

What are UNDP's "Knowledge Services"?

UNDP has been undergoing an important process of renewal of its vision and substantive profile, as outlined in the Administrator's Business Plans for 2000-2003. The goal of the Business Plans are to ensure that UNDP has the policy expertise, key partnerships and internal capacity to deliver its services effectively. Implementing the Plans involve intensive internal re-engineering and reform. Transformation is taking place around the five dimensions of UNDP operations – a strengthened policy capacity, expanded partnerships with external actors and institutions, enhanced competencies of UNDP's people, better instruments to measure performance, and an expanded base for its development resources.

To strengthen policy capacity, one of the more promising transformations has been the introduction by UNDP of "knowledge services" to programme countries, in addition to its more traditional role as sponsor of development programmes. Knowledge Services are advice, expertise, experiences, and tested approaches that are based on the state-of-the art global knowledge, and are provided to help the requesting persons come up with the best possible solutions to issues they face.

The backbone of UNDP's efforts to strengthen its policy capacity has been the introduction of knowledge services to programme countries (in addition to its more traditional role as sponsor of development programmes). While the delivery of programme services represents UNDP's continuing role of managing development cooperation programmes focused on building national capacities, knowledge services represent UNDP's substantive contribution to the development dialogue in a country. In short, the organization is working to become the source of the most up-to-date, high-quality, cutting-edge knowledge, experience and expertise in its six thematic priority areas.

Essentially, UNDP is organizing itself to ensure that whenever someone needs to find something out, the relevant knowledge can quickly and easily be made available from anywhere it exists. The systems being set up tap all possible sources of knowledge – UNDP staff in the Country Office, other COs and at headquarters, dedicated specialists in BDP, Regional and Country Programme project staff, professional networks, UN system agencies, Bretton Woods and other bilateral and multilateral donor agencies, and in-country expertise, as well as codified knowledge in the form of e-mail discussions, websites, reports, publications and research efforts. The goal is to bring the total package together to the requester in the format and time frame required.

To make sure UNDP Country Offices can deliver this service, an array of new tools and approaches have been put in place, applying the concept of "knowledge management" – managing through the effective application of knowledge. The knowledge management infrastructure has been adopted by UNDP as the "Practice Architecture", because it is organized around the six thematic priorities – or Practice Areas – of UNDP. Knowledge management in UNDP depends upon:

- *People* – dedicated specialists and other staff within UNDP, who are the sources of specialist knowledge. These are the "Practice members"
- *Communities* – networks for the Practice members to share knowledge, learning from each other and from outside professional communities which members join.

- *Knowledge bases* – where the knowledge collected and shared by the communities are “codified”, analyzed, and distilled into state-of-the art innovations, tools, products and services for recycling back to the communities, delivered to clients as knowledge-based advisory services.

Accordingly, the three elements of UNDP’s transformation to a knowledge-based organization have been the establishment of *Sub-Regional Resource Facilities* (or SURFs) as the source for decentralized dedicated specialists, the *knowledge networks* for creating communities of professional peers, and the introduction of *knowledge-based systems and infrastructure* needed to sustain cutting-edge performance and effectively support a globally distributed operation.

The SURFs: Beginning in 2000, fifty dedicated policy specialist positions in the Bureau for Development Policy, funded from the Global Cooperation Framework, were relocated from headquarters to nine SURFs – Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Beirut, Bratislava, Dakar, Pretoria, Kathmandu, Panama City and Port-of-Spain – to provide high-quality, demand-driven support to clusters of country offices. Each SURF consists of (a) a SURF Board representing the client Resident Representatives of the cluster; (b) outposted policy specialists from BDP Competency Groups (including GEF and other Funds and Programmes), and (c) SURF Coordination Units.

The SURFs strive to provide timely, flexible, demand-driven services to UNDP country offices in four areas:

- Networking and sharing knowledge between staff and development partners;
- Expert referrals and access to technical and programme-related information;
- Technical support for programme and policy identification, design, formulation and review;
- Documentation and dissemination of comparative experiences and best practices.

In 2002 the SURFs and networks responded to 2,950 queries from country office staff. 1,850 staff benefited from workshops or other community-building events. The SURFs contributed 1,750 person-weeks of policy support services to Governments through Country Offices. In addition, UNDP thematic facilities were established on democratic governance (in Oslo) and poverty reduction (in Rio de Janeiro), and the Drylands Development Centre in Nairobi became fully functional. These centers facilitate the exchange of good practice through South-South cooperation as well as global networking, thus expanding developing countries’ capacities to design and implement effective policies.

Knowledge networks: Knowledge networks encourage people to share information and discuss substantive issues through mail groups, workshops and other initiatives. These activities promote collaboration and mutual support among professional peers, i.e., country office, headquarters and SURF staff, as well as external partners in the UN system and the professional community. UNDP staff are building specialized expertise around corporate practice areas through practice networks that link thematic focal points in the country offices with each other and with the relevant policy specialists. Current practice networks focus on Democratic Governance, Crisis Prevention & Recovery, Poverty, Energy and Environment, ICT for Development, and HIV/AIDS. In addition to the practice networks, other global knowledge networks include Gender, Small Enterprise and Microfinance, National Human Development Reports, Millennium Development Goals, and Management.

Knowledge-based systems and infrastructure: UNDP efforts to date have focused primarily on community building, and the systems and tools for documenting and re-using their knowledge are still in the early development stages. Critical applications include:

- *Systems to capture, store and retrieve knowledge*, to allow community members to index and search for material using an enterprise portal and a corporately established document classification system (a “taxonomy”).
- *Community workspaces*, based on community websites, containing the knowledge resources and applications the community members can call on in the course of their work.
- *Mailgroup management*, an e-mail listserve where the network e-mail traffic is moderated and maintained. This is the principal tool in use currently.
- *Collaboration tools*, to facilitate community interaction and group work on assignments.

What impact has this new way of working had on country offices and on UNDP as a whole? 2002 was the first year in which the SURFs and the networks began to demonstrate the potential of this new role for UNDP as a knowledge organization. The policy specialists in the SURFs were in high demand by the Resident Representatives, and began to actively leverage expertise within the region and globally in support of Country Programme needs. UNDP-led global initiatives such as support to MDG reporting, helping countries with poverty reduction strategies, the WSSD-related programmes, and others were more effectively translated into country actions. Contacts were established with the Regional Economic Commissions and regional UN Agency offices to work on collaborative initiatives, including the provision of support to UN Country Teams for the development of CCAs and UNDAFs. Facilitated by the SURF’s team-based approach, multidisciplinary responses to country development challenges were organized in several countries. Interactions between the Global and Regional programme and project staff have been strengthened, and synergies promoted around the corporate thematic priorities.

In each of the meetings of the SURF Boards over the course of 2002 there was wide praise for the SURF operations – the ability to be more timely and to deliver policy expertise led to increased overall credibility of Resident Representatives in the eyes of their national partners and country teams. The developments of 2002 strengthened the relationship between the Bureau for Development Policy and the Regional Bureaux and their Country Offices, and built a more cohesive organization focused on enhancing the abilities and capacities of Country Offices to effectively respond to programme country development needs.

The impact of the Knowledge Networks on UNDP’s performance is similarly encouraging. As the networks mature, they are changing the manner in which UNDP staff carry out their day-to-day work. Responses to inquiries from country clients benefit from global consultations. Comparative experiences are routinely researched in the course of project and programme preparation. Policy positions benefit from inputs from the field to improve their relevance and grounding in programme country realities. Direct communication and dialogue between units and country offices have become second nature, ignoring hierarchical and organizational boundaries. Networks such as the one for MDGs are promoting improved collaboration of UN Country Teams. The NHDR network is bringing together national HDR preparation teams, opening up opportunities for collaboration in areas such as peer reviews and alignment of methodologies.

If UNDP can succeed in the timely and systematic delivery of knowledge services, it potentially opens up a new era in development cooperation, one in which an organization's "knowledge contribution" is as valuable as – or more valuable than – its financial contribution. The knowledge made available would not be UNDP's alone – the wider the reach of the network of associations, and the more sharing which takes place, the richer and more valuable the result. The role of UNDP in this scheme would be to build knowledge management systems managed by the communities themselves, helping members work "smarter" through exchanging their knowledge, expertise and experience. Practitioners working together in this way can improve the performance of the profession as a whole, analyzing what works and then turning the findings into models, guidelines and standards for the individual community members to apply, and ultimately leading to substantially improved development effectiveness on a global scale.

KNOWLEDGE and PRACTICE NETWORKS

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UNDP's Knowledge and Practice Networks

Global Thematic Networks have been **established in 1999** in all 6 of UNDP's thematic priority areas of work. These global knowledge networks have been originally set up as part of the SURF system as a **capacity building** mechanism for the field; to serve as a **bridge** between HQ and the field; and to **connect COs** & promote **South-South exchange**.

These Knowledge Networks subsequently became institutionalized as part of the **UNDP business plan** and are part of a larger **Knowledge Management Strategy**.

Today, UNDP is adopting a **Practice** architecture, so as to better able us to become an effective knowledge organization providing our country clients with timely, high-quality knowledge-based advisory services. Simply put, a Practice is a **group of staff** engaged in building a **specialized expertise** within an organization. Practices have a small group of "dedicated practice specialists" – equivalent to the BDP policy specialists at HQ and in the SURFs, and the much larger community of "practitioners" – equivalent to the rest of our professional staff (Country Office RRs, DRRs, National Officers, Bureau staff at headquarters, etc.). A Practice is intended to be a community of people, and not only an e-mail group for sharing experiences. It is designed to strengthen its members' professional capacities through, among other things, face-to-face meetings, developing best practices, and documenting learning to build up an institutional memory through knowledge development and sharing.

Up until now, UNDP has been building up its Practices in the context of its thematic knowledge networks. With the Democratic Governance Pilot, we have converted the Governance thematic network to the Democratic Governance Practice Network. The activities of the Practice will evolve around the network, which is being strengthened for this purpose (and provided with funding) to take on a new, broader range of activities – knowledge sharing, meetings and events, and other activities.

Below are the descriptions of the six networks which will become UNDP's six Practices:

- Democratic Governance;
- Poverty Reduction;
- Crisis Prevention and Recovery;
- Energy and Environment;
- Information and Communications Technology; and
- HIV/AIDS

The intention is to strengthen and support all of the networks, covering not only the six Practice Areas but also other communities (such as NHDRs, Gender Equality and Micro finance) where UNDP has been building specialized knowledge and expertise. For instance, the global gender network is a dedicated and cross thematic community of practice focusing on gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women, a core objective of UNDP. Such communities, which are already actively supported by UNDP and act as knowledge networks, are also described here after.

You can also find out more information – and subscribe to these and the other networks, by going to the Knowledge Connection website at <http://intra.undp.org/surf> or by contacting the Network Facilitator indicated below. And you can access discussion archives for all the networks at <http://groups.undp.org/lyris/helper/index.cfm>

Focus

UNDP integrates gender equality and the empowerment of women as core objectives across its six thematic areas of focus. The challenge of mainstreaming gender through conscious and visible actions leading to tangible results reflected in the lives of poor women is the responsibility of for the broad community of development practitioners in UNDP. The Gender Equality Network, launched in August 2001, serves as a forum where they can access information, share tools and build knowledge on the best strategies to mainstream gender effectively into all aspects of UNDP's work. The Gender Equality Network, as a facility for a virtual exchange of ideas and practices, has grown from an email based group of gender specialists at Headquarters and gender focal points in country offices to become a much broader network of 400 staff members and 136 programme countries. It was build on the electronic newsletter 'Gender Beat' which is now produced by different SURF colleagues with support from the Headquarters' gender team. The Gender Equality Network is linked to active gender networks set up by regional bureaux. It is also linked to the global practice networks for cross-posting and simultaneous discussions on gender and a specific thematic focus such as governance.

The Gender Equality Network brings together a growing community of dedicated practitioners who need resources, tools and best practices from within and outside UNDP. It also helps the organization build gender competencies and skills through shared resources and knowledge with the objective of improving the delivery of gender sensitive policy advice and gender responsive programmes.

MEMBERSHIP

The network currently comprises some 400 members, Headquarters and field colleagues, including all gender focal points in UNDP country offices. The Gender Programme Team takes leadership in guiding the network in the selection of issues and experts for focused discussion by the network.

The Gender Equality Network is moderated by Isabella Waterschoot.

SERVICES

The **Gender Equality Network** has three major components:

Query/Referral: The Gender Equality Network posts queries from members for specific information, experience, tools and expertise. This is a virtual bulletin board for **information sharing** and **networking** for members across the globe.

Information: Members share information on events, new initiatives, good practices, publications, workshops, resource materials/tools and much more. The **Gender Network Digest** is a regular summary and the **Gender Beat** is an online newsletter that SURF colleagues are encouraged to use for regional editions on a rotational basis.

Virtual Discussion: A knowledge sharing forum for substantive discussions started with moderated discussions on the service lines of the **Thematic Trust Fund (TTF)**. These discussions have contributed greatly in building conceptual clarity and raising issues related to the challenges of effective gender mainstreaming in UNDP.

How to JOIN

Contact Isabella Waterschoot at isabella@surf.undp.org.

Democratic Governance Practice Network (DGPN)

Focus

UNDP brings the unique perspective of democratic governance for poverty reduction and human development. It has been a key player in advancing analytical and applied work related to the often-missing link between governance and poverty-reduction. In every region, UNDP faces a growing number of requests for policy, technical and programme advice in support of strengthening democratic governance often falling under our six service lines including: legislatures, electoral systems, access to justice and human rights, access to information, decentralization and local governance, and public administration. These requests are delivered through a number of strategic processes including policy advice and technical support, capacity development of institutions and individuals, advocacy, communication and public information, promoting and brokering dialogue, strategic partnership and knowledge networking.

The **Democratic Governance Practice Network (DGPN)** (previously called the Governance Global Resource Network or GGRN) is the foundation for the practice's knowledge sharing initiatives. It works as an internal, global exchange forum to inform practice members of the new and upcoming regional, national and global practice activities and resources available within UNDP's governance community.

MEMBERSHIP

The **Democratic Governance Practice** has developed overtime into a network with over 400 members representing all of the thematic groups, Regional Bureaux and over 100 country offices. Membership has grown considerably over the last year and the Democratic Governance practice group is being strengthened by greater network interaction and face-to-face community of practice events including recent workshops in Brussels, Bangkok and Oslo.

DGPN members are **key** to shaping and enhancing the capacity of the network to respond, to initiate and to secure a proactive and relevant knowledge-sharing environment for everyone within UNDP's governance community.

The network is moderated by Indira Goris.

SERVICES

The DGPN is a global network and has the ability to **link focal points** of over 100 country offices together with Regional Bureaux and BDP Policy Specialists at HQ, in the SURFs and in the Oslo Governance Centre. The shift to a global Democratic Governance Practice serves to strengthen the global governance community and enhance local, regional and global knowledge sharing strategies. **The horizontal nature of the Practice architecture allows for a meshing of cross-thematic, global, regional and country initiatives that open UNDP to new types of knowledge sharing opportunities, as well as a support structure to build signature services.** A spontaneous mushrooming of Practice activities has resulted in a significant shift in focus from HQ-determined policy advice to include a more non-hierarchical and inclusive entity of over 400 members from the Country Offices and from all Headquarters Bureaux. In turn, key practice objectives as outlined (i.e. community building, management, agenda-setting, knowledge management (KM), professional development, policy development, advocacy, communications, partnership building and resource mobilization) are decentralized among the greater global practice.

How to JOIN

Contact Indira Goris, at indira.goris@undp.org

HuRiTALK - The Human-Rights Policy Network

Focus

UNDP promotes integrating of human rights and human development. Our focus is to promote human rights through cooperation and constructive dialogue and through our country programmes. As the country teams increasingly focus on the rights dimension in the preparation of the CCAs and UNDAFs, there is a growing demand for advice, guidance and sharing of experiences in the area of human rights from a number of programme countries. UNDP's broad development mandate and its responsibility for the Resident Coordinator system places the organization in the unique position to lead system-wide efforts in applying a rights approach to development, in close cooperation with other agencies forming the UN country team.

The HuRiTALK – the human-rights policy network launched in 2000 - serves as a forum where members discuss, access information, share tools and build knowledge on emerging issues and on the best strategies to incorporate human rights aspects into all aspects of UNDP's work. HuRiTALK is a sub-practice policy network, linked to the Democratic Governance Practice. HuRiTALK is made up by a network of enthusiasts, and its aim is to stimulate individual UNDP staff members' interest in and knowledge about human rights and how this relates to their daily work.

MEMBERSHIP

HURITALK is a focused opportunity for policy dialogue and inspiration among its 230 members, of which the majority are human rights focal points in UNDP country offices. HuRiTALK also includes selected non-UNDP-participants.

The HuRiTALK is moderated by Else Leona McClimans at the UNDP Oslo Governance Centre, the global thematic facility on Governance within the Institutional Development Group (IDG) of the Bureau for Development Policy. A small team of Human Rights Advisers takes leadership in guiding the network in the selection of issues for focused discussion by the network.

SERVICES

The HuRiTALK has three inter-linked elements:

Bi-monthly Discussion Theme: A knowledge sharing forum for substantive discussions that provide a forum for raising global concerns. The bi-monthly theme is suggested and introduced either by the Human Rights team of the Bureau for Development Policy or by individual members. The bi-monthly theme is introduced on the HURITALK with a set piece of maximum 2 pages that acts as the starting point of the discussion.

Query/Concerns: The HuRiTALK posts queries from members for specific information and experiences. This is a virtual bulletin board for **information sharing** and **networking** for members across the globe.

Information: Members share information on events, new initiatives, good practices, publications, workshops, resource materials/tools and much more.

How to Join

Contact Else Leona McClimans at else.leona.mcclimans@undp.org.

Environment Resources Network (ERG)

Focus

The Environment Resources Network (ERG) was launched in September 1999 at SEED, the Sustainable Environment and Energy Division.

The original SURF mandate was to **connect** thematically linked staff and provide space for CO staff and BDP policy specialists to **support** each other and collect and maintain organizational knowledge so that it is accessible for all. The 'Community' has proved that it is effective to help **analyse** and **promote** the sharing of UNDP development experience among our environment practitioners and persons interested in Sustainable Development at UNDP.

Network conversations cover both energy and environment topics. Environment priority topics are:

- Integrating environmental management concerns into national development frameworks;
- Strengthening local environmental governance;
- Addressing global and regional environmental problems.

Energy priority topics – addressed under a sub-network – are:

- Strengthening national policy frameworks to support energy for poverty reduction and sustainable development
- Promoting rural energy services to support growth and equity
- Promoting clean energy technologies for sustainable development

MEMBERSHIP

From a fledgling 'Network', the ERG has grown into a thriving and essential 'Community' with a membership of 600 practitioners and specialist serving UNDP's Environment work.

New members are continuously joining the ERG as the benefits of belonging to the network are becoming more apparent. Recent network development strategy includes sharpening the focus by strengthening Regional UNDP 'Communities of Environment practitioners'. Since November 2001, UNDP Environment Focal Points have convened in Cameroon, Mauritania, Zambia and Bratislava in order to network, plan and learn about UNDP programmes for Environment.

The network is moderated by Stephanie Hodge.

SERVICES

The network leads problem solving and brainstorming sessions among network members, supports network discussions on environment, acts as an information sharing channel, provides information on upcoming workshops, conferences and valuable www resources, and generally enhances community knowledge. It assists with or actually directs network discussions on Environment, fostering **substantial contributions** and involving non-members where needed. It leverages members to partake in the moderation for quality of community activity – filtering and distributing messages; determining the appropriate recipients.

How to JOIN

Contact Stephanie Hodge, at stephanie.hodge@undp.org

Focus

Distinct from the roles of other UNAIDS cosponsors, UNDP focuses on interventions aimed at creating an enabling policy, legislative and resource environment essential for an effective and truly multi-sectoral response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Areas of work include: mobilising actors and institutions well beyond the health sector to facilitate the social transformation needed to achieve an HIV-free future; promoting strong leadership and capacity for a coordinated and scaled-up response; helping governments raise domestic and international resources; placing HIV/AIDS at the centre of national development agendas; and promoting the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS through advocacy and legislation.

UNDP's Corporate Strategy on HIV/AIDS focuses on five types of services:

- Advocacy and Policy Dialogue
- Capacity Development
- Mainstreaming
- Human Rights
- Information and Multimedia Technology

The HIV/AIDS Network is central to the knowledge sharing activities and initiatives of the HIV/AIDS practice.

MEMBERSHIP

The HIV/AIDS network presently comprises about 290 members with more than 60% of members from country offices.

Recruitment still forms part of our activities with a special efforts being made to encourage HIV/AIDS focal points to subscribe to the network. Other efforts include ensuring that Country Offices based in high HIV-prevalence countries (more than 4%) are subscribed to the network.

The network is moderated by Karin Santi.

SERVICES

Since its launch, the activities on the HIV/AIDS network have mainly concentrated on consultant **referrals** and **comparative experiences**. Over the last few months activities have become more diverse to include interesting examples of **time-bound discussions** on for instance draft Policy Guidance Notes.

Once a month a **Resource Update** is circulated that highlights exciting developments, activities and readings. The Resource Update is organised to include information on *News from Country offices*, *Announcements*, *Events*, useful *Resources* and general *Network News*. We encourage contributions to the Resource Updates from our members.

Other activities being considered include mainly utilizing the network for **capacity development**, especially with regard to the service lines as outlined in the HIV/AIDS Corporate Strategy that has been finalized recently. Such activities may include more **time-bound discussions** that will provide input into the development of **policy guidance notes** as well as discussions on topics of interest to network members. Involvement in focal point workshops that will guarantee the **face-to-face interactions** of members to further strengthen the network will also form part of our priorities during the next year.

How to Join

Contact Karin Santi at karin.santi@undp.org

Information & Communication Technology for Development Resource Network (ITRN)

Focus

The Information & Communication Technology for Development Resource Network (ITRN) established in December 1999, is a global group of UNDP staff working on, or interested in, information and communication technology for development (ICTD). The ITRN members represent a broad representation of country offices, ICTD policy specialists, and other key players in HQ and select external participants. Moreover, as ICTD is a crosscutting topic, many thematic disciplines are represented.

In line with the ICTD Thematic Trust Fund, the focus of the ITRN centres on the development and implementation of national e-strategies and related pilot projects. Issues dealt with include human capacity building, infrastructure and access, legal and regulatory frameworks, enterprise, and content/applications such as e-governance and HIV/AIDS.

Through discussions and sharing of information and knowledge, the ITRN seeks to build the capacity of country offices and competencies of staff, as well as to enhance the delivery, relevance and effectiveness of our policy work and advisory services in this new priority area of work. To these ends, the network provides information on internal and external experiences, key up to date resources, a country office query service, and serves as a forum for project review, policy development, and debate on key ICTD challenges and opportunities.

MEMBERSHIP

The 300 members represent a broad representation of country offices, ICTD policy specialists, and other key players in HQ and select external participants. Moreover, as ICTD is a crosscutting topic, many thematic disciplines are represented. The vast majority of members are **field based**.

ICTD focal points form the natural membership of this community, however, as ICT is a cross-cutting theme, those engaged in programming in our other focus areas are encouraged to join. The policy specialists provide support in expanding membership of the network.

SERVICES

Several products and services have been developed.

Discussions, Policy Development, Project Review: Online substantive discussions; policy development and comment on corporate strategy; identification of good practices and lessons learned; peer review of project documents and other collaborative activities.

Referrals: The referral system provides for policy support to country offices, promotion of south-south collaboration, and exchange of tacit knowledge. In this year alone over 40 queries have been handled through the referral system. Past queries have focused on a range of subjects including: UNDP's ICT for Development strategy; national ICT strategies and policy; e-governance; human capacity development; ICT and economic opportunities; connectivity/access; and telecommunication policy.

Information Exchange: Share general information, comparative experiences and keep up to date with key resources through tools such as network digests, resource update bulletins and individual announcements.

A UNDP ICTD **Comparative Experiences** database has also been developed with member support

How to JOIN

Contact Atsushi Yamanaka at atsushi.yamanaka@undp.org

The Poverty Reduction Network (PRN)

Focus

The Poverty Reduction Network (PRN), one of the oldest and largest SURF networks, provides mechanisms for members to improve knowledge and competence in reducing poverty. The network is an important instrument, among others, for increasing UNDP's effectiveness in poverty reduction. The PRN offers the following services to its members:

- On-line discussions on a variety of social and economic topics;
- Regular exchanges of experiences and best practices in policies and programmes for reducing poverty;
- Debates that shape UNDP's policy positions and options on key poverty reduction issues (e.g. pro-poor policies, trade, PRSPs and economic reform);
- Access to new knowledge and information on social and economic issues;
- Opportunities to generate new knowledge key to reducing poverty; and
- Provides quick referrals to a list of experts and organizations engaged in poverty reduction.

MEMBERSHIP

Currently the PRN is the largest knowledge network in UNDP with over 500 members and growing rapidly.

The network is moderated by Sarah Renner.

SERVICES

PRN provides the following:

Discussion: Some lively discussions have taken place on the network, including those on UNDP's niche in the PRSP process, measuring vulnerability, and draft policy notes (e.g. "The role of Macro-economics in Poverty Reduction", "HIV/AIDS and Poverty Reduction", "Poverty-environment nexus").

Best Practices: Highlighting best practices such as developing *National Poverty Trust Funds*, *Poverty Assessment TORs*, and *area-based development schemes and models*

Referral services: Quick and quality responses by connecting members to help identify experts, institutions, similar projects and publications.

Methodologies for Programme Design & Evaluation: Members share experiences and report on available tools and systems to design, monitor and evaluate poverty reduction initiatives.

Digests: For quick review, the digest includes summaries of e-mail exchanges plus announcements on events, jobs, and resources brought up by members during on-line discussion

Practice Newsletter: News from the practice members, CO in the spotlight, update on new publications, events, useful web-sites, and news from collaborations with other practices.

In the year 2002, we have a number of exciting plans, such as: holding a series of on-line discussions, developing an e-journal on poverty reduction, and organising regional events to facilitate opportunities for greater information sharing among members, creating various communities of practice

How to JOIN

Contact Sarah Renner, at sarah.renner@undp.org

The Small Enterprise and Micro finance (SEMFIN) Network

Focus

Established in 1999, the SEMFIN Network seeks to **build the capacity and competencies** of staff in the areas of micro credit, micro finance and small & micro enterprise development, and to contribute to their work by **sharing** information and knowledge. The SEMFIN Network is hosted by the SURF and the Special Unit for Micro finance (SUM) of UNCDF, UNDP's technical advisory unit for micro finance.

MEMBERSHIP

The Small Enterprise and Microfinance (SEMFIN) Network connects around 300 members of country offices, BDP, other headquarter units, and SUM. It is open to all UNDP and UNCDF staff and welcomes new subscribers. SUM staff assumes the moderation of the network and actively participates in knowledge sharing, discussions, and responses to queries. **The network is moderated by Annette Krauss**, SUM's micro finance training specialist.

SERVICES

As an informal network based on e-mail and a site in UNDP's Intranet Knowledge Connection, the SEMFIN network offers the following facilities. ***The demand and active participation of network members is the key for carrying out all these activities:***

Information Sharing: The SEMFIN Network offers UNDP and SUM staff a platform to share information on new publications, events, workshops, micro finance and SME initiatives and programmes, resources, materials/tools and more. Members from field offices are encouraged to share more information on related activities and resources in their respective countries and regions. Much of the information and additional to relevant information from the global microfinance and SME fields is compiled regularly in the **SEMFIN Newsletter and a Network SEMFIN**. The facilitator compiles the information; all members are welcomed to contribute.

Queries/Referrals: The SEMFIN Network posts queries from members for specific information, experience, and technical advice; the facilitator ensures that a quality response or consolidated response is provided. Consultant queries are followed up within the service package offered by SUM's Technical Advisory Services on a cost-recovery basis. Queries for technical advice on micro credit, micro finance and SME projects are shared within SUM and followed up individually, and usually result in responses of general interest to the entire network.

Best Practices/Knowledge Building: "Best practices" in micro finance and in SME development are bodies of knowledge that expand and evolve as practitioners try new approaches to design and deliver services to micro finance clients and micro entrepreneurs. The SEMFIN Network disseminates best practices through individual messages, the digest and links to relevant tools and publications available at the SEMFIN **Resource Corner** on the UNDP Intranet. For the area of micro finance, where UNDP has subscribed to a set of best practices acknowledged by the donor community, the network encourages its members to participate in the micro finance training **workshops** that SUM organises regularly. For the area of SME development, the network facilitates attendance of network members at external training courses and links UNDP colleagues to the wider SME donor community.

Discussion: The SEMFIN Network offers a space for informal discussion of **substantial and operational** issues. Some interesting discussions items have been shared by network members in the past, for example on the importance of sustainable interest rates on micro credits, and on the challenge of supporting sustainable micro finance operations for the poor facing political influence.

How to JOIN

Contact Annette Krauss, at annette.krauss@undp.org

The Global Human Development Network (SURF HDR Network)

Focus

The Global HDR SURF Network taps the collective knowledge of members in order to assist each other with **substantive and technical support** in all areas related to NHDR preparation and follow-up.

MEMBERSHIP

The Global HDR SURF Network connects 414 UNDP staff, national NHDR teams and experts involved in the writing of National Human Development Reports (NHDRs) across all regions. It includes about 20% external members, experts working on the NHDRs but who are not UNDP staff.

The Network is hosted together by the SURF and the NHDR Unit of the Human Development Reports Office (HDRO).

The network is moderated by Marci de Castro.

SERVICES

The objective and services of the network are to:

Share comparative experiences and "best practices" in terms of high quality NHDRs, preparation processes, and policy impact, as well as comment on drafts of NHDRs.

Discuss issues related to the preparation of NHDRs, such as the institutional arrangements needed, the consultative process required, substantive issues of report contents, innovative conceptual issues, technical issues related to the HDI and other indices, selecting target audiences, planning launch strategies and follow-up activities.

Discuss substantive issues related to human development, coming to collective positions on issues on applying human development.

Share information on up-coming workshops, meetings, training, important publications and web-resources relevant to human development in general and NHDRs in particular.

Help other members of national core teams as well as Country Offices to answer queries related to the NHDRs.

Discussions are summarized in **Consolidated Replies**, to which the moderator adds research in order to bring added value around each theme discussed. These are being now put on the **Knowledge Connection** website of the Network. On some subjects, there are now plans to create **Sub-Groups** to discuss among smaller groups and bring conclusions to the rest of the Network. Information concerning new NHDRs, and Reports under preparation, are disseminated through a monthly **InfoNet**.

In addition, a **Global Retreat** was organized in Beirut, Lebanon, bringing together 74 of the members of the Network, to discuss the Corporate Policy on NHDRs, Networking at the global and national level, and conceptual issues related to Human Development, its measurements and thematic areas. The Network is a community of practitioners as well as a **community of believers** in the human development concept.

Discussions over the past year have covered the following range of subjects:

Operational issues and practical topics, including:

- Institutional arrangements for preparing NHDRs (November 1999)
- Preparing sub-regional NHDRs (April 2000)
- Developing and sub-national NHDRs (March 2000)
- National Human Development Networks (May 2000)
- Disseminating and marketing NHDRs (May 2000)
- Minimum requirements (March 2000)
- Commercial sale of NHDRs (January 2001)
- Consultation on the TOR of the NHDR Unit (May 2001)
- Best Practices (March 2001)
- Independence of NHDRs (June 2001)

Thematic areas, including:

- Human rights
- The environment
- Solidarity
- Civil society
- Youth mobilization
- Small-to-medium sized enterprise
- Rural Development
- Governance
- ICT
- Environment and Poverty Eradication
- Operationalising HD
- Human Development Policies for Poverty Eradication
- Human Security and Human Development
- Empowerment and HD
- Decentralization and HD

Technical issues:

- Municipal HDI (dealing with the GDP component)
- SHD Modelling
- Calculation of the PPP
- Calculation of the HDI
- Alternative HDI

Regional and global initiatives, including:

- Brainstorming For An Arctic Human Development Report
- Theme For HDR 2001
- Preparation Of Sub-Regional And Regional HDRs
- Strategies For Operationalizing HDR 2000, Recommendations In The Work Of UNDP.
- Curriculum Development
- Training on Human Development
- Preparation of Reporting on Millenium Target and NHDRs input into HDR 2002.

How to Join

Contact Marcia de Castro, at Marcia.de.castro@undp.org

Crisis Prevention and Recovery Practice Network

Focus

The Crisis Prevention and Recovery Practice Network – short CPRP Network - is UNDP's platform to exchange knowledge and experience around crisis prevention and recovery issues. The CPRP network was launched in September 2002 and has already grown into a community of almost 400 members across the world. The network is facilitated by BCPR and BDP and aims to contribute to **capacity building** of UNDP staff in the field and in HQ in the area of Crisis Prevention and Recovery **and mainstreaming** of CPC issues throughout UNDP. This will be done through

- facilitating exchange of experiences and knowledge at the country, regional and global levels;
- providing opportunities to access new and updated information, lessons learned and best practices
- harmonizing organizational policies and priorities by providing closer linkages between headquarters' thematic units and country offices

The CPRP Network is part of UNDP's global Practice Area Crisis Prevention and Recovery. The CPRP Practice Area has been established to better enable us to become an effective knowledge organization providing country offices with timely, high-quality knowledge-based advisory services. The CPR Practice is comprised of Sub-Practices that will evolve along the CPR Thematic Trust Fund service lines: Conflict Prevention and Peace-building, Transition Recovery, Justice and Security Sector Reform, Small Arms Reduction/DDR, Mine Action, Natural Disaster Reduction.

MEMBERSHIP

Since the official launch of the network in September 2002, the network already has almost 400 members of which 80 % are country offices or field personnel representing staff at all professional levels. With this number, the CPRP Network is already one of UNDP's larger networks reflecting the high demand of sharing knowledge among the CPR Practice area.

As the core thematic unit of the CPR Practice Area, the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) is active in participating and strengthening the activities of the CPRP Net.

The Crisis Prevention and Recovery Practice Network is moderated by Gita Swamy

SERVICES

Since the launch of the network, the CPRP Net has offered and plans the following services to its members:

- Referrals and Sharing of Best Practices
- Consolidated Replies of Discussions and Referrals
- Technical Backstopping
- Monthly Network Digests
- Practice Newsletters (forthcoming)
- Practice Workspace in UNDP Intranet (forthcoming)
- Expert Roster (new roster is being developed)
- Workshops and Trainings on selected topics and practice community building based on needs of CO and Project staff
- Knowledge Management Briefings
- Knowledge-based Advisory Services: e.g. Regional Thematic Networks, Knowledge Maps, etc.

Other services continue to emerge as the members of the CPRP Net community demand them.

How to JOIN

Contact Gita Swamy at gita.swamy@undp.org

Focus

The Secretary-General has committed the UN to play the role of 'score-keeper' of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The UN Country Teams (UNCTs) will support Government (and other local partners) in preparing regular progress reports towards the MDGs – Millennium Development Goals Reports (MDGRs). Each country is expected to have prepared at least one MDGR by the end of 2004.

MDGNet is part of UN Development Group's efforts to support UN staff working on MDGRs. It is hoped that the discussion and exchange of information and experiences through the network will contribute to the production of high-quality reports and a greater awareness on MDGs in the programme countries.

MEMBERSHIP

This is the first knowledge network of the UN Development Group (UNDG). The MDG Net is led and hosted by UNDP, but supports all UN staff working on MDGRs.

The network was launched at the end of 2001, and currently has about 560 members, representing over 100 countries and 25 parts of the UN system.

The MDG Net strives brings to bring together all partners on MDGs, by encouraging government and CSO membership.

The network is moderated by Sarah Renner of UNDP on behalf of the UN Development Group.

SERVICES

Since its launch in January 2002, the network has held lively discussions on the definitions of MDG indicators, ways to create national consensuses around a set of targets and indicators, and creative approaches to publicity for launching the MDGR. The network may also be used to circulate draft reports, share lessons learned, exchange information on workshops, and identify expertise to help with the preparation of MDGRs.

The UNDG web-site, DevLink (www.undg.org), hosts the resource corner for the MDGNet, where many resources and reference materials are posted along with an updated status table on the MDG Reports, a short list of relevant experts and a summary of discussions. At DevLink, you can also view all the MDGRs and other relevant materials published so far.

How to JOIN

Send your name, position and station to Sarah Renner (sarah.renner@undp.org) or to the network at mdg-net@groups.undp.org

MANAGEMENT NETWORK (MPN)

Focus

Management Practice Network

Operational from September 2002, the MPN is a "Community of Practice" for Managers within UNDP to share and exchange common professional interests, concerns, and knowledge needs. Once the network is well established it will be expanded to the broader UN family and externally.

The MPN is an initiative of the Bureau of Management intended for *organization-wide participation*. Current membership includes staff at all levels of the UNDP community, from Administrative Assistants up to Resident Coordinators.

The goal of the MPN is to **provide operational assistance** to its members, through mediating Network queries and requests for information and best practices, as well as to **inform management policy decisions** on timely issues at all levels of the organization.

Examples of the former include queries on Cost Recovery Mechanisms, Harmonizing Consultant pay scales across UN Agencies, procedures for E-Banking, and a request for Terms of Reference for hiring Travel Agents. Examples of the latter include Discussions on Simplification and Harmonization, and policies and procedures for Electronic Documentation.

There are distinct sub areas within MPN covering the themes of **Change Management** and **Business Centres Development**. UNDP's significant experience in these topics represents an important resource both within and outside the organization. Other themes will be formally organized based on emerging needs identified by the community members.

An integral part of the Network's activities planned for early 2003 onwards is the support and facilitation of the work programme of a soon-to-be-launched **Internal Management Consulting service**. This promises to be an exciting endeavour as UNDP builds up its in-house management consulting capacity in order to better assist Country Offices in managing their core business activities.

MEMBERSHIP

- Within 3 months of the Network launch in September 2002, membership already stands at 575.
- To date, 1 in 5 members has made a contribution to the MPN Network.
- 75% of our members are in the Country Offices.

The MPN Network is facilitated by Satish Vangal

SERVICES

The MPN offers the following services:

- **Queries:** Facilitation of requests for assistance from Network members
- **Discussions:** Mediation of Discussions on key topics of current relevance to UNDP operations
- **Sharing of Best Practices**
- **Consolidated Replies** of Discussions and Queries
- **Monthly Digests** containing a synthesis of activity on the Network, with links to more detailed information
- **Workshops and Training** (*forthcoming*)
- **Practice Workspace in UNDP Intranet** (*new look forthcoming*)
- **Sub-Network on Business Centre Development** (BC-DEV)
- Sub-Networks on other topics can be set up based on interest
- *A commitment to never send out messages with large attachments!* All documents will be stored in the UNDP Portal and shared via links.

HOW TO JOIN

Contact Satish Vangal at satish.vangal@undp.org. (*Please include your Functional Title and Duty Station*)

Measuring and Assessing Results: Evaluation Network

Focus

Knowledge sharing and learning continue to be a top corporate priority for UNDP. The purpose of this Network is to strengthen UNDP's evaluation knowledge base by disseminating good practices and lessons learned on monitoring and evaluation to a broad constituency and to foster results-based performance at both country and corporate levels. It will also help build UNDP staff capacity in measuring and assessing results. The network specifically aims to:

- Share and exchange experiences and knowledge and lessons distilled from evaluative work relating to programmes and projects
- Mainstream results orientation within the work of UNDP's six practice areas
- Provide a forum for UNDP staff to share and deepen their knowledge of monitoring and evaluation practices and methodologies

The network is an important tool to further promote results-based monitoring and evaluation, and development effectiveness.

MEMBERSHIP

The network is open to all UNDP staff members interested in and working on measuring and assessing results and who want to contribute and build their capacity in this area. The network has more than 400 members.

To join the network please send a message to our network facilitator Elham Seyedsayamdost (elham.seyedsayamdost@undp.org) based in the Evaluation Office, in NY.

SERVICES

The Network supports the following activities:

- **Respond to queries:** e.g. specific questions on the Handbook on M&E for Results.
- **Launch Issues for discussion** collective brainstorming on evaluation issues or methodologies, country specific analysis of development effectiveness and performance.
- **Provide Information on** recently launched evaluations, other M&E news, Development Effectiveness Reports, and information on evaluative findings (linked to EO website).
- **Provide access to** specific articles, books, training on M&E.
- **Serve as a platform for comments:** M&E tools, reviews, TORs, findings, lessons and recommendations on thematic evaluations.

In addition, the network provides the following services:

- **Consolidated replies:** summary, members who contributed, relevant resources.
- **Information dissemination:** collection of news and new developments (once every 2 months).
- **Virtual Resource Corner:** web based "resource corner" will be established in EO's website. It will function as background source for the network discussions and will serve as a repository of information on best practices, lesson learned, reports and documents, organizations, training sources, tools, references, network newsletters, network discussions etc.

How to JOIN

Contact Elham Seyedsayamdost at elham.seyedsayamdost@undp.org