

FAST FACTS

United Nations
Development Programme



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Civil Society and Civic Engagement in the Africa Region

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works with a diverse range of civil society organizations (CSOs) at regional and local levels in Africa to help lift people out of poverty, build strong, independent and resilient communities and promote human rights, and thereby advance the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To this end, UNDP helps to facilitate dialogue between governments and civil society to enhance partnerships and ensure civic participation in policy planning and reform; and foster an environment where civil society can develop and operate.



UNDP is supporting an entrepreneurship programme that aims to create 100,000 businesses and expand another 100,000 by 2016. Aynis Design, pictured above, is one of them. Photo: UNDP Ethiopia

UNDP in action

- In **Nigeria**, UNDP is implementing the second phase of a [joint donor-funded project](#) aimed at strengthening the capacities of CSOs to enable them to participate in development and policy-making processes. As a result, more than 600 CSOs representing women, youth and marginalized groups such as people with disabilities have become increasingly involved in governance reforms, anti-corruption efforts, advocacy for human rights, and observing elections. For instance, women's groups participated in the country's constitutional review process by developing a joint memorandum in 2012 and addressing issues such as rights to education, health and housing. They also examined "indigeneship" or lineage issues and how this affects the ability of women to hold representational positions in Nigeria.
- In **Madagascar**, UNDP and its partners supported the country's presidential and parliamentary elections aimed at ending the country's four-year political stalemate. UNDP was involved in all aspects of the elections, held from October to December 2013, through a [project to support the electoral cycle](#) that provided technical assistance to the

National Electoral Commission of the Transition. Over 470 civil society representatives in 119 districts were trained to inform citizens about the elections and encourage them to vote, mitigate conflict, and act as watchdogs. UNDP also partnered with a women's organization to train 140 members who ran for Parliament. Furthermore, UNDP conducted extensive civic education and advocacy campaigns throughout the country.

- In **Rwanda**, UNDP partnered with the Forum for Activists against HIV/AIDS Scourge (FAAS) for the [Universal Access for Women and Girls Now!](#) (UA Now!) initiative. Launched in February 2010, UA Now! is aimed at increasing access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for women and girls. As part of this initiative, FAAS started a legal clinic staffed with two lawyers and 30 paralegals who were trained in laws related to succession, gender-based violence, and land and alternative dispute resolution. Additionally, 30 female leaders from the National Women's Council were trained in these subjects. Furthermore, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, and judicial police were trained on rights-based approaches to gender and HIV mainstreaming. As a result of the partnership, FAAS gained

new insight into the issues women and girls face in accessing HIV and AIDS services and learned of new approaches in addressing gender and HIV related issues.

- In **Ethiopia**, UNDP is working with the Ministry of Urban Development and Construction to tap into the creativity and drive of young entrepreneurs to accelerate the country's economic growth, and create jobs, wealth and alleviate poverty. Since the launch of the [Entrepreneurship Development Programme](#) in February 2013, over 1,000 young people have gained entrepreneurial skills and knowledge through training courses in Addis Ababa and four major regions. The newly-created Entrepreneurship Development Centre, supported by UNDP, is partnering with public universities and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to scale up the programme nationwide and foster and strengthen entrepreneurs.

- In **Chad**, UNDP and its partners support the establishment of customized financial services for poor and low-income populations to boost local business initiatives, especially those led by women and other vulnerable groups. The [Programme of Support for Inclusive Finance](#) is building the legal and institutional foundations of a robust microfinance sector benefitting large segments of the population. Since 2012, the programme has resulted in the creation of 185 civic associations that bring together more than 4,000 women.

- By facilitating early recovery, UNDP supports households, ex-combatants, their family members and internally displaced persons to help them recover their livelihoods through employment and income-generation activities. In **Burundi**, since 2010, UNDP has been helping the Government to put in place a [three-stage scheme](#) enabling ex-combatants and people affected by war to rebuild livelihoods through community projects. Participants earn a salary, pool their savings for business projects and are supported by micro-finance institutions and business incubators, creating thousands of jobs and improving community relations in provinces with high numbers of internally displaced persons.

- As part of the [Small Grants Programme](#) of the Global Environment Facility, UNDP helped develop the capacities of peasant farmers in **Ghana** to invest in sustainable land management. UNDP also helped farmers to address land

degradation by cultivating sunflower and *jatropha curcas* while also ensuring food security and commercial production of biofuel. Members of the Tema Cooperative Sunflowers Association received training on agro-forestry systems. They registered as a farmer-based organization and established a sunflower processing mill and a bio-digester to process sunflower seeds into oil and biodiesel. As a result, the organization now uses sustainable land management practices, produces and sells biodiesel and also engages in apiculture. These efforts have led the Ministry of Energy to encourage investments in biofuels as part of the national energy mix policy and to pursue cabinet approval for a renewable energy policy.

- In the countries of the Sahel, which are characterized by chronic poverty, drought and political violence, UNDP supports programmes to help populations withstand shocks. For instance, UNDP is partnering with governments, the private sector and CSOs in **Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, and Niger** and to boost food security through the [MDG Acceleration Framework](#). This collaborative and multi-sectoral approach is creating programmes that widen access to seeds and fertilizers, improve nutrition, expand social safety nets and raise the technical know-how of small-scale farmers. In all these countries, CSOs and local NGOs, including representatives of community-based groups and producer organizations, have engaged in both identifying bottlenecks at the start of the process and implementing solutions. In **Niger**, NGOs are helping to identify vulnerable households, while ensuring the coordination of all local interveners.

For more information:

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