organization.”³⁶

In his 7 June 2001 report to the Security

Council on the *Prevention of Armed Conflict*, the Secretary-General states the following: “Development assistance provided by the United Nations system needs to focus on decreasing the key structural risk factors that fuel violent conflict, such as inequity – by addressing disparities among identity groups; inequality – by addressing policies and practices that institutionalise discrimination; justice – by promoting the rule of law, effective and fair law enforcement and administration of justice, and, as appropriate, equitable representation in the institutions that serve the rule of law; and insecurity – by strengthening accountable and transparent governance and human security.”³⁷ The Secretary-General writes, “Looking at the United Nations system as a whole, the capability for preventive action is extensive. There remains, however, a clear need for introducing a more systematic conflict prevention perspective into the multi-faceted programmes and activities of the United Nations system so that they can contribute to the prevention of conflict by design and not by default.”³⁸ The Secretary-General then makes the following recommendation: “I encourage the governing bodies and other intergovernmental bodies of the United Nations funds and programmes and specialized agencies to consider how they could best integrate a conflict prevention perspective into their different mandated activities.”³⁹

III. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This exercise itself has undergone changes in response to findings from the literature review phase during which projects in the selected CPC situations (local governance, conflict prevention) were solicited and analysed. Indeed, originally, the exercise was to center around a systematic examination of past and ongoing activities at “ground level”, presented in two “clusters” – *Dynamic Management of Local Governance Programmes and Emerging*

35. A/55/305, para 46.

36. DP/2001/4, para 53.

37. S/2001/574, “Prevention of Armed Conflict, Report of the Secretary-General”, 7 June 2001, para 100.

38. S/2001/574, para 64.

39. S/2001/574, Recommendation 10, para 72.

Frameworks for Early Warning and Conflict Prevention. Recognizing that the distinction in effect of these two “clusters” is not always clear, the exercise has been reoriented toward the key aspect that determines the effectiveness of all CPC assistance, namely flexibility in the design and implementation of post-conflict programmes.

The exercise will document UNDP operational and managerial responses to changing circumstances and conditions during post-conflict programme implementation. The final report will serve as an inventory of best practices that help programme managers to respond effectively to the intrinsic uncertainties of post-conflict situations. The basic question to be answered, then, is: how have UNDP programme managers, at the field level, responded effectively to unforeseen developments during the life of a given project?

IV. METHODOLOGY

The preparation of the above document will comprise literature review, field-based data-gathering, and consultations with the major stakeholders both within the UN system as well as in host country and donor capitols. A timetable, detailing each of the main phases below, is provided at the end of this document.

1. **Conceptualization.** Consultations with relevant UNDP offices should be held in September-October, with the concepts, substantive parameters, and geographic scope of this exercise decided by mid-November. Recruitment of research assistants and consultants should take place in the second half of November.
2. **Literature Review.** A review of relevant documentation, including thematic and project evaluations, ROAR, CCA and UNDAF documents, as well as scholarly/academic literature, should be undertaken by the evaluation team, with a general situational analysis drafted by mid-December.
3. **Fact-finding/Interviews.** Headquarters-based interviews will take place in January 2002. Field visits will take place during February 2002. Report drafting will take place in February-March 2002. Field visits will to the extent feasible involve meetings with project beneficiaries, possibly in focus group discussions, aimed at identifying benchmarks for the success of a given programme.
4. **Presentation of Findings.** A workshop/symposium at which the findings from this

exercise are to be presented, will take place in April 2002.

V. THEMATIC FOCUS OF CPC EVALUATION PROGRAMME

The best practices identified and lessons learned during this exercise will fall generally under the following three categories. Interviews, surveys, focus group discussions, etc., should aim be undertaken in full view of these issues.

1) Flexibility in day-to-day project management

- Adapting programme focus and sequencing (in response to shifting economic/social/political/demographic conditions).
- Ensuring timely implementation of quick impact projects
- Filling information loopholes – working despite weak baseline data (including problems of limited institutional memory as a result of rapid international staff turnover).
- Administrative innovations for the timely recruitment of local experts.
- Circumventing supply bottlenecks and logistical constraints (i.e., dynamic implementation modalities)

2) Expedient decision-making vis-à-vis UNDP headquarters and other international stakeholders

- Streamlining headquarters-field communication.
- Streamlining administrative decision-making processes.
- Timely recruitment of international experts.
- Innovative ways of maintaining donor support and project funding during phased projects.
- Responding to budgetary shortfalls and cost over-runs.
- Identifying sustainable sources of revenue for maintenance and technical management of project outputs.
- Innovative means of maximizing communication with stakeholders (beneficiaries, national governments, and donors).

General Questions for Discussions, Interviews, Focus Group Discussion

1) Substantive Management Issues

- Which are the most recurrent on-the-ground “surprises” that have necessitated shifts in substantive programming for post-conflict programmes?

- How have UNDP and partner organisations responded to unforeseen developments?
- What has been the end result of these responses, as perceived by project and programme target beneficiaries?

2) Administration and Fiscal Management Issues

- In administrative and budgetary terms, what have been the most common changes

during the implementation phase of UNDP programmes?

- How have donors responded to budget shortfalls?
- Have there been noteworthy innovations adopted by programme managers in order to expedite programmes and/or circumvent unnecessarily burdensome bureaucratic procedures?

VI. GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

Region	Country experiences in	
AFRICA	Rwanda	Mozambique
ASIA	Tajikistan	Bougainville
ARAB STATES	Lebanon	
EUROPE	Kosovo	Macedonia
LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN	Haiti	El Salvador

VII. TIMETABLE AND TASK AGENDA FOR CPC EVALUATIVE PROGRAMME

1. Senior Consultant A:

11/26-11/30	12/3-12/7	12/10-12/14	1/7-1/11	1/14-1/18	1/21-1/25	1/28-2/1	2/4-2/8	2/11-2/15	2/18-2/22	2/25-3/25
1. Consultations at UNDP headquarters on the substantive scope and orientation of exercise. 2. Background research on local governance/conflict prevention issues.			1. Absorption of background analyses prepared by research assistants. 2. Consultations with UNDP Headquarters Staff, including regional bureaux, UNCDF, ERD, etc on particular projects to be evaluated. 3. Ascertain country-specific fact-finding agenda for subsequent field visits.				1. Undertake field visits to selected case study countries. 2. Initiate drafting of report.			1. HQ Debriefing. 2. Draft selected chapters. 3. Elicit and integrate comments, etc., from stakeholders.
5 working days			10 working days				10 working days			15 working days

2. Senior Consultant B:

11/26-11/30	12/3-12/7	12/10-12/14	1/7-1/11	1/14-1/18	1/21-1/25	1/28-2/1	2/4-2/8	2/11-2/15	2/18-2/22	2/25-3/25
			1. Briefings with EO, Senior Consultant A, and Research Assistants				2. Undertake field visits to selected case study countries. 3. Initiate drafting of report.			1. HQ Debriefing. 2. Draft selected chapters. 3. Elicit and integrate comments, etc., from stakeholders.
			2 working days				20 working days			15 working days

3. Research Assistants/Associates:

11/26-11/30	12/3-12/7	12/10-12/14	1/7-1/11	1/14-1/18	1/21-1/25	1/28-2/1	2/4-2/8	2/11-2/15	2/18-2/22	2/25-3/25
1. Familiarize oneself with UNDP working practices and introductions to key UNDP staff. Consultations with Team. 2. Note-taking during discussions with UNDP programme staff. 3. Documents Collection and Review: UNDAF, CCA, ROAR, Evaluation Reports. 4. Prepare general situation and needs analysis, including inventory of lessons learned/recommendations on each country situation.			1. Consultations with team members and finalization of background analyses. 2. Initiate preparations of field visits; contacts with field offices.				1. Assist in the drafting of chapters of case study. 2. Prepare other components of case study, including bibliography, List of Persons Interviewed, etc. 3. Backstop field visits of senior team members; be on standby to meet needs that will arise during field visit.			1. Assist in drafting of text as advised by senior team members. 2. Assist in the organization of workshop with stakeholders
3 weeks			4 weeks				3 weeks			1 week

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ANNEX IV. LIST OF PEOPLE MET

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Ismail Redzeqi, Mayor of Gostivar

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Denis Racicot, Technical Advisor, Justice
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UN Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK)

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Pristina Youth Center
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Secondary School
Ola Sylva, Widow's Handicrafts Project,
Krushe e Madhe, Rahovec
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Hakon Arald Gulbrandsen, Charge
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primary school (caza Chouf)
Ali Abou Darghan, Health Center, Kfarhim
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Raed Najar, Kornayel Technology
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