Progress Report

Name of the country: The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Project number (Atlas): 00082200
Project name: "Giving a voice to youth – promoting greater civic engagement for young people at local level"

DGTTF edition (year): 2012
Implementation period: April 2012 – April 2014
Reporting period: April 2012- December 2012

PROJECT PERFORMANCE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome areas under UNDP strategic plan 2008-2011&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Purpose and expected output</th>
<th>Activities undertaken</th>
<th>RESULTS ACHIEVED</th>
<th>Reasons if progress below target</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local and regional governance enhanced to promote equitable development and inter-ethnic and social cohesion.</td>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong>: To increase youth participation in local governance and ensure more equitable social service delivery through social partnerships. Expected output: Greater youth participation in policy making processes. This is critical for the overall cohesiveness of society and an essential factor for enhancing inter-ethnic dialogue in the country.</td>
<td>Following an inception analysis, six municipalities were selected for project activity implementation: Bitola, Caska, Kumanovo, Ilinden, Stip, and Tearce - all diverse in size, type, ethnic structure and in location. Comprehensive assessments were carried out in all six municipalities to identify the existing gaps in local governance which exacerbate - or have the potential to exacerbate - the social, economic, cultural and political exclusion of young people. The focus of the assessments was put on youth needs and vulnerabilities, participation of youth in governance processes and social service delivery. For the first time ever in the six municipalities, young men and women, local authorities, civil society organizations and business sector representatives gathered around the same table to discuss and better understand the challenges faced by youth at local level.</td>
<td><strong>The key national and local level stakeholders, such as the national Agency for Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the six municipalities, civil society organizations and others, have been involved in the process from the earliest stage. They have all gained a better understanding of the challenges faced by youth at local level.</strong> The comprehensive assessments, carried out in six selected municipalities, resulted in specific recommendations and actions that need to be undertaken at both national and local level to ensure a greater engagement and participation and a stronger voice for young people in local government planning. For example, in the municipality of Stip, young men and women, local authorities and civil society organizations recommended that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are put in place to ensure a smooth implementation of the local youth strategy. Such set of recommendations and actions will support the national and local level institutions to develop evidence-based youth related policies.</td>
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<sup>1</sup> Please state under which of the following nine outcome areas your project falls into:
CUMULATIVE RESOURCES UTILIZED

DGTTF resources: $1,595 USD
Other resources (as applicable; please state sources of funding and amount): UNDP TRAC: $9,795 USD

PROJECT PERFORMANCE—MAIN CHALLENGES

Internal factors:
No challenges encountered.

External factors:
Young people face difficulties in effectively articulating their needs and interests to influence policy-makers and are often unable to secure the social benefits they need. With only a small proportion of young people belonging to civic or professional organizations, the share of youth in the country's social capital is low, undermining social cohesion. There is a pressing need to strengthen the voice of young people and to increase their civic engagement by treating them as social partners.

One of the main challenges is to enhance the capacity of the project’s key national partner — the Agency for Youth and Sports — so that it can provide substantive inputs and guidance on youth-related issues in the country. Another key challenge is the pending adoption of the Law on Youth. The draft law that has initially been proposed has not received the support from the civil society organizations and has been withdrawn from procedure. Also, there is an overall lack of cooperation and coordination among relevant stakeholders, including national and local level institutions and civil society organizations working with youth. This is why the project has ensured that all sides are involved in all stages of the project implementation from the very beginning.

PROJECT PERFORMANCE—MAIN OPPORTUNITIES

Please list the main opportunities which have been the key enabling factors to support the implementation of the project.

One of the main opportunities was the establishment of new partnerships. For example, UNDP has established a partnership with the national Agency for Youth and Sport, a ‘non-traditional’ partner. The project has initiated intensive consultations with other important stakeholders as well, such as the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, the Ministry of Justice and the Association of Local Self-Government Units, involving them in all stages of implementation of activities and ensuring full ownership of the project.

Furthermore, national institutions are not heavily involved in youth related policy-making, which provides an opportunity for UNDP to position itself as one of the key players in this area. The need for supporting evidence-based policy-making is acknowledged and appreciated by all relevant institutions. UNDP’s neutrality, network, knowledge and experience are perceived as a great asset. For example, in order to further strengthen evidence-based policy-making, the national institutions recently requested additional support from UNDP, to carry out an in-depth comparative analysis on youth networking and organizing, to support youth related policy-making processes.

The civil society sector, particularly civil society organizations working on youth-related issues at national and local level, have expressed willingness to actively participate in all processes, which is essential for the successful implementation of the project.

1. Civil society, including civil society organizations and voluntary associations, and the private sector contribute to the MDGs in support of national planning strategies and policies
2. Electoral laws, processes and institutions strengthen inclusive participation and professional electoral administration
3. Access to information policies support accountability and transparency
4. National, regional and local levels of governance expand their capacities to reduce conflict and manage the equitable delivery of public services
5. Legislatures, regional elected bodies, and local assemblies have strengthened institutional capacity, enabling them to represent their constituents more effectively
6. Effective, responsive, accessible and fair justice systems promote the rule of law, including both formal and informal processes, with due consideration on the rights of the poor, women and vulnerable groups.
7. Strengthened capacities of national human rights institutions
8. Strengthened national, regional and local level capacity to mainstream gender equality and women’s empowerment in government policies and institutions
9. Strengthened national, regional and local level capacity to implement anti-corruption initiatives
RATING ON PROGRESS on PARTNERSHIPS

Please describe the level to which the DGTTF project has contributed to strengthening partnership with different stakeholders and tick the boxes as appropriate:

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Strengthened</th>
<th>Somewhat Strengthened</th>
<th>Unchanged</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Donors</td>
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<td>3. Civil society:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) Academia</td>
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<td>b) Unions</td>
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<td>c) Religious orgs</td>
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<td>d) NGO/CBOs</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Private sector</td>
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<td>5. UN system</td>
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<td>6. Other Int. orgs (like IMF, ADB, etc)</td>
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<td>7. Other (please specify)</td>
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Comments:

WAYS IN WHICH DGTTF FUNDED ACTIVITIES WERE CATALYTIC AND INNOVATIVE

Please indicate how DGTTF funds helped the CO advanced its agenda in Democratic Governance. How did DGTTF funds allow the CO to explore innovative approaches? Did other donors or the government provide additional funding as a result? Did the DGTTF funds allow UNDP to advance the dialogue or garner a leadership position?

This is the first intervention of the UNDP CO Skopje office which has a very specific focus on youth. The DGTTF funds have helped advance the CO’s democratic governance agenda through the establishment of partnerships with non-traditional partners, such as the national Agency for Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Justice. The funds have also helped strengthen further the long-standing partnership between UNDP and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy by opening up new potential areas for cooperation.

The governance assessments that have been carried out and the comparative analysis on youth networking and organizing will provide a good basis for evidence-based youth related policy-making and garner UNDP a leadership position in this field.

The Social Entrepreneurship Programme for Youth, which will be implemented throughout 2013, will allow exploring of innovative approaches by forming social partnerships that should ensure more inclusive delivery of services for young men and women. The local self-government units have already pledged financial contribution for this type of activities.

LESSONS LEARNED

Please elaborate on the three most important lessons learned during the project implementation. It is expected that more lessons learned will be shared in the more advanced stages of the project implementation, but at this initial stage, the three most important lessons learned are as follows:

1. To ensure ownership, regular meetings and coordination with all relevant stakeholders is needed from the beginning of the project. For example, involving the Agency for Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and the Ministry of Justice in the design and implementation of the governance assessment, ensured that the assessment is tailored to their specific policy-making needs and that the recommendations will be used widely.

2. The introduction of new concepts must go hand-in-hand with capacity building to ensure that all stakeholders have a good understanding of the concept and realistic expectations. For this particular project, governance assessment and social entrepreneurship were seen as relatively new concepts, as there is not much experience and knowledge of these topics in the country. Additional efforts were invested to bring these concepts closer to all relevant stakeholders.

3. Additional efforts need to be invested to involve the business sector in the assessment and planning activities and to ensure support for youth social entrepreneurship. Experience shows that it is difficult to engage the business sector in activities from which they do not see direct benefits.
SUPPORT FROM HQ/REGIONAL BUREAUS/REGIONAL SERVICE CENTRES

Please indicate the nature of support requested and received from HQ, Regional Bureaus, Regional Service Centers, DG-net during the course of project implementation.

During the Regional Workshop on Democratic Governance and Youth Participation in the Europe and the CIS Region held on 29-30 May 2012, specific advice was provided in several areas, such as social partnership, social entrepreneurship, civic engagement, youth involvement in service delivery, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation, gender mainstreaming and other – all aiming to enhance certain aspects of the project implementation and utilize relevant experience of other countries in the region. Additional support was requested and received from RBEC on the performance measurement review, including indicators, baseline and targets. Also, specific advice was received for the governance assessment methodology and participatory process.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Has your project contributed to gender mainstreaming? If so, please elaborate.

Yes, the project has contributed to gender mainstreaming. A gender analysis was carried out during the inception phase of the project. Gender disaggregated data were used for the governance assessments. Men and women participated in all activities and discussions and recommended a few targeted interventions to help promote gender equality and women’s empowerment.

To illustrate with a concrete example: during the round-table discussion organized in the municipality of Tearce, young mothers that have just recently formed the first local women’s civil society organization, pointed out that there is an urgent need to open a child care facility in the municipality. With this type of facility, they would not have to spend so much time at home, taking care of the children and the elderly, but could instead find jobs and become more economically empowered. Other local civil society organizations and municipal officials fully supported this idea, which they believe will also ensure greater participation of women in democratic governance. The project will support opportunities for social partnerships to help open such a facility in the forthcoming period.

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Date: 21 January 2012