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Outcome Evaluation of UNDP India's Democratic Governance Programmes

2008-2011

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ATI	Administrative Training Institute
A2I	Capacity Building for Access to Information
A2J	Access to Justice for Marginalized People
BRGF	Backward Regions Grant Fund
CBDUG	Capacity Building for Urban Governance
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CDDP	Capacity Development for District Planning and Livelihood Promotion
CDP	City Development Plan
CDLG	Capacity Development for Local Governance
CPAP	Country Program Action Plan
DFID	Department for International Development
DHDR	District Human Development Report
DSA	Daily Subsistence Allowance
DSO	District Support Officer
GIS	Geographic Information System
Gol	Government of India
HDR	Human Development Report
IRDP	Integrated Rural Development Programme
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NCBF	National Capacity Building Framework
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PAHELI	People's Assessment of Health Education and Livelihoods
PESA	Panchayat (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act
PIO	Public Information Officer
PPCP	Public Private Community Partnerships
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutions
RD	Rural Decentralization and Participatory Planning for Poverty Reduction
RTI	Right to Information Act
SAJI	Strengthened Access to Justice in India
SHDR	State Human Development Report
SIRD	State Institute of Rural Development
SPO	State Project Officer
UIDSSMT	Urban Infrastructure Development for Small and Medium Town
ULB	Urban Local Body
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistant Framework
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund

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Third – and most important – are the innumerable Government officials, trainers, civil society activists, democratic governance experts and programme beneficiaries who made the time to be interviewed at great length, and in great detail, for this Evaluation. I hope that I have effectively captured their varied observations, and reflected these in a manner that UNDP might find easy to action.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize how much I myself have learned from this Evaluation and how useful UNDP's training materials and films have proved to my own grassroots work in Uttarakhand. As I have already shared with the Democratic Governance team, a key outcome of this Evaluation is its capacity-building of the Evaluator herself!

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

This Outcome Evaluation assesses the contribution of UNDP India's Democratic Governance programmes (2008-2011) to development results in the country. Conducted independently in July-September 2011 (near the end of the 2008-2012 programme cycle), it has run in parallel with and contributed to UNDP's Global Evaluation Office's decennial Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in India.

The Evaluation's specific objectives were to:

- Review the UNDP India Democratic Governance Programme with a view to understand its **relevance and contribution to national priorities**,
- Review the **status of the outcome and the key factors that have affected (both positively and negatively)**,
- Assess the extent to which UNDP has succeeded in **building capacities of key institutions**,
- Review and assess the Programme's **partnership with the government bodies, civil society and private sector and international organizations** in Programme,
- Review and assess links/**joint activities with other UNDP Programmes and UN Agencies** and how these have contributed to the achievement of the outcome, and
- Provide **recommendations for future country programmes**.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The Evaluation examined all the Democratic Governance projects listed in the India Country Programme Action Plan/ the Country Programme Document (2008-2012), as also the handful of projects carrying over from the previous programming cycle (2003-2007): a total of 20 projects. It also considered the results of UNDP's key non-project advocacy efforts in India.

UNDP's Democratic Governance project activity broadly fall into five key areas, which are to:

- i) build state, district, and rural-micro planners' capacity to incorporate human development considerations into all their planning activity,
- ii) build governmental and civil society capacity to strengthen implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA);
- iii) enhance the governance capacity of elected representatives, particularly women;
- iv) build governmental and civil society capacity to use the Right to Information Act (RTI); and
- v) improve access to justice for the marginalised sections, especially women.

Most of these programmes operate/d only in seven states: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, though some had a larger coverage. Administratively, most of these programmes involve a mix of UNDP national, state and district level activity and partnership,

The Evaluator reviewed all project-related documents and interviewed 112 varied stakeholders in New Delhi and three sample states (Rajasthan, Orissa and Chattisgarh) to obtain a 360° view of programme strengths, contributions and shortcomings. All interviewees were asked a common set of ten questions on programme effectiveness, relevance, efficiency and sustainability and UNDP strategic positioning and impact in India, which were drawn from UNDP's *Assessment of Development Results Method Manual (January 2011)*.

KEY FINDINGS

Informants overwhelmingly credit UNDP with having made seminal contributions in the run-up to or roll-out of strategic national initiatives, such as the Right to Information Act, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, and Panchayati Raj training.

Relevance and contribution to national priorities

All informants also feel that UNDP's Democratic Governance portfolio (2008-2012) is strongly aligned with national priorities because it has been designed

and is being implemented in close partnership with GoI. They also feel that UNDP's 'human development' focus closely accords with India's ongoing struggle against poverty, hunger, ill-health and illiteracy. UNDP's unique strength by far is that it is the only international development partner completely trusted by government and citizens. UNDP's other key strength is that its monies are flexible and so can be used innovatively to trigger multiplier effects, particularly in the area of training and capacity building.

Informants unanimously consider the concept of Human Development to be UNDP's prime contribution to India. Most important is that UNDP's human development work has fundamentally guided the Government of India in strategically boosting and fine-tuning social sector spending over the past two decades.

Planning

UNDP's Human Development Reports, Human Development Index and its human development trainings have taught Government officials that they must look at planning through a human development prism, showing how human well-being translates directly into economic development. UNDP's gender-inclusion and social-inclusion work is also credited with having triggered a similar mindset shift. Most important, UNDP took human development, gender and inclusion out of the realm of NGOs, straight to the heart of Government.

Equally important, UNDP's emphasis on inclusive consultation in its DHDR and District Planning projects has triggered the beginning of popular participation in village and district planning, creating noticeable accountability pressures on Government.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

UNDP has played a major role in supporting the Ministry of Rural Development operationalize India's landmark Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) by financing a Technical Cell to help run the project, a national series of programme evaluations, and a variety of

programme-related pilots. Similarly, UNDP is credited with being the first international development partner to recognize the importance of India's Right to Information movement. It "broke new ground" by underwriting cross-state exchanges and international workshops of activists, elected representatives, and government officials, as also widespread governmental training once the Act was passed.

Right to Information Act

UNDP is credited with being the first development partner to recognize the importance of India's Right to Information movement and it played a seminal role in the exchange of ideas that led to the enactment of this Act in 2005.

Capacity building of Panchayati Raj Officials, including women

UNDP's Orissa Dakshyata and Capacity Building for Local Governance programmes have helped GoI radically upscale the quantity and quality of training for Panchayati Raj officials throughout the country. These programmes have also facilitated the development of some innovative new courses for rural stakeholders, particularly in Chattisgarh. Its work to politically empower women is also yielding observable results, encouraging a growing variety of women to step out of their homes and take up issues of public relevance.

Access to justice for the marginalized

UNDP is the only development partner chosen by GOI to support its effort to strengthen and reform of the justice system, and its two access to justice programmes have created a close working partnership between the Indian judicial system and civil society for the first time. It is now helping India's judicial system identify areas for improvement in delivery of justice to the poor women and men and implement innovative small pilots on legal aid and legal empowerment.

Status of the outcome and key factors affecting it

Despite the notable contribution being made by UNDP's Democratic Governance initiatives,

projects are not able to meet all their deliverables. This is due to a handful of structural issues, referred to repeatedly by informants. Broadly, these issues are:

- UNDP is “spreading itself too thin” and not seeing issues “through to the end”,
- It requires 1-1.5 years of the 4-year programme cycle just to obtain government clearances and put in place project personnel/ infrastructure,
- Human resource turnover is extremely high in certain projects,
- UNDP Country Office staff need to monitor and drive projects more closely at the field level,
- project budgets are too small, and
- there is not sufficient governmental ownership and drive behind projects.

Building capacity of key institutions

While the materials and methodologies being produced with UNDP support are constructively embedding themselves in State-training institutions, the same is not happening with UNDP-provided experts, trainers, and district staff, who tend to serve primarily as short-term, parallel capacity, say informants.

Informants thus advise UNDP to focus on building permanent local capacity and on creating local knowledge repositories, even if it is more time-consuming,

Partnership with government bodies, civil society, private sector and international organizations

UNDP has created a variety of platforms that have enabled Government and civil society to collaborate constructively on accountability, governance and human development issues, with important results for national planning, policy-making and capacity building. However, informants would like to see more direct UNDP-civil society in the next programme cycle. Informants also say there is need for tighter intra-UN coordination in the UN-Gol Joint Programme on Convergence.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

Going forward, UNDP should build strategically on its strengths, informants advise. Equally important is to identify and expand areas of programmatic synergy, both within the overall UNDP India programme and the Democratic Governance portfolio itself. Doing this will maximize field impact and cost-effectiveness, they say.

Planning for Human Development

All informants urged UNDP to press ahead with its Human Development Reports, in particularly its District Human Development Reports. These are bringing unique value to district planners, district administrators and district populations. Key suggestions include: DHDRs should be regularly released at 2-3 year intervals, and UNDP should help each District Administrations set up a comprehensive and up-to-date database of ‘human development’ statistics for use in district planning and in tracking district performance. Informants also urge UNDP to systematically build local capacity for human development research and analysis, including micro-planning capacity within panchayats.

Capacity Building for Local Governance

State government and civil society informants underlined the need for a thorough evaluation of learning outcomes to determine whether and how Panchayati Raj training is impacting the quality of grassroots governance. UNDP also needs to support its training institute partners in creating “holistic and ongoing learning systems” that result in discernable behavior change and better governance. Trainees should be taught how to think critically about law, policy, and government schemes, so that they can make constructive inputs in these areas.

MGNREGA

Informants feel that UNDP needs to upgrade the Technical Cell to keep with the Government's new ‘mission mode’ approach to the MGNREGA programme. They also call for similar UNDP-financed

Technical Cells within each state Government, and a broader set of MGNREGA operational partnerships.

Access to Justice – In the next programme cycle, the Access to Justice programme should focus on expanding the reach and depth of training and sensitization within the judicial system, and on building mass legal literacy. As important is to undertake a systematic evaluation of programme impact with a view to improvements.

Access to Information and Urban Governance – Many informants suggested that UNDP continue to support RTI capacity-building by making access to information initiatives a fundamental component of its other Democratic Governance programmes.

A handful of informants also urged UNDP to institute an urban governance programme. Since India's urban population is growing very rapidly, there is a pressing need to radically improve the quality of Indian municipal governance, they say. . Close to a half of India's population is already urban, and half of this population is poor, making it vital to create a cadre of well-trained municipal officials who can address this immense administrative and developmental challenge. UNDP might thus approach its urban governance programme, as an organic parallel to its Panchayati Raj training programme.

I. Introduction and Background

UNDP India works to support India in reducing human poverty and in “promoting social, economic and political inclusion for the most disadvantaged, especially women and girls,” an agenda deriving from the India United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2008-2012. This Framework, in turn, accords with the targets set by the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and India’s Eleventh Five Year Plan, which gives utmost high priority to inclusive growth.

UNDP’s ‘Democratic Governance’ programme works to “bring Governments closer to people, and to enhance people’s access to public administration and justice...by partnering with the Government of India to strengthen systems, institutions and mechanisms that enable local elected representatives, officials and communities to perform their functions effectively.”

The programme consists of five major interventions, each of which is briefly described below:

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL INCLUSION AS CENTRAL TO PLANNING

This programme seeks to make ‘human development’ (an approach pioneered by UNDP in the 1990s) an integral component of the Indian government’s plans and policies. While, initially, UNDP support focused on building India’s capacity to prepare State Human Development Reports (HDRs), since 2004 it has concentrated on preparing District Human Development Reports (DHDRs), as a means of deepening ‘human development’ analysis at the district levels, and on integrating human development concerns in state and district planning processes. According to the UNDP website, 21 states have prepared State HDRs and 80 DHDRs are underway in 15 states.

Equally important, UNDP has continually prioritized gender equality and inclusion in India, most particularly in its range of planning-related programmes. It has pioneered the practice of gender-budgeting and gender sub-planning in India, initially supporting India’s Central and State Governments plan for the special needs of women and now, increasingly, doing so at the district, departmental and village level as well. Over these past few years, UNDP has also been according similar priority to building planning capacity across administrative tiers to address the need of socially marginalized groups.

UNDP’s India Country Programme (2008-2012)

The current Country Programme (2008-2012) contributes to UNDAF outcomes in areas of capacity development for effective, accountable and participatory decentralization and a rights-based approach to achieving the MDGs, with a focus on disadvantaged groups (especially women and girls). Programme initiatives relate to the following two UNDAF Outcomes:

Outcome Two: By 2012, accountable and responsive local government systems, in rural and urban areas, are in place in selected districts/cities (within priority states), which promote equitable and sustainable development to achieve MDGs/ local development goals with special attention to the needs of disadvantaged groups, especially women and girls.

Outcome Three: 11th Plan targets related to MDGs are on track in selected districts in each of the 7 priority states.

Programme initiatives are concentrated in the seven focus states – Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh – which have low rates of human development, gender disparity indices and high proportions of scheduled castes and tribes. Within the focus states, the United Nations (including UNDP) has identified five districts in each for joint and convergent activities with importance given to state and district-level linkages.

DISTRICT PLANNING TO ACHIEVE THE MDGs

Here, UNDP is working to strengthen district (and state) level capacities to plan in a decentralized manner, as a key strategy in helping India achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The programme’s unique and noteworthy features – ‘change management’ pilots, ‘gender sub-plans’ within district plans, and use of ‘community monitoring tools’ such as PAHELI – are intended to create a paradigm shift in the manner in which district and state planners approach local planning and service delivery. By fundamentally changing planners’ mindsets, this effort aims to lay the ground for effective outcome-

based, inclusive and integrated local planning that optimizes resource use and developmental impact. The programme is also supporting state and district governments adapt and implement new national planning directives, including the Planning Commission's Integrated District Planning and Gender Sub-Plan guidelines, among other things.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR LOCAL GOVERNANCE

In this programme, UNDP supports the government's efforts to strengthen grassroots democracy via the National Capability Building Framework. Capacity assessments undertaken for partner states form the basis of capacity development strategies for state training institutes that reach out to elected representatives. Partnerships with NGOs aim to enhance outreach and quality.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO JUSTICE

In partnership with the Department of Justice since 2006, UNDP supports initiatives to strengthen access to justice for the poor, marginalized castes and tribal communities and religious minorities. The approach has two objectives: to enable key justice sector institutions to effectively serve the poor; and to empower the disadvantaged to access justice services. A Justice Innovation Fund, launched in 2009, in 66 districts across the 7 UNDAF states encourages innovative practices in legal awareness and access to justice for the poor.

UPHOLDING CITIZENS' RIGHTS: SUPPORT TO KEY LEGISLATIONS

UNDP provides support to monitoring and evaluation of centrally-sponsored schemes and operationalisation of key legislations at local levels, particularly the Right to Information (RTI) Act and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Technical support to the Ministry of Rural Development aims to improve transparency and accountability in the world's largest employment guarantee scheme.

UNDP is also helping to strengthen the capacity of a number of state training and research institutions across these five broad issue areas.

Another intervention in UNDP's Democratic Governance portfolio is Solution Exchange. This is an online platform for practitioners with common interests (known as Communities of Practice) to learn from each other and collaborate for further knowledge development. The aim is to build a more nuanced and context specific knowledge base that can help accelerate achievement of national human development goals and the MDGs. Solution Exchange allows practitioners to share experiences, documents, best practices, and tools towards furthering action on human development. The Decentralization Community of Practice facilitated by UNDP brings together individuals from governments, elected institutions, training institutions, civil society, media, development partners, development practitioners and other organizations who are concerned with strengthening the institutions of local self-governance and municipal agencies to enable them to govern more effectively. The Community addresses political, functional, administrative and financial decentralization in both rural and urban contexts.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

2.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

This Outcome Evaluation assesses the contribution of UNDP India's Democratic Governance programmes (2008-2011) to development results in the country. Conducted independently in July-September 2011 (near the end of the 2008-2012 programme cycle), it has run in parallel with/ contributed to the UNDP Global Evaluation Office's decennial Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in India.

The Evaluation's specific objectives were to:

- Review the UNDP India Democratic Governance Programme with a view to understand its **relevance and contribution to national priorities** for stock taking and lesson learning, and recommending corrections that may be required for enhancing effectiveness of UNDP's development assistance;
- Review the **status of the outcome and the key factors that have affected (both positively and negatively)**, contributing and constraining) the outcome;
- Assess the extent to which UNDP outputs and implementation arrangements have been effective for **building capacities of key institutions** which implement government schemes and policies (the nature and extent of the contribution of key partners and the role and effectiveness of partnership strategies in the outcome);
- Review and assess the Programme's **partnership with the government bodies, civil society and private sector and international organizations** in Programme;
- Review links/**joint activities with other UNDP Programmes and UN Agencies** and how these have contributed to the achievement of the outcome
- Provide **recommendations for future country programme** regarding ways in which the UNDP resources can most strategically impact change in capacities of key institutions of the country so that the delivery mechanisms of the Government are better designed, suit their purpose, and that governance systems put inclusion at the centre of Government efforts; capacity of demand-side local institutions (community, CBOs, PRIs) to seek accountability is enhanced.

- Through this evaluation UNDP India seeks to **understand and articulate the key contributions that the Governance programme has made** in the programmes on democratic governance processes, a rigorous analysis of the areas of synergy between the various capacity development strategies adopted within the programme and with other practice areas of UNDP India and recommendations to strengthen UNDP's interventions in this critical area of engagement with the Government of India.

2.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The Evaluation examined all the Democratic Governance projects listed in the India Country Programme Action Plan/ the Country Programme Document (2008-2012), as also the handful of projects carrying over from the previous programming cycle (2003-2007). Table 1 lists the 20 projects to be evaluated.

Table 1: Outcome Evaluation - Democratic Governance: List of Projects for Review

Sl.No	Project name
1	Strengthening State Plans for Human Development (SSPHD)
2	Strengthening State Plans for Human Development (SSPHD) – DFID Component
3	Promoting Gender Equality (PGE)
4	Capacity Development for District Planning and Livelihood Promotion (CDDP)
5	Rural Decentralization and Participatory Planning for Poverty Reduction (RD)
6	UNDP-DFID partnership (PPCP)
7	Support to Operationalization to National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)-Phase I
8	Support to Operationalization of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)-Phase II
9	Capacity Development for Local Governance (CDLG)
10	Capacity Building of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) and Functionaries of PRIs

Sl.No	Project name
11	Capacity Building of the PRIs in Orissa (Dakshyata)
12	Enhancing women's roles and participation in local governance by making governance gender responsive (Action Aid)
13	Enhancing the Role of Women in Strengthening Democracy (Center for Social Research)
14	Access to Justice for Marginalised People (A2J)
15	Access to Justice (SAJI I)
16	Capacity Building for Access to Information (A2I)
17	Capacity Building for Urban Governance (CBDUG)
18	ICT for Development (DFID)
19	Public-Private Partnerships for the Urban Environment (PPPUE) - Sustainable Local Energy Services in Tiruchengodu Town
20	Coordination and Decision Support System (CDSS) on External Assistance

Broadly, these 20 projects fall into five key activity areas, which are to:

- i) build state, district, and rural-micro planners' capacity to incorporate human development considerations into all their planning activity,
- ii) build governmental and civil society capacity to strengthen implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA);

- iii) enhance the governance capacity of elected representatives, particularly women;
- iv) build governmental and civil society capacity to use the Right to Information Act (RTI); and
- v) improve access to justice for the marginalised sections, especially women.

Most of these programmes operate/d only in seven states: Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. This is in keeping with the Country Programme Action Plan (2008-2012), which strategically focuses UNDP resources and efforts in India's poorest states for maximal development impact. Administratively, most of these programmes involve a mix of UNDP national, state and district level activity and partnership, with the exception of the MGNREGA programme where activity has tended to be largely at the national level so far. The Access to Information and State Plans for Human Development projects which were carried forward from the previous country programme, had a larger coverage that went well beyond the UNDAF States.

The Evaluation also assessed the results of UNDP assistance from non-core resources, and UNDP non-project advocacy and knowledge-sharing activities (including Solution Exchange; technical support to the Planning Commission, Central and State Governments on issues ranging from District Human Development Reports and gender budgeting to social audits; facilitating the participation of civil society and marginalized groups in national planning efforts; the mainstreaming of legal literacy material; and global best-practice sharing).

3. Methodology

3.1 DATA COLLECTION

The Evaluation used three methods to collect data. These were i) document reviews, ii) individual and/or group interviews, and iii) project/field visits.

- **Document review** – The evaluator reviewed all Democratic Governance planning, operational and evaluation documents (as also the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and Country Programme Action Plan) to assess the extent to which programmes met the goals enunciated for them.
- **Individual and group interviews** – The evaluator then interviewed all the major stakeholders involved in each project. To obtain a holistic view of the developmental impact of each project, the evaluator also interviewed ‘third party’ observers operating in the Democratic Governance area. These might be civil society groups, journalists/ editors, elected representatives and Government officials with no link to the programme. Their observations provide many useful pointers to UNDP India in improving its strategic positioning and developmental impact going forward.

Though the evaluator did not have the time to conduct a comprehensive survey for each project, she posed the same set of questions to each interviewee, enabling a rough quantification of perceptions on major issues.

The set of stakeholders interviewed, as relevant, for each project were:

- UNDP official handling project/ programme
- Central Ministry official handling project/ programme
- State Department official handling project/ programme
- District Department official handling project/ programme
- Project manager/ project staff offering implementation support to Government, at central, state or district level
- Training institution partners (State Institutes for Rural Development, Administrative Training Institutes, others)
- Key trainers/ ‘responsible parties’ used by project

- Development partners
- Elected representatives and government officials trained by programme. (Also other project trainees, including media and civil society groups).
- ‘Third party’ observers
- Community members who are the intended ‘downstream’ beneficiaries of the project
- **Project/ field visits** - The evaluator travelled to Rajasthan, Orissa and Chattisgarh to conduct in-person interviews/group discussions with key stakeholders and observe projects directly in the state capital and two representative districts. In Rajasthan, the evaluator visited Jaipur and Bhilwara and Udaipur Districts. In Orissa, the evaluator visited Bhubaneswar, and Ganjam and Sundargarh Districts. These two states/ four districts were chosen for their high concentration and long history of UNDP Democratic Governance projects. Both states have also featured in previous Democratic Governance Outcome Evaluations, offering an interesting baseline for comparison. UNDP’s Democratic Government involvement in Chhattisgarh is more recent (though as focused as in Rajasthan and Orissa), and has thus not previously undergone an Outcome Evaluation. Here, the Evaluator only visited one district: Korba.

3.2 KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

All interviewees were asked a common set of ten questions on programme effectiveness, relevance, efficiency and sustainability and UNDP strategic positioning and impact in India. Drawn from the suggested list of questions in UNDP’s *Assessment of Development Results Method Manual (January 2011)*, these were:

- In your opinion, what has been the programme’s **most significant contribution?**
- Has it introduced any **novel ‘best practice’?**
- Is the programme **designed well**, or, does it need to be modified for more development impact? (*For training programmes, also: Was the course matter relevant? Should the training have been differently structured or delivered?*)
- Has the project or programme been

implemented within deadline and cost estimates?

- What **implementation challenges** did you confront? How did you address these?
- How sustainable is the programme, and what sort of **exit strategy** should UNDP put in place?
- What sort of investments/ partnerships should UNDP make to scale up its **pilots**?
- In your opinion, what **success parameters** should UNDP use to measure this programme?
- Do you feel that UNDP is effectively **documenting development lessons** being learned through this programme, and sharing these with those who would find these useful?
- In your view, what are **UNDP's comparative strengths** in building India's capacity for 'Democratic Governance', and which programmes/ activities should it focus on? (Are UNDP and

other development partners 'stepping on each other's toes' and unnecessarily duplicating each other's efforts?)

However, for convenience, findings and recommendations are arranged as per the major questions in the Evaluation's Terms of Reference. These are:

- Relevance and contribution to national priorities
- Status of the outcome and the key factors that have affected it (both positively and negatively)
- Building capacities of key institutions
- Partnership with the government bodies, civil society and private sector and international organizations; including joint activities with other UN Agencies
- Recommendations for future country programmes

4. Key Findings

4.1 RELEVANCE AND CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL PRIORITIES

Informants overwhelmingly credit UNDP projects with having made seminal contributions in the run-up to or roll-out of strategic national initiatives, such as the Right to Information Act, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, and Panchayati Raj training. Equally, UNDP has created a variety of platforms that have enabled Government and civil society to collaborate constructively on accountability, governance and human development issues. UNDP's non-project advocacy efforts have also fundamentally informed the Government's approach to priority issues, particularly in the areas of planning and anti-corruption.

4.1.1 Relevance to national priorities

All informants also feel that UNDP's Democratic Governance portfolio (2008-2012) is strongly aligned with national priorities, for two reasons. First, all major programmes have been designed and are being implemented in close partnership with the Government of India. Second, UNDP's 'human development' focus closely accords with India's ongoing struggle to end poverty, hunger, ill-health and illiteracy. Given that India is now internationally committed to attaining the Millennium Development Goals, UNDP's (and the United Nations') support – as the only development partner singularly focused on these goals – is now even more relevant. Over the past decade, informants say, UNDP has helped the Government develop frameworks by which to draw-up and undertake human development-focused initiatives in a number of areas.

However, UNDP's unique strength by far is that it is completely trusted by government and citizens. It is perceived to be ideologically neutral and, thus, devoid of the agendas that motivate other international development partners. This is why the Government has deliberately chosen to partner closely (or only) with UNDP, rather than other development partners, on nationally strategic programmes such as the MGNREGA and capacity building of institutions and individuals mandated to provide justice delivery services.

Many informants also remarked upon UNDP's strategic foresight in grasping the significance of an issue long before its counterparts, and supporting the individuals or social movements behind it. For instance, UNDP support was invaluable in energizing

the national and international discourse on the 'right to information' in the lead in to the enactment of India's landmark Right to Information Act 2005 and it was India's largest development partner in this sector for some years after that. It has played a matching role in the national and international thinking and discussion on 'India's Experience in the Design and Implementation of MGNREGA Programme'. Similarly, it was the first development partner to invest in Indian's efforts at decentralised District Planning, in strengthening the implementation of the MGNREGA programme, and in supporting the People's Mid-Term Assessment of the Eleventh Plan (resulting in civil society being formally invited to make their inputs into the Twelfth Plan approach paper). It has also been the only development partner to be permitted to assist India's judicial system build its capacity to more effectively provide access to justice for the marginalized.

Also seen as a key strength is that UNDP monies are flexible, triggering a multiplier effect. UNDP is not a 'loan-maker', but a development partner providing technical assistance, knowledge support and best-practice exchange nationally and internationally. It is thus free to authorize the use of funds to address emerging issues within a programme. Even the Government of India does not have this freedom, since all public spending must strictly adhere to programme guidelines, some of which might not have been rationalized to respond to an evolving operating environment. UNDP funds have thus enabled innovative applications and experiments, even if these do not yield immediate returns. Among these is the provision of human resource support to key ministries, the use of ICT for transparency, community monitoring tools (such as the People's Assessment of Health, Education and Livelihood), the use of NGOs as training and implementation partners, and the piloting of models that converge MGNREGA with other major governmental programmes. Though UNDP's funds are very small, they can yield a major return if tactically applied, as the next section will highlight. As one informant put it, "UNDP's money is small, but can have big impact."

Equally valued is UNDP's operational flexibility; that is, its willingness to adapt to the evolving needs of governmental and, to a lesser extent, civil society partners, and to undertake major course-corrections midstream.

However, many senior Government informants alluded to an accelerating shift in the Government

of India-development partner relationship, due to which the former is relying far less on UNDP and its counterparts. Rapid economic growth and much-expanded tax revenue, they say, has profoundly lowered India's need for international financial assistance, particularly given how tiny it is as a proportion of the national budget. As another informant explained, "State Governments are now able to get large project funds just by writing a letter to the Government of India. In contrast, development partners require a mountain of paperwork for the small funds they make available. Becoming particularly resentful is mid management, which must bear the load of this paperwork, given that each development partner has their own requirements."

This said three senior and knowledgeable informants suggested that UNDP is straight-jacketing itself by an almost religious adherence to its CPAP, even though they well recognize that this document is the result of a rigorous situation analysis and extensive consultation. Their perception is that UNDP, in being compelled to justify all potential initiatives through the logic of this framework, might be missing out on important new opportunities in India.

Research and knowledge-sharing to inform policy

Project support aside, UNDP research and knowledge-sharing have informed Indian policy-making on a variety of fronts. In planning, for instance, UNDP's inputs have influenced state policy and practice on decentralization and human development reporting, and lessons from UNDP's work on micro- and district planning have informed the formulation of district planning guidelines. In some states, UNDP has underwritten the preparation of such guidelines. UNDP's MGNREGA evaluation studies and consultations have informed policy revisions in this programme. In light of heightened public pressure and protests around the need for an effective 'Lokpal Bill' (or Anti-Corruption Law) in August 2011, UNDP India compiled global examples of Anti-Corruption Laws and presented them to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice

4.1.2 Contribution to national priorities

4.1.2.1 The concept of Human Development

UNDP's prime contribution to India is the Human Development concept. UNDP "brought the human development agenda home, just when the Government of India was beginning to recognize the need to invest strategically in education, health, drinking water and other social sectors in the 1990s." It also "took human development out of the realm of NGOs and civil society, and straight into the heart of Government. In doing so, it ensured that human development did not remain an abstract concept, understood only in multilateral donor HQs."

UNDP and Human Development: Synonymous in India

Moreover, Human Development Reports are what triggers UNDP brand recall in the country. 100% of informants said that UNDP's unique selling proposition (USP) in India is the Human Development Reports and Millennium Development Goals. Many informants said they had no idea that UNDP worked on other issues. Those that did felt that UNDP should build on these two issues as its core competency going forward, since it is the only global development partner singularly focused on Human Development and the Millennium Development Goals today. Moreover, no other international development partner in India produces the Human Development Report – a unique, "annually and eagerly awaited" publication.

UNDP's intensive international spotlight on human development has both encouraged and compelled the Government of India to publicly commit to heightened expenditures on health, education, drinking water, and so on. At the same time, UNDP's Human Development Index has given it concrete benchmarks by which to detail and assess this spending.

According to a senior and well-known informant, UNDP's Human Development work has indirectly contributed to safeguarding Indian national/state spending on human development despite recent

fiscal austerity crunches. For, preliminary studies show state-level social sector spending holding steady despite huge step-ups in matching central government programmes, contrasting with the historical 'substitution effect' noticed between national and state social sector expenditures.

4.1.2.2 More rigorous and inclusive planning

UNDP's Human Development Reports, Human Development Index and its human development trainings have taught Government officials that they must look at planning through a human development prism, showing how human well-being translates directly into economic development. According to Government informants, this has triggered a "mindset shift in State and District planners and policy-makers," who have begun to look beyond infrastructure and GDP to MDG improvements as a worthy goal in its own right. High political rewards have further embedded this approach.

UNDP's gender-inclusion and social-inclusion work is also credited with having triggered a similar mindset shift in the Indian Government's planning for women and socially-marginalized/ disadvantaged groups. In this context, informants in the three States visited by the Evaluator spoke with particular enthusiasm about the UNDP-financed gender-planning workshops facilitated by the Planning Commission.

Relevant informants say that programme-related trainings have built planning capacity and brought new clarity to the planning process. District official also say that, MDGs aside, DHDRs are a vital tool for district planning in general. At the same time, UNDP's decentralized planning work is introducing local officials to the concept of converged and integrated decentralised district planning for the first time. District officials say that DHDRs offer the first consolidated view of district performance across sectors and geographic pockets. As one informant put it, "District Plans present the beginnings of a 'management dashboard' to guide governmental action in the district." DHDRs also present District Governments with an alternate set of data against which to benchmark their own statistics.

Informants also observe another major outcome: that is, the beginning of popular participation in village and district planning, triggered by UNDP's emphasis on inclusive consultation in its DHDR and District Planning projects. In parallel, the Public-Private Community Participation built local communities' understanding of and capacity to

negotiate with business. It also taught *gram pradhans/ panchayats* how to look beyond the mere last-mile delivery of government schemes, such as MGNREGA, Suvarna Jayanti, and IRDP, to identify and mobilize for commercially-based rural livelihood options.

Most importantly, communities have begun to become more assertive. Having contributed to the District Plan one year, they then demand results from block, district and state officials the next year, sometimes quite aggressively according to informants, as Orissa informants share. By encouraging community monitoring of public services via PAHELI (People's Assessment of Health, Education and Livelihoods), UNDP aims to give further focus to local communities' push for more accountability from local government and elected representatives.

More broadly, UNDP's work is shifting district officials' approach to District Plans in four ways, informants say. First, it has emphasized the importance of resource matching, in which proposed projects are matched against available resources. Hitherto, District Plans tended to be a "wish list" not bearing on reality and, therefore, not implementable. Second, it has underscored the need to converge and synergize departmental schemes and resources for maximal developmental impact. Third, it has established the need for a linkage between the State Plan (made by the Planning Department) and the District Plan (made by the Panchayati Raj Department). Rajasthan is thus working to develop a "Model District Plan" in Ajmer for feeding into the State Plan. Once complete, it will serve as the framework by which all of Rajasthan's 33 districts will feed into the state plan. Fourth, UNDP's focus on inclusiveness is prompting Line Departments to be more sensitive to the unique needs of women and marginalized groups, and to begin to plan pro-actively for these. With UNDP support, many Districts – even some Line Departments – have developed (or are in the process of developing) detailed gender sub-plans, the first initiative of its kind in India. UNDP-supported community assessments of health, education and livelihood outcomes further facilitate this effort. Here, it is important to highlight the potentially empowering effects that Indian planner's new attention to women and the marginalized have for these groups, particularly in India's more patriarchal and feudal states.

Equally important, UNDP's range of district planning initiatives is noticeably building the self-

esteem, practical value and career path of district planners, who till now functioned primarily as silent enumerators.

4.1.2.3 Strengthening delivery capacity for landmark programmes

4.1.2.3.1 National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

UNDP has played a major role in supporting the Ministry of Rural Development operationalize India's landmark MG National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). According to some informants, it was the first development partner to grasp the strategic import of this programme and to invest in it. UNDP supported the preparation of prototype primers, manuals, training materials, films, as also a more widespread use of social audits, all of which were seminal to the early rollout and monitoring of the programme.

Most important, UNDP set up and funds a dedicated MGNREGA technical cell within the Ministry of Rural Development, which is key to the national operation of the programme. The Technical Cell has also been key to the development and operation of a national MIS system that gives policy-makers and the public a detailed online view of how many people the programme is employing and how MGNREGA works are progressing. Civil society informants say that the MIS has brought great transparency into the programme, though there is need for some improvement.

UNDP has also helped the Ministry establish a Professional Institutional Network (comprising over 50 of India's most respected academic and research institutions) to evaluate MGNREGA implementation and impact. These assessments offer an objective third party view of the programme, for they emphasize outcomes, rather than activities and outputs. These evaluation studies were delivered within a few months and have thrown up important issues for correction. Evaluators themselves say that UNDP's involvement brought a superior operational quality and professionalism to the evaluation, by requiring continual interaction amongst evaluators and the Government significantly enhanced the content of the finished evaluations and seeding intellectual cross-fertilization among evaluating institutions. Informants cited this ongoing engagement between UNDP, MoRD and evaluators as a 'best practice'. In addition, UNDP paid them on time, in happy contrast to their experience with

governmental organizations.

Further, some members of this Professional Institutional Network are going beyond evaluations to handhold State Governments in improving MGNREGA implementation. IIT Roorkee, which was assigned the Uttarakhand evaluation, is now helping the Government of Uttarakhand better its MGNREGA-related MIS system.

UNDP is now funding a number of MGNREGA-related pilots across the 7 UNDAF states, something that the Government is itself not able to do given programme spending rules. One set of pilots seeks to demonstrate how MGNREGA might be converged with other government schemes (in agriculture, horticulture, watershed and natural resource management, for example) to optimize value for farmers and rural poor. Another set supports the development and testing of a variety of ICT-based applications to ensure transparency in wage payments and a third to address long-term livelihood objectives by building the skills, functional and financial literacy, livelihood options and market linkages for MGNREGA workers. The Government has begun to scale up some of the more promising pilots within the first two sets.

UNDP has also facilitated the national and international sharing of India's MGNREGA experience, significantly furthering the global body of knowledge on how large-scale national rural work programmes might be most optimally run.

4.1.2.3.2 Right to Information Act

Similarly, UNDP is credited with being the first development partner to recognize the importance of India's Right to Information movement. It "broke new ground" in the run in to the Right to Information Act by underwriting cross-state exchanges and international workshops of activists, elected representatives, and government officials. "Although the budget for such activities was limited," said a well-known informant, "it became a key platform for the exchange of ideas, best practice and networking", all of which contributed to the momentum that finally brought India a Right to Information Act in 2005.

Once the Act was passed, UNDP's support to the roll-out phase was far larger than that of other development partners. Most importantly, it underwrote the cost of the training and educational materials, films and e-learning modules used to mass-train India's new cadre of PIOs, as also that of the

training itself. Some 100,000 State and District level PIOs were trained with UNDP funds.

Though the programme closed some years ago, the Department of Personnel and Training still relies fundamentally on all materials and learnings produced by the programme, both of which it has incorporated into two subsequent national RTI schemes.¹ Most noteworthy is that it has converted the Centre for Good Governance's computerized self-learning modules into an online 12-lesson RTI certificate programme. According to the Department of Personnel and Training, this module has been a huge success. Over 16,000 people have signed up since mid-2009 when the course was launched, even though the Department has not spent any money on advertising. 50% are government officials and 50% are other citizens, including housewives and students. Training costs just one-third the 'contact method' for similar material: Rs 100 as opposed to Rs 350.

Additionally, UNDP gave micro-grants to The Hunger Project, Kabir and the Centre for Youth and Social Development to generate RTI awareness among women and girls. The Hunger Project used its grant to teach rural women in Bihar and Orissa how to use the RTI, particularly how to draft effective applications and pursue them. This has emboldened trainees to file their own applications, many of them successfully, on issues as varied as ANM Center functioning to governmental allocations for their villages to why state projects lie incomplete for month/years. The RTI Radio programme by Kabir can be accessed at www.kabir.org.in/content/fm.htm.

4.1.2.4 More effective Panchayati Raj officials and elected representatives

UNDP is helping the Ministry of Panchayati Raj undertake *panchayati raj* training in mission mode across the country. It is also helping the Ministry implement the National Capacity Building Framework, India's key standard on Panchayati Raj training, and is now actively supporting it in developing a variety of other training-related standards. It has supported State Governments' first-time effort to devise Panchayati Raj capacity development strategies, and has pioneered an outsourced model which is now being replicated nationally. UNDP has also contributed to evaluating the Panchayati Raj capacity development components

of two flagship national schemes: the Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) and the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana (RGSY). While the former was led by the World Bank, the latter was supported entirely by UNDP. Equally important, UNDP has financed the development of an innovative and very useful online repository or training materials.

Since 2008, when the Capacity Development for Local Governance programme began, the number of Panchayati Raj representatives trained annually has more than doubled from 1 to 2.4 million in 2010-2011. This jump is particularly sharp in the 7 states where UNDP operates, which account for the bulk of India's population.

Focused training also seems to be slowly but steadily triggering a growing confidence and professionalism among Panchayati Raj officials, particularly women and those from the SC/ ST categories. By pioneering "role-based", rather than "rule based", training, the programme holistically briefs Panchayati Raj officials about their responsibilities, powers and public duties for the first time.

Additionally, exposure visits have prompted participants to attempt similar 'best practices' within their jurisdictions.

Training and exposure is especially encouraging women to be more assertive and ambitious. Many SHG trainees have subsequently run elections.²

Informants also cite other programme contributions, including the development of new innovative rural capacity-building courses in Chattisgarh, a strengthened, more objective monitoring and evaluation of Panchayati Raj training, as also state-by-state progress reports on training and funds utilization. UNDP also supported the Ministry of Panchayati Raj's in examining the feasibility of setting up a National Institute for Panchayati Raj. Most important, however, is that the Indian Government now has a comprehensive database of all the country's Panchayati Raj officials, something it never had earlier.

UNDP's effort to politically empower women and build the leaderships skills of grassroots elected women representatives has also begun to yield noteworthy results. Among these are village women

¹ 'Strengthening, Capacity Building and Awareness Generation for the Effective Implementation of the RTI Act' (2008-2010) and 'Improving Transparency and Accountability through the Effective Implementation of the RTI.'

² Here, it must be noted that there is no data about which of these women have won.

Innovative use of film and audio-visual technology

All informants cited CDLG's intensive use of film, satellite and other audio-visual technology as a 'best practice'. All except one informant said the quality of training, literature and films was "excellent" or "very good". The messages in the films "can be very powerful, particularly for an illiterate sarpanch," and by showing trainees what 'ideal gram sabhas' look like present with a concrete model to aspire to. Most importantly, "films minimize the danger of 'transmission loss' in a multi-tiered cascade training system." UNDP underwrites the cost of film production, only leaving duplication to State Governments, enabling hundreds of thousands of Panchayati Raj officials to see them. In this sense, "CDLG has been like a 'lubricating' oil, even if its monies are small."

Some also cited the comprehensive online repository of Panchayati Raj-related training modules and presentations, documents, and films set up by the programme (www.pri-resources.in). The repository also provides a listing of resource persons, although it must be noted that none of the informants referred to it.

now stepping out of their homes to participate in public life, monitor public services, discuss public issues in community fora, and work collaboratively with other women to act on issues of local concern, such as filing FIRs at police stations or organizing protests against government failings and policies. UNDP programmes are now also supporting first-time and aspiring elected women representatives with systematic handholding, capacity-building and support, something that political parties have rarely done. They are also being taught how to run a successful election campaign, manage the media, optimize their role for greatest developmental impact, and so on. Results are particularly noticeable at the village level, say informants.

4.1.2.5 Justice Delivery Institutions Sensitized to the Legal Needs of the Marginalized

Given the national security implications, UNDP is the only development partner chosen by GOI to support

its effort to strengthen and reform of the justice system, an opportunity that informants consider well-used.

Most significant is that UNDP's two access to justice programmes have created a close working partnership between the Indian judicial system and civil society for the first time. For, UNDP has supported the Department of Justice to carry out a justice sector diagnosis, identify areas for improvement in delivery of justice to the poor women and men and implement innovative small pilots on legal aid and legal empowerment in partnership with CSOs. The project has also commissioned research aimed at improving judicial training. Informants say that much of this research is being actively read and used by key decision makers.

To start with, NGOs have assessed the state legal aid systems and are developing modules on gender issues and issues related to marginalized groups for various stakeholders including State Judicial Academies (SJAs) in the 7 UNDAF states,

Women's political empowerment in the IKEA project

UNDP's democratic governance and poverty programmes also jointly run an intervention to economically, socially, politically and legally empower women in an integrated manner. Funded by IKEA, it has had a noticeable impact in politically and legally empowering programme beneficiaries. The project has been evaluated by the Poverty Outcome Evaluation³, which says that "it is perhaps the best example of taking advantage of the opportunity of upcoming panchayat elections to develop capacities and capabilities of women in legal and political dimensions to enable them to take part in an effective manner in local level decision making process and exercise their democratic rights." Other project achievements include: "a 12-point empowerment charter ratified by 13,000 women... 20,000 women know their political rights better and over 12,000 know their legal rights under law better. Political awareness campaigns have resulted in over 100% increase in voter registration in some pockets."

³ Outcome Evaluation: Energy and Environment and Poverty Reduction UNDP India by Vishaish Uppal, November 2011

something that has never been done before. A needs assessment of the State Legal Services Authorities in these 7 states is now underway. SJAs are also actively supporting the development of a systematic 'access to justice' training methodology for judges and lawyers – another first. Civil society's practical grassroots experience is also bringing a range of powerful real-life case studies into the classroom to further illustrate the new concepts being taught. Thirdly, NGO partners are now fundamentally involved in the delivery of the Government's paralegal training, making it more relevant and impactful.

All this is significant given that the Indian judicial system does not tend to be open to external inputs, especially from civil society. The project has helped in bring civil society and the justice sector together to appreciate each other's role in ensuring justice to the poor. Civil society now also has a stronger understanding of the judicial system constraints that impede effective outreach to the marginalized, say informants, and is thus revisiting some of its hardline positions to propose workable solutions. This collaboration has engendered a novel perspective to training and the debate on systemic reform. From civil society's perspective, the programme has given it a chance to showcase its work across states, winning a new respect from Government while seeding cross-state learning and experimentation. Further, it has pulled together all bits of the 'access to justice' value chain (from the legal literacy to the legal services and legal representation NGOs) to collaborate as a single whole.

Most important of all, informants are confident that the personal and professional relationships being forged between the judicial system and NGOs will sustain even after programme ends.

This partnership is translating into grassroots level shifts, which bode well for the strengthening of District Legal Services Authorities' relationship with the rural communities they are mandated to service. First, DLSA's now rely on the programme's NGO partners in organizing/delivering rural trainings and arranging widespread participation in legal awareness camps and Lok Adalats. As a result, SLSA/ DLSA officials are now regularly visiting remote villages, something they were not confident enough to do before. At the same time, villagers – particularly in tribal areas – are less wary of attending such trainings given the involvement of NGOs they know and trust. Hitherto, the police presence at these

trainings had kept many villagers away.

In this context, informants report subtle, yet empowering, shifts in villagers' perceptions of the police. Rural trainings are typically run by a senior District judge, who is reverentially escorted by the local police. Since NGO partners closely accompany these judges, including on the podium, police have begun to treat them with a new respect. Seeing this, villagers realize that the police is not 'all-powerful' and so need not be regarded with terror.

NGO partnership is enabling a tremendous ramp up in grassroots legal awareness and knowledge, with NGO partners continually running village trainings and film showings. Moreover, an important start has been made in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, two of the most difficult parts of the country. What is encouraging is the immense support provided by a variety of unpaid grassroots NGOs, who feel that legal rights underpin all other aspects of their work with rural communities.

4.1.2.6 Capacity Building for Urban Governance

This project, though very limited in scope and duration, introduced managers and elected representatives in medium-sized cities to 'best practice' concepts in urban governance, possibly for the first time. Based on the evaluator's interviews in Berhampur, Orissa, Municipal Governments' found the preparation of City Development Plans most useful, particularly since they needed to submit such plans to access the new monies being made available under the Government of India's major new urban reform schemes. Civil society praised the project's effort to consult stakeholders all across each city, especially the poor.

4.2 STATUS OF THE OUTCOME AND KEY FACTORS AFFECTING IT

As described in the previous section, UNDP has partnered India in moving toward some key developmental and governance priorities.

4.2.1 Planning

As mentioned earlier, UNDP's intensive international spotlight on human development has both encouraged and compelled the Government of India to publicly commit to heightened expenditures on health, education, drinking water, and so on. At the same time, UNDP's Human Development Index

has given it concrete benchmarks by which to detail and assess this spending, say informants. For instance, before 1990, India's education situation was analyzed and approached only in broad terms (percentage of literacy). Now, thanks to UNDP's Human Development work, State Governments are being guided by specific and directly actionable indicators, such as number of schools, number of teachers, school-enrolment rate, school drop-out rate, and so on. In parallel, UNDP's Financing Human Development series⁴ has assisted nine states analyze their human development expenditures (i.e. how much money is being spent, for what, and how efficiently?) and better plan for these going forward. At the national level, a high-level Planning Committee is deliberating the universalization of healthcare, and an increase in healthcare spending from 1.2% to 2.5% or 3%.

Relevant informants say that programme-related trainings have built planning capacity and brought new clarity to the planning process. Planners have shared best practice and learnt more rigorous data collection and analysis techniques. Resultantly, planning is beginning to base itself more on hard data than just impressions and political compulsions. Illustrating this point, Rajasthan "used the rigor of UNDP's human development indices" to choose five districts for the United Nations-Government of India Joint Programme on Convergence. (This programme will be discussed in detail later). "This was the first time we were able to push through selection criteria based on strong data rather than anecdotal evidence," said an informant in that state.

District officials say that DHDRs offer the first consolidated view of district performance across sectors and geographic pockets. Earlier, all district data on health, education, agriculture, industry, etc existed solely within its parent Department, which reported it separately to the District Government, and not always in its entirety. Further, this data rarely reached the public. DHDRs have played the invaluable role of pulling key district data together into one public document, enabling citizens and policy makers to assess and compare district performance on crucial developmental parameters.

Further, DHDRs have presented District Governments with an alternate set of data against which to benchmark their own statistics, since the

consultants that UNDP hired to prepare these reports collected a variety of primary and secondary data. With UNDP support, the Chattisgarh Government has gone a step further, to pilot detailed and continuing primary data collection in both rural and urban areas in Rajnandgaon District, using Village Index Cards and the Urban Ward Index Cards. These 'cards' collate and report primary data on key human development indicators for all villages and urban wards. Specially-developed software enables the District Administration and the District Planning and Statistical Office to view and analyze all this data. Since this has greatly enhancing the quality of district planning, the Chattisgarh Government is now scaling up this effort to the entire State and is allocating Rs 50 lakhs to each district for the purpose. Thus, Chattisgarh is likely to be the first Indian state with comprehensive, up-to-date data on key human development parameter for all of its villages and towns/cities.

Informants also observe another major outcome: that is, the beginning of popular participation in village and district planning, triggered by UNDP's emphasis on inclusive consultation in its DHDR and District Planning projects. In this sense, the process of DHDR preparation was as important as the content. (However, many informants also pointed to the role of broader factors like education, economic development, and grassroots mobilization by civil society). To start with, DHDR preparation brought together all stakeholders (including gram panchayats, SHGs, NGOs, elected leaders, academic institutions, civil society, consultants, experts, and the District Administration and so on) to discuss district problems and prospects. For many, it was the first time they had participated in such a discussion. UNDP's Rural Decentralisation and District Planning work took forward this initiative, resulting in observable shifts in local power and accountability relationships in the Orissa and Rajasthan districts visited for this Evaluation. Many informants spoke of growing turnout in gram sabha meetings and in block/district planning discussions, where it was earlier difficult to even get a minimal quorum together. Gram sabha meetings have become more focused, structured and productive, as a result of UNDP-supported training and capacity building for a range of village stakeholders. Women have become more vocal. Communities have begun to ask for new and innovative types of projects and are being

⁴ The research project on Financing Human Development was entrusted to the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, as part of the larger UNDP - Planning Commission sponsored programme on "Strengthening State Plans for Human Development" 2005-2009.

heard, in some cases. In Ganjam District, Orissa, for instance, many villages are demanding funds for aanganwadi maintenance, renovation and repair and the State Government is responding, even though Government schemes do not provide for such spending.

District official also say that, MDGs aside, DHDRs are a vital tool for district planning in general. This is because DHDRs create a complete developmental topography of a district by detailing resources, strengths, problems, and potential. Stakeholders are thus far better positioned to identify priorities and take them up with the Government.

As mentioned earlier, UNDP's decentralized planning work is introducing local officials to the concept of converged and integrated decentralised district planning for the first time. At the moment, they merely manage the last-mile implementation of national/state schemes, rather than plan and finance independent projects for their district. Local planning is thus basically an exercise in summation, with line departments submitting independent plan that are stapled together to become District Plan. In many states, District Planning offices' only real planning activity is in suggesting the optimal deployment for MP and MLA funds. The UNDP-financed district planning exercise is "the first time that this activity was done with thought and rigor", and in a manner that nurtured synergies between schemes and departments. Senior government informants credit UNDP with sustaining the push for decentralized, integrated planning, an issue which seems to have lost momentum within the Planning Commission. "UNDP has kept the momentum going, for the Planning Commission is now focusing primarily on sectoral, rather than district, plans. In fact, we have not received even one letter on district planning from the Commission in the past two years," said a government official in Chattigarh.

In addition, UNDP's emphasis on inclusive consultation in its DHDR and District Planning projects has triggered the beginning of popular participation in village and district planning. In this sense, the process of DHDR preparation was as important as the content.⁵ To start with, DHDR preparation brought together all stakeholders

(including gram panchayats, SHGs, NGOs, elected leaders, academic institutions, civil society, consultants, experts, and the District Administration and so on) to discuss district problems and prospects. For many, it was the first time they had participated in such a discussion. UNDP's Rural Decentralisation and District Planning work took forward this initiative, resulting in observable shifts in local power and accountability relationships in the Orissa and Rajasthan districts visited for this Evaluation. Many informants spoke of growing turnout in gram sabha meetings and in block/district planning discussions, where it was earlier difficult to even get a minimal quorum together. Gram sabha meetings have become more focused, structured and productive, as a result of UNDP-supported training and capacity building for a range of village stakeholders. Women have become more vocal. Communities have begun to ask for new and innovative types of projects and are being heard, in some cases. In Ganjam District, Orissa, for instance, many villages are demanding funds for aanganwadi maintenance, renovation and repair and the State Government is responding, even though Government schemes do not provide for such spending.

All Sundargarh District informants spoke with immense enthusiasm about UNDP's 'change management workshops. "These give us a strong understanding of Government programmes and services, how we might better serve the citizen, and how we should build our leadership qualities," said a Block Development Officer. "Most importantly, it gave us our first opportunity to talk one-on-one and as equals with District Collectors!" These residential workshops make a deliberate effort to break social and administrative hierarchies amongst government officials by building a sense of teamship, camaraderie and unity of purpose.

Human Development Reports

UNDP has already supported 20 states⁶ prepare a State Human Development Report (SHDR). This effort is gaining momentum, judging by the fact that many states are now preparing their own Reports, with or without UNDP financial and technical support. Madhya Pradesh, home to India's first SHDR, has already published four, and is now preparing a

⁵ However, it must be noted that many informants also pointed to the role of broader factors like education, economic development, and grassroots mobilization by civil society.

⁶ Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh,

fifth. It has funded all these reports, while drawing on UNDP for technical expertise. Karnataka and Rajasthan have released two each, with a varying mix of UNDP funding and expertise, and Maharashtra is preparing its second HDR largely at its own initiative. Meghalaya's Report has been entirely State-managed and funded.

UNDP has also commissioned a slew of Human Development-related policy research and training materials, as discussed earlier. (These are listed in Annexure 4).

UNDP is also assisting 82 Districts across 15 States prepare District Human Development Reports. About a half of these have been published to date. (Listed in Annexure 4). However, this component of the project is far more operationally complex, since there are a variety of factors posing a drag on the speedy preparation, finalization and publication, of DHDRs.

First is the interplay between State and District Governments in the contracting and approval process. Though District Governments are responsible for driving the DHDR at ground level, DHDR consultants have generally been hired by the State Government. Similarly, there is a process of multiple sign-offs (District Governments followed by State Government) with the State – rather than the District Government – which controls the final sign-off on the content of each DHDR. For this reason, many DHDRs are not yet published, even though final drafts were submitted over a year ago by the consultants after sign-offs from District Governments and District Governments have little knowledge of progress on this score. In Ganjam, for instance, the Chief Planning Officer does not know if the DHDR has been published, though the District Level Steering Committee cleared the report a year and a half ago (on 19 March 2010)⁷. In Sundargarh, the chief planning officer said he had not heard about UNDP's DHDR initiative.

In some cases, the DHDR is awaiting approval from the District Committee. In others, there are differences between District Governments and consultants on Report findings, since the latter's data – generally collected through primary field survey –

might paint a more negative picture of a district than that available with the District Government.

Another shortcoming is the lack of standardization in published DHDRs, resulting from the strategic and understandable decision to cement State ownership of this project by encouraging each State and District to develop its own DHDR methodology and model/s. While an overall guidance was given by UNDP and the Planning Commission, DHDRs thus do not follow a single structure, and DHDR writers were given the independence to innovate within certain broad parameters. Since States are driving the DHDRs within their jurisdictions, no single entity was put in charge of overseeing DHDR preparation across the country. Thus, DHDRs are not comparable even across differing districts within a single state. For much the same reasons, there are also quality variations between DHDRs.

However, many informants say the programme's weakest component was statistical system strengthening, primarily because its budget (Rs 10 lakhs per state for 5 years) was so tiny as to be meaningless. Though planning staff was trained to use the latest planning software, they never had a chance to use it given the lack of computers in district planning offices.⁸ Similarly, the special software developed to estimate district- and state-level indicators was ultimately not deployed, since the Planning Commission felt the data could not be properly authenticated.

Informants' impression is also that the Human Development trainers capacitated under the program were rarely, if ever, used by the State Governments they were supposed to support. A trainer interviewed for this evaluation says she has been repeatedly trained, but not yet called upon to train, in contrast to the experience of RTI and Panchayati Raj trainers trained with UNDP support. This is because RTI and Panchayati Raj training went into 'mission mode' because of underpinning laws, a condition that does not yet exist for Human Development training.

District planning

The District Planning programme appears to be

⁷ This, according to the chief planning officer who checked the file in the presence of the evaluator.

⁸ According to this information, Jodhpur is the only one of Rajasthan's 33 districts to have a dedicated office building for its statistics and planning staff, apparently. In many districts, statistical and planning staff use make-shift quarters made available by the District Collector, and do not have computers. Thus, UNDP's investment in planning training and software seems to have been largely lost in this state.

falling behind targets. Firstly, many informants feel that the programme is too restricted to fundamentally influence long-established planning processes, especially since it has been downscaled due to budget cuts. Initially, UNDP worked in 5 BRGF districts per state, on an annual budget of Rs 90 lakhs per state. This has now been pared down to 37 lakhs and 1 district per state. In its Rural Decentralization project, UNDP allocated just Rs 5-10 lakhs per panchayat, which informants say was a "meager amount", especially compared to that allocated by other development partners.

Some informants also say that the project's single-minded focus on BRGF districts also minimizes its practical value as a reform pilot. Since districts within a state vary widely in geographic terrain, ethnic make-up and development levels, a pilot would need to address the unique challenges and potential of each intra-state region to really succeed. It must be noted here, however, that the choice of BRGF districts is strategic. Since BRGF funds are untied, they readily lend themselves to converged planning/spending by serving as 'bridge funds' by which to link other government schemes.

Informants also say that the programme's prime handicap is systemic, emanating from the manner in which district planning is currently undertaken in India. As of now, District Governments receive most of their funds from central Government programmes, such as MGNREGA, NHRM and so on, each of which have their own binding spending and implementation guidelines. This leaves little scope or incentive for districts to plan and finance projects independently, or to effectively synergize this plethora of funds. According to informants, integrated planning is only happening in those districts where the District Collector shows interest and initiative.

Thus, as touched on earlier, district plans thus tend to comprise of a collection of proposed annual spending statements by each of the Departments responsible for the last-mile delivery of these schemes, particularly since the devolution of funds and function is still not complete in most states. Added to this, District Planning Committees are weak and unable to push a more integrated model of planning. This also explains why the micro-plans developed by the Rural Decentralisation project were never incorporated into the District Plan.

Further exacerbating this structural handicap is that State Governments are also not free to spend their

funds entirely as they wish. According to informants, State Governments are required to provide matching funds for all the national schemes they administer. For instance, 90% of MGNREGA project funds come from the centre, and states must contribute a matching 10%. In Sarva Shiksha Abhyaan, the ratio is 65:35 and, in the National Rural Health Mission it is 85:15. Another large chunk of spending goes in finishing central schemes that are unfinished or in progress.

"It will still take a long time to move existing "models" of district planning to a true 'budgeting' approach to planning, where a resource allocation is made and its left to institutions of local self-governance to decide on priorities." In fact, it is this very challenge that the District Planning project is struggling to address through dialogue, advocacy and training on the indispensability of integrated and inclusive district planning. In particular, its Change Management component aims to break the 'mental silos' that block Line Departments from working synergistically and developing a feeling of ownership for converged and collaborative inter-departmental planning, at both State and District level. As mentioned earlier, all Sundargarh interviewees were especially excited and inspired by this innovative new approach and the consultants delivering the training, though this was not the case in other states visited by the Evaluator where informants seemed dissatisfied with the quality of the Change Management consultants hired there.

Systemic issues aside, the programme is suffering particularly from high turnover within UNDP staff at state and district levels. Rajasthan informants complained that only 1 of UNDP's 5 CDDP districts had a District Support officer in place. (There was no District Support Officer in Udaipur, the district visited by the Evaluator). A senior government informant remarked that UNDP planning programmes in Rajasthan "have been suffering for the last year to year-and-a-half due to this turnover. The entire chain of activities has got disrupted, and there is no one to drive the programme at ground level." An Orissa government informant exclaimed, "Just as the workplans were getting finalised, UNDP shifted the volunteer. We were totally dependent on him!" To further highlight the gravity of this problem, the Rajasthan Technical Support Officer (interviewed by the Evaluator in July) resigned within a few weeks of the interview.

Though district chief planning officers consider

UNDP's District Support Officers to be an invaluable extra hand, more senior officials expressed disappointment at the relative youth and inexperience of the person being hired for the position. The latter feel that DSOs serve merely as additional staff, not thought leaders, to District Planning Offices. To highlight this point, one informant said that 40-45% of the preparation for the 'converged' District Plan prepared with UNDP support was prepared by the UNDP-appointed Technical Support Institution (i.e. the external consultant); 40-45% by the District Planning Office; and only 10% by the young District Support Officer. Also, since DSOs undergo an 8-month training, they are not available to the District Administration for this period even once they are hired.

Here, it must be noted that District Support Officers are – as per their Terms of Reference – only supposed to support District Planning Officers by building capacities, monitoring, ensuring inclusion. They are not themselves supposed to engage in planning activity and thus substitute for, rather than build, district planning capacity and process.

While DSOs receive an allowance to cover basic mobility and telecommunications, particularly during the months of peak plan preparation, this is provisioned for in the district budget and so is not under their direct control. They are thus bound by district spending rules, which stipulate that money can only be released if field visits relate directly to the preparation of Annual Village Action Plans. DSOs say this impedes their ability to travel into the field to train and mobilize communities at other times of year.

Another deficiency is that the programme has been imposed on District Governments from above, and has not grown out of its expressed needs. Further, while District Collectors and Chief Planning Officers received State Government instructions that their district should participate in the programme, Line Departments received no such letter from their respective Principal Secretaries. For this reason, they do not see the programme as binding upon them. Many informants also said that the programme would be far stronger were the State Government to appoint a dedicated nodal officer to run this programme, and lend weight to UNDP's TSOs and DSOs in running the programme on the ground.

Rural decentralization and PPCP

Rural Decentralization – The Rural Decentralization

project trained *gram panchayats* to identify and prioritize local needs, micro-plan, raise local resources, and oversee plan implementation. Project deliverables included the preparation of comprehensive village and Gram Panchayat plans; the integration of these plans into block plan and, then, into district plans, and negotiations with the District Planning Committee for better resource allocation. The project also engaged with State and Central Governments to inform and expand national policy-making on decentralization and devolution.

Among the programme's key successes were mass-level community mobilization, training and awareness-building (including through community radio). It also built the capacity of PRI leaders, Zilla Parishad functionaries, and other formal and informal stakeholders, and introduced structured formats by which panchayats could monitor and record the quality of human development-related public services and other parameter, such as infrastructure, income and so on. In Rajasthan, project villages have raised independent income from Rs 5,000 to Rs 20,000. Some project panchayats continue to monitor these indicators, and to check the effective functioning of other functions devolved to them (agriculture, education, animal husbandry, social and farm forestry, minor, PHED, dairy, poultry and minor forest produce). In Chattisgarh, the systematic village plans produced under the project prompted the relevant Zilla Parishad to release Rs35-40 lakhs for land improvement works, and encouraged their replication in other blocks. Also very useful was the accountancy training provided to village level stakeholders. Panchayat record-keeping systems have improved and some Project Panchayats have initiated a regular social audit process based on the manual prepared by the programme.

The national Tribal Welfare Department has recognized the process rules prepared on PESA, forwarding these to all state Governments, and the Rajasthan Government accepted the process rules developed for the standing committees of PRIs and PESA.

However, the project was not successful in getting village and block plans become an organic part of the district plan, for the reasons discussed in the earlier section. Also, human development concerns and women's issues still tended to attract the least priority in gram sabha meetings and in discussions in other PRI platforms.

Informants feel that the project under-performed for two reasons. First, and most importantly, it closed too early. Second, while field partners credit UNDP with the foresight to launch this important initiative, they say they were not given clear guidance on what exactly was required from the micro-planning process. State Resource Institute (SRIs) informants, that drove the project confirm this. They say SRIs were brought in long after project commencement and, in turn, received no support or direction from State Governments, particularly since the project MoU was between the Zilla Parishad, the field partner and UNDP. Also, many field partners were 'environment', rather than 'local governance', NGOs, and so were not conversant with the grassroots issues they were supposed to drive.

Here it must be noted that all relevant informants felt this was an extremely valuable initiative, with significant potential for grassroots development and empowerment, and should be revived in some way.

Public-Private Community Participation – As mentioned earlier, this project brought panchayat and rural communities into direct contact with big business for the first time, and built local communities' understanding of and capacity to negotiate with business. It also taught *gram pradhans/ panchayats* how to look beyond the mere last-mile delivery of government schemes, such as MGNREGA, Suvarna Jayanti, and IRDP, to identify and mobilize for commercially-based rural livelihood options, and thus considerably expanded their intellectual horizons on this issue.

Though the programme showed little real impact while it lasted, the seeds it sowed have begun to sprout three years later. In Berhampur, Orissa, where the project closed without having met most of its deliverables, the local community has – of its own initiative – brought to fruition one of the floriculture partnerships proposed under the project. In Chattisgarh, local blanket makers continue to refine these locally with business support, rather than sending them for processing to Ludhiana as was their earlier practice. Moreover, 7-8 Indian export houses have signed sourcing contracts with Bastar bell metal makers, even after the project closed.

Here, informants attribute project underperformance to faulty design and, to a lesser extent, early closure. As one informant put it, "Project objectives were not clear and were predicated on killer assumptions."

First, and most important, there was a significant mismatch between the risks that businesses and communities were each willing to take, and in the time they were willing to wait to see profits. Since such partnerships were new, the project should have spent more time on finding the areas of commonality, particularly since the Technical Support Institutions handholding the initiative had little, if any, business experience. Land use regulations and policy issues also posed a problem.⁹

4.2.2 Strengthening delivery capacity for landmark programmes: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

UNDP support to MGNREGA initially focused on building mass awareness and use of the programme, it now centres on strengthening operational systems, monitoring and evaluation, micro-planning for authorized local works, and convergence with other programmes. UNDP supported the preparation of prototype MGNREGA Primers and Rural works Manuals, of training material and documentary films, and a more widespread use of social audits, all of which were seminal to the early rollout and monitoring of the programme.

UNDP has set up and funds a dedicated MGNREGA technical cell within the Ministry of Rural Development. This 8-person cell assists the Joint Secretary (MGNREGA) and other RD officials oversee the programme nationally and formulate strategies to enhance implementation. This cell is key to the national operation of the programme. Among other things, it is developing quality standards and field manuals for MGNREGA works; supports State Governments in building grassroots planning, implementation and monitoring capacity; creates guidelines for labour budgeting, social audit, MGNREGA convergence with other centrally sponsored schemes and GIS mapping for effective planning, management and assessment of natural resources. It also provides Central and State Governments with regular programme performance data, operates the MGNREGA Grievance Redressal Mechanism, and is responsible for communication and knowledge products.

UNDP has also helped the Ministry establish a Professional Institutional Network (comprising over 50 of India's most respected academic and research

⁹ In Orissa, for instance, corporates cannot lease land for more than five years.

institutions) to evaluate MGNREGA implementation and impact in parallel to the Government's own assessments. Though UNDP's spend on these evaluations has been small, just Rs 12-14 crores (as against the Rs 100 crore the programme allocates for evaluation), they have presented the Government with an "invaluable rapid assessment of what is happening on the ground and an objective, outside view of the programme." Equally important, these assessments have emphasized outcomes, rather than activities and outputs (the focus of Government assessments) creating a new monitoring framework for the programme. These evaluation studies have thrown up important issues for correction, and armed the Government with the statistics and analysis necessary to course-correct and defend the programme from various critics. As valuable, UNDP made these evaluators quickly available to the Government, by-passing the latter's lengthy procurement rules.

In addition, as already mentioned, some members of this Professional Institutional Network are going beyond evaluations to handhold State Governments in improving MGNREGA implementation.

UNDP is now funding a number of small NGO-run pilots across the 7 UNDAF states in an effort to demonstrate how MGNREGA might be converged with other government schemes (in agriculture, horticulture, watershed and natural resource management, for example) to optimize value for farmers and rural poor. It is also supporting the development and testing of a variety of IT-based applications to ensure transparency in wage payments ranging from low-cost ATM machines to smart cards and biometrics. In August 2010, the Ministry of Rural Development announced the scale-up of this model through the National Framework for biometric-based ICT-enabled end-to-end solutions¹⁰, launched by the Prime Minister.

Other pilots aim to expand the ambit of MGNREGA by addressing long-term livelihood objectives by building the skills, functional and financial literacy, livelihood options and market linkages for MGNREGA workers so that they might derive maximum developmental benefit from the programme. Many informants cited the integrated resource management pilot in Kandhamal, Orissa

as a 'best practice'. Jairam Ramesh, India's Minister for Rural Development in August 2011 visited this pilot in 2011. Shortly thereafter, the Ministry listed the need to incorporate an integrated approach to soil and water conservation in its proposed set of MGNREGA improvements.

UNDP has also facilitated the national and international sharing of India's MGNREGA experience, significantly furthering the global body of knowledge on how large-scale national rural work programmes might be most optimally run.

As mentioned earlier, UNDP is funding a number of small NGO-run pilots across the 7 UNDAF states so as to demonstrate how MGNREGA might be converged with other government schemes. Many informants cited the integrated resource management pilot in Kandhamal, Orissa as a 'best practice'. Jairam Ramesh, India's Minister for Rural Development in August 2011 visited this pilot in 2011. Shortly thereafter, the Ministry listed the need to incorporate an integrated approach to soil and water conservation in its proposed set of MGNREGA improvements.

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UNDP is also supporting the development and testing of a variety of ICT-based applications. In August 2010, the Ministry of Rural Development announced the scale-up of this model through the National Framework for biometric-based ICT-enabled end-to-end solutions¹¹.

However, all informants, especially those from civil society, alluded to the need for the programme to partner with a wider range of stakeholders nationally to "live up to its promise." Their opinion is that UNDP is "now a captive of the Ministry of

¹⁰ 'ICT for people's empowerment under MGNREGA', Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances' Governance Knowledge Centre, 20 August 2010 <http://indiagovernance.gov.in/news.php?id=252>

¹¹ 'ICT for people's empowerment under MGNREGA', Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances' Governance Knowledge Centre, 20 August 2010 <http://indiagovernance.gov.in/news.php?id=252>

Rural Development” which is neither good for the institution nor for the programme in general. Given their mutual interdependence through the Technical Cell, both UNDP and the Ministry are tending to listen only to each other's voices on MGNREGA implementation and enhancement, missing out on the wider range of thinking occurring in the field, and not really making the effort to contribute to it. However, UNDP-MoRD civil society partner organisations and research institutions participated in a high level Consultation jointly organised by the Ministry and UNDP and provided inputs on the Ministry's 'Reform Agenda for MGNREGA Implementation'. The findings and recommendations from UNDP funded concurrent monitoring studies and innovation pilots formed the basis for this consultation, which was a strategic opportunity for civil society participants to influence the preparation of revised MGNREGA guidelines.

For much the same reason, said civil society informants, the grassroots MGNREGA network throughout the country knows little, if anything, about the range of UNDP-supported work on MGNREGA. Illustrating this point, all the civil society informants interviewed for this evaluation knew nothing about the UNDP-supported pilots in Bhilwara, which the institution considers a great success; this, though three of them are well-known MGNREGA activists who have worked in partnership with UNDP.

Thus, their suggestion is that UNDP “open up” its support to the MGNREGA programme and “democratize the MGNREGA innovation process, so that the location and choice of pilots does not rest merely on the whim of the Rural Development or Chief Minister.”¹²

Also, while the Technical Cell has played a useful role in supporting the Ministry of Rural Development in early MGNREGA implementation, the programme's national expansion calls for a larger, more 'mission mode' operation, with the authority and know-how to resolve delivery problems on the ground and drive continual value-addition. Most important, MGNREGA expansion will require active support and partnership from grassroots civil society groups throughout the country given limited governmental

manpower. In addition, all informants urged UNDP to support the setting up of state-level Technical Cells to oversee field-level implementation and course-correction.

4.2.3 Capacity Building of Elected Representatives

UNDP's 'Orissa Dakshyata' and 'Capacity Building for Local Governance' programmes have demonstrated to the Government that Panchayati Raj training can be executed in mission mode across the country. For, only mass training of a high standard can quickly build essential governance capacity amongst India's 3 million Panchayati Raj representatives and 240,000 Panchayati Raj institutions.

UNDP is helping the Ministry of Panchayati Raj implement the National Capacity Building Framework, India's key standard on Panchayati Raj training and is now actively supporting it in developing a variety of other training-related standards for the first time. It also supported State Governments first-time effort to devise Panchayati Raj capacity development strategies, an activity that many informants say was extremely ad hoc earlier, as well as an innovative online training repository. Secondly, it pioneered an outsourced model for Panchayati Raj training and capacity building in Orissa, which is now being replicated nationally. This model deploys civil society as the Government's primary training partner, for the first time. Thirdly, it is supporting States assess their capacity for extensive and effective Panchayati Raj training, something they had never done before. UNDP has also contributed to evaluating the Panchayati Raj capacity development components of two flagship national schemes: the Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF) and the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojana (RGSY).¹³

Since 2008, when the programme began, the number of Panchayati Raj representatives trained annually has more than doubled from 1 to 2.4 million in 2010-2011. In percentage terms, this represents a jump from 33% to 80% of all Panchayati Raj representatives. This jump is particularly sharp in the 7 states where UNDP operates, which account for the bulk of India's population. In Madhya Pradesh, for instance, the training percentage has rocketed from

¹² However, UNDP-MoRD civil society partner organisations and research institutions participated in a high level Consultation jointly organised by the Ministry and UNDP and provided inputs on the Ministry's 'Reform Agenda for MGNREGA Implementation'. The findings and recommendations from UNDP funded concurrent monitoring studies and innovation pilots formed the basis for this consultation, which was a strategic opportunity for civil society participants to influence the preparation of revised MGNREGA guidelines.

¹³ While the former was led by the World Bank, the latter was supported entirely by UNDP.

16% to 91%, in Orissa from 5% to 54%, in Rajasthan from 42% to 80%, and in Uttar Pradesh from 3% to 32%. (Please see Table 2).

As mentioned earlier, focused training seems to be slowly but steadily triggering a growing confidence and professionalism among Panchayati Raj officials, particularly women and those from the SC/ ST categories. Trainees say they now know how they are supposed to run a panchayat, put together a representative village committee, identify beneficiaries, and solve practical village problems. They say they have begun to put these learnings to use, in particular helping community members access government schemes and obtain land titles. Further, their new understanding of Government laws, schemes and scheme guidelines has enabled them to properly inspect public services in their jurisdiction (schools, anganwadis, hospitals, etc) and negotiate on improvements with the relevant departments.

Exposure visits have prompted participants to attempt similar 'best practices' within their jurisdictions. For instance, Rajasthan trainees visiting Kerala and Andhra have submitted a 'plan of action' to the Rajasthan Government suggesting schemes similar to what they had seen in these two states. Many also seek UNDP's CDLG State Coordinators' advice on how they might run their villages professionally "like an executive, not a politician". In Orissa, State Government officials observe that Panchayati Raj and social audit training has noticeably improved the performance and accountability of the State's MGNREGA programme.

Training and exposure is especially encouraging

women to be more assertive and ambitious. Many SHG trainees have subsequently run elections, though there is no data on which of them have won.

Informants also cite other programme contributions, including the development of new innovative rural capacity-building courses in Chattisgarh, a strengthened, more objective monitoring and evaluation of Panchayati Raj training, as also state-by-state progress reports on training and funds utilization. UNDP also supported the Ministry of Panchayati Raj's in examining the feasibility of setting up a National Institute for Panchayati Raj. Most important, however, is that the Indian Government now has a comprehensive database of all the country's Panchayati Raj officials, something it never had earlier.

As mentioned earlier, the CDLG programme has made a significant contribution to the Government's Panchayati Raj training mission, boosting the number of trained Panchayati Raj representatives from 1 million in 2008-2009 to 2.4 million in 2010-2011. Capacity Assessments (for Panchayati Raj training) have been conducted for all 7 States, and some states have already begun to implement the recommendations. A Monitoring and Evaluation Manual is being compiled to help state training institutions monitor and evaluate their training programmes better. Other guidance documents include an Outsourcing Reference Guide (to guide states in outsourcing training delivery), a Village Planning Manual (to help Gram Panchayats plan better) and Training Needs Assessment Methodologies (to help State training institutions

Details of Pri Elected Representatives and Officials Trained (2008-2011)							
Name of State	Total ERs	Training Coverage (2008-09)		Training Coverage (2009-10)		Training Coverage (2010-11)	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Bihar	130091	140930	103*	0	0	76919	57
Chattisgarh	160548	37746	6	32586	18	200639	116*
Jharkhand	53466	0	0	0	0	1168	0
Madhya Pradesh	417346	109775	16	235600	37	427719	91
Orissa	100864	9102	5	39040	39	132254	54
Rajasthan	120247	58056	42	0	55	112683	80
Uttar Pradesh	771661	24703	3	146122	7	246776	32
TOTAL	1754223	380312		453348		1198158	

Source: Status Report PRI Capacity Building & Training (CB&T) in India: Learning from experience sharing regional workshops.

*Some trainees have been trained more than once.

systematically assess training needs).

Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh and Rajasthan have seen the highest jumps in annual training of PRI officials.

Additionally, as mentioned earlier, the programme has funded a variety of motivational films.

While all informants praise the quality of the training films and materials, there are some programme shortcomings that must be remedied. Most major is that the programme is yet to address the basic challenge that all newly-elected officials be trained within the first 6 weeks of their election. Many informants, including Panchayati Raj officials themselves, said that training is happening only in the third or fourth year of a trainee's term. Second, training is not being properly animated, interspersing films and lectures with dialogues and discussion. Rather, it consists of day-long satellite-broadcasts or "talkathons" in which only the presenters talk.

Thirdly, trainees are not being properly incentivized. For many, trainings hold little practical value in the third or fourth year of their term, particularly since rotating reservations (for women, backward castes, and so on) preclude them from being re-elected. Many thus attend only long enough to register their presence and collect their DSAs. Informants say training needs to be marketed more strategically¹⁴, persuading pradhans that it will benefit them politically to implement learnings. Most also feel that ward members and community leaders within the panchayat should also receive the same training as pradhans for greater accountability. Finally, training should be approached as a comprehensive process of learning and capacity building if it is to enable pradhans to rise to their full potential.

Programme staff observed that the programme would benefit immensely from systematic cross-state learning and experience-sharing, something that is currently absent or rudimentary. Many informants also called upon UNDP to increase its allocation to the programme, given the size and nature of the training challenges confronting the State Institutes of Rural Development.

In this context, the programme's major challenges are the minuscule size and short duration of the programme, and high turnover among UNDP Technical Support Officers. In Rajasthan, high turnover of SIRD staff was also cited as a difficulty.

Other pressing issues are:

Immensity and diversity of target population – India has 240,000 Panchayati Raj institutions and 2.8 million Panchayati Raj representatives, of which 1.03 million are women. Training all of them within 6 weeks of election requires immense, tightly-executed logistical effort. Moreover, they are from highly varied socio-economic, educational, and cultural backgrounds, necessitating customized training methodologies and materials. High electoral turnover, combined with continual additions/changes in government schemes and laws necessitates the continual updation of training materials.

Not easy to find good trainers – Finding the right quality of trainers is a particular problem, given the unique messaging required for this target group. Some NGO training partners are under-performing or corrupt so have had to be terminated. Although a methodology is now being developed to grade and improve the quality of trainer, it is still a work in progress. Field training partners say they are not being paid enough to cover training expenses, which compromises the quality of the programme.

As mentioned earlier, UNDP's effort to build and capacitate elected and aspiring women leaders has had noticeable impacts at the grassroots level. Women are far more vocal and assertive, exerting a discernible influence on decision-making within the *panchayat* - a key objective of the programme. Informants do not see the same success at district and state levels, where elected representatives do not have day-to-day contact with their political constituencies, where their roles are less clear, and where party politics is at play in determining priorities and action.

Informants from among the '1,000 potential women leaders' identified and trained by the UNDEF-CSR said that the programme had "inspired" them by giving them the opportunity to interact personally with senior politicians and by keeping them politically motivated to, though they had lost their first election. However, they felt that 2.5 days of training was too short, that lectures should have been tighter and better-facilitated, and that there should be regular refresher courses and ongoing in-person or online interaction within the group. Many also wanted practical hand-holding and support during election campaigns. Third-party informants feel that the project has not really succeeded in "building the

¹⁴ Currently, pradhans receive just a call or short letter of invitation.

capacity of *marginalized* women to participate in state and national electoral politics”, since trainees that have successfully fought elections tend to be from privileged or political backgrounds.

The online course on Political Leadership for women is innovative and useful, but needs to be widely publicized and translated into other languages to realize its full potential. CSR is now also in discussions with the Indian Institute of Management Bangalore to create a formal political leadership course for women. The advocacy aspect of the project (for passage of the Women's Reservation Bill) only met with partial success.

4.2.4 Access to Justice

The Access to Justice project seeks to strengthen legal aid and legal empowerment for marginalized people, particularly women, scheduled cases, tribal communities and minorities. It has four components: i) support national and local justice delivery institutions improve justice services to the marginalized, ii) develop legal and representational capacity of civil society organizations and networks providing justice services to disadvantaged groups; iii) enhance legal awareness among women and men belonging to marginalized groups; and iv) inform policies and institutional structures through action research and studies. This project builds on UNDP's two-year Strengthening Access to Justice pilot (2006-2008), which undertook a broad analysis of the justice sector, focusing on key challenges in the criminal justice and informal justice systems, and in legal aid and legal empowerment.

As mentioned earlier, informants unanimously perceive the projects' most major contribution to be the genesis of constructive, reform-minded collaboration between India's judicial institutions and civil society. UNDP is also the only development partner privileged to partner with India's justice system.

The project appears to be moving well, judging by the positive response from all relevant informants. Capacity assessments of state-level justice delivery institutions' ability to effectively service the marginalized are now underway in the 7 UNDAF states. 'Access to Justice' modules are being prepared and tested for training of judges. Community justice workers are being trained in 7 states, legal literacy modules are being prepared for integration into the National Literacy Mission's adult literacy programme,

Sakshar Bharat, and – according to UNDP figures – the programme has built legal awareness amongst 15,00,000 people on laws related to women's rights, tribal communities and the poor through a range of outreach material, and has trained over 2000 legal aid lawyers, paralegals, elected women representatives from minority communities such as dalits, and representatives from various non-governmental organizations and self-help groups to assist marginalized people access justice.

UNDP has also launched the Justice Innovation Fund, supports a variety of innovative civil-society run legal awareness, legal aid and training programmes in 67 districts across the country. Amongst these are the use of information technology, strategic networks, community radio, and help lines to generate awareness.

The 100 paralegal workers trained by MARG (a legal empowerment NGO) in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are now helping train counterparts within the Department of Justice's new national paralegal development programme. Community radio is being used to disseminate information on a range of legal rights including the public distribution system, legal aid mechanisms, entitlement schemes such as MGNREGA, the right to education, domestic violence and minority rights. Justice Innovation Fund partners are also supporting the poor in accessing free legal aid and justice services to realize entitlements, such as old age and widows pension, inclusion in the BPL category and redressal of delayed payments under the job guarantee scheme.

According to UNDP informants, there were some initial delays in the programme for two reasons. Firstly, it has taken time to develop a close working relationship with State/ District justice officials and judicial academies. Also, since UNDP's Access to Justice team manages the project from Delhi, organizing regular meetings and feedback involves some effort, particularly since it is juggling simultaneous roll-out across 7 states using a handful of expert national consultants. This issue continues to pose an operational challenge, and many informants suggested that UNDP hire State Programme Officers for each of the project states. The baseline assessment had to be re-bid due to the selected consultant's lack of capacity to carry out research at this scale. Some informants also spoke of the disinterest and/or poor managerial capability of the government and UNDP staff that initially handled the project.

4.2.5 Access to Information

This Access to Information project sought to develop mass awareness of India's Right to Information Act through an extensive training and advocacy programme targeting both government officials and the public. Other objectives were research and documentation on the early implementation of the Act, the compilation of knowledge bank of case studies and best practices, experience-sharing workshops and information fairs at which citizens might seek information from State and District agencies, including audits of information requests and their disposal. The project, which commenced in December 2005, initially covered 12 states and 24 districts. Given the scale of the training challenge, it was scaled up to 28 states and 56 districts in April 2007. Total project budget was US\$ 3.0 million.

The programme produced a variety of manuals and modules, which continue to be the basis for much RTI training in the country. As discussed earlier, the Department of Personnel and Training has converted one of these modules into a popular online certificate course, and UNDP support was crucial in developing materials and providing platforms to build mass awareness and understanding of the Act, as also in developing a cadre of RTI trainers throughout the country.

However, the programme fell short on most of its other objectives, which civil society informants attribute to its "being reduced merely to a Department of Personnel and Training initiative", which included none of the extensive knowledge-sharing and dialogue that characterized UNDP's earlier effort to broad-base access to information in the country. Informants involved in programme implementation also cite managerial issues, such as infrequent meetings by the National Steering Committee and weak centre-state coordination on RTI training.

However, the key issue was a limited ability to enforce performance over partner Administrative Training Institutes, resulting from the programme's 'cafeteria approach'. In this approach, ATIs were permitted to choose from a basket of desired activities. While, ideally, they should have put equal effort into training, as into other activities such as research and the development of training materials,

this did not happen.

Not surprisingly, there were major shortfalls in training quantity and quality. Informants cite the following in particular: training was too short; only mid-tier PIOs were trained; few gram panchayat PIOs, First Appellate Authorities and Heads of Departments were trained. Trained PIOs were also transferred to other posts in which they were never required to use their trainings, and new PIOs were not trained.¹⁵ Civil society was rarely, if at all, invited to participate in trainings. Civil society informants say this enabled trainee PIOs to focus more on asking trainers, including State Information Commissioners, how they might best use the Act's exemption clauses to avoid or reject responding to applicants' question. These informants also say that if UNDP and the Government had publicly reported details of which government officials had been trained, and how project funds had been spent, civil society could have helped monitor and enhance programme performance.

Thus, UNDP's investment in RTI training has not had the extensive national outcome that was intended. Though most PIOs are now familiar with the law, no 'mindset change' is observable judging by the continuing poor quality of Section 4 or *suo moto*, reporting, record keeping and support to RTI applicants. Many government offices around the country, particularly at the block level and below, still fail to report even the *most basic* information required by the Act – that is, the name and contact details of the Public Information Officer!

4.2.6 Capacity building for Urban Governance

All relevant informants feel that this project was closed (Nov 2006-June 2008) just as it was gaining speed on the ground. Thus, while it met most of its 'hard' deliverables, in which consultants undertook specific activities and/or submitted plans and reports, those which relied on ULB leadership have not performed as well.

Draft gender-inclusive CDPs were prepared for nine UIDSSMT cities¹⁶ following wide ranging stakeholder consultations and presented to elected local representatives and urban local body officials. On the other hand, 7 cities were comprehensively credit-rated but none seems to have worked on

¹⁵ These observations are affirmed by the findings of the People's RTI Assessment (2008-2009), an extensive civil society study of Right to Information Act performance across ten sample states.

¹⁶ Alapuzza and Palakkad in Kerala; Tonk, Bharatpur, Bhilwara and Sri Ganganagar in Rajasthan; and Cuttack, Sambalpur and Berhampur in Orissa

market. Similarly, while consultants completed their double-entry related activities, many municipalities have still not updated their balance sheets or got their accounts audited.

GIS mapping of municipal properties has moved very slowly due to difficulties in undertaking door-to-door surveys given non-availability of ULB staff, and in procuring and digitizing GIS maps (particularly in Rajasthan).¹⁷ Thus, at project close in mid-2008, only 90% of the Uttar Pradesh work, 80% of the Kerala work, and 60% of the Orissa work was done. Some States, such as Orissa, have had to reform municipal laws, causing further delays.¹⁸

20 Citizen Facilitation Centres (CFC) became partly-operational in 10 project cities, and Municipalities were to further invest in putting most services and data online to enable citizens and ULB officials to access all necessary information in 'real-time' information. ULBs were also to expand CFC services beyond property tax and complaint registration to include birth and death registration, approval of building plans, etc. While progress differs across states, UNDP's investment is fortunately not lost. Most states are now in the process of rolling out e-services projects, and to make continued use of these centres. Berhampur's CFCs will soon be an integral part of Orissa's e-services programme.

Poor ULB capacity was a major programme challenge. For, most ULBs lacked the expertise/ manpower to effectively undertake and monitor project activities. It thus took 2-4 months to tender for consultants, and one State lost even more time due to its State Level Agency's failure to draft an effective ToR, which necessitated re-tendering. Also slowing progress was poor intra-Municipal departmental coordination, reassignment of ULB functionaries and weak local civil society.

However, informants feel that the project's key structural problem was that it had little State Government/ ULB ownership, being executed in partnership with the Ministry of Urban Development in Delhi. Also, unlike the MGNREGA, it did not hinge on a law that binds State Governments to deliver. State Governments engaged marginally with the project, than attending the occasional review

meeting and nominating State Level Agencies to drive it. In turn, these Agencies had little real interest in the project, since they were nominated by State Governments rather than having competed for the project. Also, since the project introduced a variety of concepts that were new to the State Level Agencies, many did not have the capacity to really drive it. According to informants, the Kerala Institute for Local Administration was the only one of the 7 State agencies to go frequently to the field to push implementation.

Also, given the tight timeline in which the project was executed (November 2006-June 2008), it devoted little energy to what should have been a key activity: building ownership and commitment from the executive and political leadership within each municipality, and the city in general. Moreover, the project was executed from Delhi and the State Level agencies, both of whom relied heavily on consultants. No coordination mechanisms were set up either at State or ULB level, by appointing a nodal officer and/ or dedicated staff right from the start of the project. Consultants, on contract from the SLAs (with UNDP financing), worked independently of the ULB, and interacted with them only on an 'as needs' basis.

4.3 STRUCTURAL ISSUES IMPACTING THE OUTCOME

Despite the notable contribution being made by many of UNDP's Democratic Governance initiatives, many projects are failing to meet all their deliverables. The Evaluator's observation (from the 112 central, state and district interviews conducted for this evaluation in New Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Orissa) is that this stems from a handful of administrative and structural issues that are recurring across projects. For convenience, these can be classified into the six broad issues below.

"Spreading itself too thin" – The most dominant observation from informants is that UNDP is "spreading itself too thin in trying to be all things to all people." Rather than focusing on a core competency, UNDP has strayed, they feel, into areas in which it has little strategic advantage or technical expertise. UNDP is thus undermining its own programmatic impact, they say, by "sprinkling" money and human resources across a variety of unrelated projects, and thus compromising on what they see as

¹⁷ The four Rajasthan cities had to drop this component from their work plan due to large delays on the part of the State level agency.

¹⁸ Orissa reformed its Municipal Corporation Act to permit a property tax which used a unit area-based system of assessment. Since the Municipalities Act did not provide for this, the Orissa State Government is still working to modify this act.

Non-project advocacy and knowledge-sharing activities

Informants had the following feedback on project advocacy and knowledge-sharing activities relating contained in UNDP's Democratic Governance Programmes.

Documentation, research and advocacy – Most government informants were positive about the quality of UNDP publications, though most academic and civil society informants feel that UNDP materials are largely descriptive and lack analysis. UNDP does not offer the wealth of cutting-edge and continually-updated research available on the World Bank website, they say, which is why the latter is their “go to” place when reading up on a Democratic Governance issue. District informants say that UNDP publications, including its Human Development Reports and other studies, are too voluminous and complicated to read. Their advice to UNDP is that it summarize the content of these publications into a series of short simply-written fliers, with graphs and charts, that are both widely available and easily understood.

Many informants feel that UNDP is not sufficiently documenting the research and lessons from its projects and, even when it does, it is not investing enough in disseminating it widely. Thus, many valuable studies commissioned by UNDP (on Human Development, Right to Information best practice, Planning and, so on,) sit on its shelves, they say, and do not reach the wide audience for which they are intended. Here, informants suggest that UNDP draw lessons from the concerted manner in which the World Bank promotes its research and publications to Indian policy/opinion makers, ensuring that it goes right down to state and district levels to hold launch workshops, press conferences, seminars, and so on. Another observation, including by UNDP staff, is that UNDP needs to catalogue its reports, studies and publications better, so that these can be easily and quickly accessed.

Project partners and consultants also observed that UNDP delays in approving final release of the studies and films it commissions result in these never reaching the public.

Solution Exchange – Informants say that this is a useful innovation though they feel that it needs to be more tightly moderated, given the number of emails and messages it generates on a daily basis. For this reason, many informants do not have the time or inclination to read much of the exchange. What most informants suggest is a daily or weekly summary of key points. Some also suggest that debate and discussion be structured around expert thought papers on particular issues. One suggestion is that online discussion be supplemented by the opportunity to regularly engage offline as well, maybe once a month or once a quarter.

National and international knowledge-sharing – Here, the feedback is extremely mixed. While about a half of the informants who commented on this issue feel that UNDP is usefully making available international technical expertise and know-how, the other half feel that UNDP could do considerably more to bring this talent to India. There were also differences of opinion on whether expensive international consultants bring more or less value to projects than similar Indian consultants.

One remarkably common theme, though, is that UNDP needs to devote more concerted energy to identifying, documenting and widely disseminating ‘best practice’ within the country. UNDP state and district project staff especially stressed on the need for programmes to regularly and systematically share ‘best practice’ and experience across states, as also across programmes (e.g. CDLG staff be kept abreast of planning-related and access-to-justice developments and planning staff about CDLG-related and access-to-justice developments, and so on).

the institutions’ key strength – policy advice, capacity building and advocacy on human development, poverty alleviation and governance.

Administrative issues – Programmes are typically

going into operation only in the middle or end of Year 2, due a combination of GOI and UNDP approval and financial process. A further two to eight months is being lost in procuring field staff and consultants, as a result of current tendering rules and

Limited State and District Ownership

Some of UNDP's Democratic Governance programmes only involve an MoU between UNDP and its partner Ministry at the centre, though State Governments are responsible for implementation. Thus, sufficient ownership, interest and momentum is not built within the level of Government that is charged with implementing the programme. The tendency is to see it as somebody else's creation, and thus somebody else's responsibility.

This same tendency is at play in the District Planning programme, in which the MoU is between UNRC, the Planning Commission and the State Government, while District Governments which actually implement part of the programme merely receive a letter of instruction from above. Recognizing the problem, UNDP has strategically placed its state-level and district-level project support staff within the relevant government office, rather than in a separate project office. For this reason, they report directly to state and district officials so as to build governmental ownership of the project and all decisions taken within it. The intent is to ensure that the initiative sustains even after the project concludes though, by UNDP informants' own admission, some further strategic thinking is required on how to build active government ownership of programmes.

the non-availability of suitably qualified candidates. As a result, programmes are operational for just two of their planned four years, and are thus understandably not able to meet all outputs and outcomes. A few interviewees also alluded to some delays in UNDP fund flows. In some cases, spending thus begins late in the programme cycle but must be "hurried up" so as to meet budget timelines, compromising on the quality of delivery.

Exacerbating these issues is the multi-tiered and multi-stakeholder structure in many of UNDP's existing Democratic Governance programmes. Typically, programme MoUs are signed between UNDP and national Ministry, though it is the State Government that actually implements it. Similarly, the CDDP programme involves a tripartite agreement

with UNRCO, the Planning Commission and the State Government, although the primary focus of activity is at the district level. Given this variety of actors, programmatic decisions are referred to National or State level Steering Committees comprising of all stakeholders. While these are supposed to meet quarterly, key members are often too busy and so they meet just once a year or less. Strategic decisions often get held up, further hindering outcomes and constraining collective, high-level monitoring and evaluation.

Limited and straitened budgets – Even as informants point to the flexibility of UNDP funds as a prime strength, they underline that its "tiny budget" is its leading Achilles heel.

UNDP's small budget is having two negative impacts. First, the monies it makes available to partner Ministries are often less than 1% of the millions of rupees the latter handle every day. National Programme Directors, who are under continuous pressure to spend Government scheme allocations impactfully, "rarely have the mindspace to pay attention to UNDP programme more than once or twice a month," let alone drive them in the manner required to effectively meet all outcomes. Some informants also sympathized with UNDP's being "doubly-cobbled by being tied to Government."

Given the minuscule budgets, UNDP programmes also tend to become 'invisible' within partnering Governmental institutions, who receive far larger funds from other development partners such as the World Bank, DFID or even UNICEF. Many informants added that UNDP is further undermining its impact and stature by diffusing its energies and finances across a variety of unrelated activities. Sudden budget crunches and downscaling also hurt its credibility with Government. Finally, small programme monies so limit the geographic scope of an intervention that it has little natural visibility even if successful.

Low budgets can also constrain partner institutions and consultants in delivering a quality product. Assignments are often ambitious, yet contract fees barely cover operational costs, say informants from this group of stakeholders, even though UNDP fee norms for consultants are significantly above those of the government which does the bulk of contracting in this sector. Contractors say that there is thus a tendency to meet only the most minimal contractual requirements, so as to retain some profit.

However, it might be noted here that UNDP's

Accounting-related issues

Government informants overwhelmingly complained about UNDP's increasingly stringent accounting and procurement rules, and called upon the institution to simplify them. Particularly cumbersome, they say, is that UNDP requires all recipient government departments to maintain separate accounts in a separate format for all its project monies, without offering any human resource support for the purpose. While they acknowledge that tight oversight compels more effective, efficient project spend, the common observation is that UNDP project monies, though small, entail more oversight than a large World Bank loan.

UNDP informants say that most international development partners require a separate account to hedge fiduciary risks and avoid the protracted steps involved in routing funds through the state treasury. According to them a separate account creates the flexibility to avoid stringent government financial and treasury rules. UNDP is also under increased pressure for stronger accountability mechanisms from those development partners who fund its programmes.

to UNDP informants, the institution should thus in all fairness be judged not by the size of its budget, but by its success in establishing the frameworks, plans and processes necessary to guide optimal and impactful spending of the Indian Government's far larger budgets.

strategy is to strengthen governmental institutions with technical expertise, rather than large-scale project implementation, an approach that many government informants also called for. According

Tendering-related issues

In some programmes, consultants are deliberately under-bidding to win contracts, sometimes by a factor of a half to two-thirds. Not surprisingly, they are unable to deliver and the whole assignment has to be re-tendered. This process can often take up to a year.

To guard against this problem, informants strongly advise UNDP to devise cost benchmarks by which to vet tenders for major programme components. UNDP informants point out that this will be difficult since costs are market-driven and so shift continually.

“UNDP is not pursuing an issue through to the end” – Another recurring observation is that UNDP is not seeing its initiatives through to the end. Firstly, its 15-year programme cycle is far too short given the ambitious transformations it seeks to nurture (and the fact that it “has tended to go for difficult area”), particularly since the first one to two years are lost in setting up a programme operationally. Many programmes also entail intense initial advocacy to build the governmental and community buy-in necessary to make the programme a success. Thus, just as programmes begin to take off, they hit the four-year deadline and must be closed, as happened with the Rural Decentralization and Capacity Building for Urban Governance projects. Since UNDP has rarely put in place a carefully thought-through ‘exit strategy’, such projects hardly produce sustainable results.

A programme must run for at least five to seven years for its impact to manifest. Thus, informants overwhelmingly called on UNDP to extend its programme cycle, or to incorporate a zero-year for operational start-up, baseline surveys, and so on.

Further limiting outcomes is “UNDP’s tap on, tap off approach to projects”, in which it works on an issue for a few years and suddenly drops it when another one becomes more fashionable. Thus, it has abandoned a number of initiatives which could have had significant outcomes “had it seen the issue through to a lasting solution.” The most common examples cited by informants are the Rural Decentralisation and Capacity Building for Urban Governance projects, though many also feel that UNDP should have persisted with its Access to Information work given the national momentum for greater transparency and accountability issuing from the Right to Information Act.

Similarly, informants’ perception is that UNDP launches a variety of pilots, promising that it will work with Government to scale these up, but if nothing happens, UNDP moves on. However, as pointed out earlier, there have been some success stories, including the Orissa’s Government’s upscaling of the UNDP-supported MGNREGA convergence pilot in Kandhamal and the Chattisgarh Government’s upscaling of Village and Urban Ward Index Cards. UNDP initiatives, including gender-

budgeting and RTI training modules, have also fundamentally informed the design and content of a number of government schemes. For these pilots to be meaningful and replicable, they must be embedded in focused long-term activity. Many informants also considered that UNDP should invest more in ‘hard products’, such as training films, textbooks, manuals etc, which – when useful – continue to be used long after a project ends.

Frequent human-resource turnover – While UNDP programmes have long struggled with the sudden transfers of nodal officers at national, state and district levels, two of its key programmes - CDDP and CDLG - are being severely hit by high turnover amongst UNDP’s own District and State Support Officers that are supposed to drive these programmes on the ground. This is an issue that UNDP must address immediately since it is especially limiting the pace and scope of its District Planning work.

Informants attribute this turnover primarily to the nature of the contract on which these state and district support officers (DSOs) are being hired. Since they are hired as United Nations Volunteers (UNVs), they are given an annual contract that must be renewed every year with a maximum of four years duration. Salaries are also about a third or a half lower than prevailing market rates,¹⁹ and are not indexed to living costs in the district to which DSOs are posted.²⁰ The Rs 5,000 budgeted for DSOs travel and communications is also too low, say DSO informants, since their main duty is community mobilization which requires continual travel into the field.

Weak field engagement and monitoring & evaluation – Informants also urged UNDP’s New Delhi staff to engage with their programmes’ field operations at least two or three times a year. Many also called for the setting up of UNDP State Offices in the states in which it operates, or at least a dedicated state Programme Management Unit for three or four major programmes.

Field teams say they would feel more confident and intellectually energized should they regularly engage with UNDP Country Office staff. Currently, they

¹⁹ According to informants, many resigning DSOs join UNICEF (often as District Facilitators in the ‘convergence’ districts), since contracts are permanent and monthly salaries are much higher, starting at Rs 50,000.

²⁰ According to DSO informants, their salaries are a fixed Rs 17,666. However, the monthly rent on a one-bedroom flat can vary from Rs 2,000 in Kalahandi to Rs 5,000 in Sundargarh, to cite just one example.

feel distant from the organization due to the lack of direct personal interaction with the New Delhi team. Many field staff said that they only see UNDP staff once a year at intra-team workshops in New Delhi. SIRD partners complain that they are not called to these workshops even though they are essential to programme delivery. Government officials feel UNDP programmes would be more aligned with state needs, if there were continuing engagement with a full-fledged State Office. Chhattisgarh was particularly emphatic about its need for dedicated UNDP state-level support.

More frequent UNDP visits to State and District Capitals and field areas would strengthen programme officer's understanding of ground realities and pressures, something that many informants consider weak at the moment. "Only if you contribute directly to your own programme, can you effectively measure outcomes." Stronger field engagement is essential to assess programmatic impact. It would also build programme visibility, stature and momentum for amongst local officials and communities.

Informants also faulted UNDP on the thinness of its monitoring and evaluation efforts, again resulting from the New Delhi team's infrequent and superficial engagement with the fields. Where there are slippages, it tends to be because the programme team (UNDP and the Government) is not actively monitoring, demanding reports. It is to UNDP's credit that it is evaluating its own work. That is, the "evaluation supporting agency itself asking to be evaluated." One informant said, first time seeing a UNDP evaluator do an impact assessment study; one interviewee, first time seeing a UNDP evaluator ever. Another interviewee – it is very creditable that UNDP is having itself evaluated – "the evaluator being evaluated."

"Formats is not monitoring," said an informant, referring to UNDP's current practice of merely requiring short quarterly reports in tabular form from programme staff and partners. Moreover, UNDP programme staff should more actively monitor and evaluate programmes themselves while they are in progress to facilitate timely course-corrections, even though UNDP generally commissions both a mid-term and terminal evaluation of its projects.

Moreover, UNDP does not appear to be conducting any follow-up evaluations to assess programmatic impact and draw development lessons from its

programmes once they have. In the case of micro-planning, for instance, partner NGOs helped villages make the micro-plans, but then the project closed – and so they were not there to monitor implementation, to see what happened afterward – and to help push for money after the Plan was submitted.

Limited in-house technical expertise – Outcomes are also being constrained by the fact that UNDP programme staff operate essentially as managers, rather than technical experts. Many informants commented, in one way or another, on the limited domain and/or field knowledge of "UNDP's generalist development bureaucrats." Resultantly, UNDP is offering India little that is new or cutting-edge in the subject areas in which it is operating through in-house experts and relies on external know-how. Here, UNDP informants point out that programmes need managers, rather than technical experts, to run them.

Many informants also observed that UNDP is increasingly tending to hire younger people "with fancy degrees but no real grassroots experience or subject expertise", whether in its Indian and global Country Offices or field operations. Many staff members thus have neither the requisite field experience or training to think out-of-the-box on development issues. In contrast, UNDP earlier hired older people with extensive grassroots experience and great understanding of local conditions and culture. To transform itself from within, "UNDP might consider an intensive process of internal capacity building and change management so it can truly add value to its client system."

Affirming this observation, staff ruefully confided that much of their time goes in administration and "quality control", as a result of which they themselves have little time to refresh or intensify their domain knowledge. Some said that insufficiently deep domain expertise hampers them in holding consultants intellectually accountable for their work, especially on more academic issues such as research methodologies. For this reason, it is often consultants – rather than UNDP itself – that drive its intellectual agenda.

4.4 BUILDING CAPACITIES OF KEY INSTITUTIONS

Most of the programmes in UNDP's current Democratic Governance portfolio seek to build

the government's capacity to deliver on social sector commitments, contrasting with its earlier emphasis on building demand-side capacity through civil society-driven workshops, cross-state visits, international exchanges, and so on. In this context, UNDP is partnering with two types of anchor institutions. In the first category are State Institutes of Rural Development and State Administrative Training Institutions. In the second are State and District Governments. The nature of capacity development varies in both cases. However, it might be broadly observed that UNDP might need to rethink some of its existing capacity-building models, so as to create more permanent resources and

Trainers not really being used

Some informants mentioned that State and District Governments are not really making full use of the the Human Development and Planning trainers trained from UNDP resources, as discussed earlier, though this does not appear to be the case with RTI trainers.

knowledge assets in the States/ Districts in which it operates.

- **State Institutes of Rural Development and State Administrative Training Institutions**

UNDP's prime contribution, as discussed earlier, is in quickly hiring high-quality technical experts and trainers to run 'training for trainers' programmes, or to develop new certificate programmes. Quite clearly, the materials and methodologies being produced with UNDP support are embedding themselves within these institutions, expanding capacity and content, and being relied upon and supplemented for many years. But, the experts and trainers that UNDP is making available tend to serve largely as short-term parallel capacity, and the expertise they offer is not being sufficiently absorbed by the trainings institutions they are deputed to assist.

Also not being fundamentally absorbed are the more innovative pedagogies being introduced and proposed by these experts. As mentioned

earlier, training appears to be continuing "in the old style" with trainees crammed into a room and subjected to long series of lectures and films, with little animation or facilitation. Two other recurring themes about training are, first, is that it needs to be longer and, secondly, that it must include extensive hands-on experience.

Going forward, UNDP will need to pay especial attention to moving its training institute partners beyond their current focus on boosting training number to instituting pedagogy that "creates a holistic learning system that results in discernible behavior change." To do this, it needs to build the capacities of institute faculty by sponsoring them for external training and cross-state visits to observe best practice. It also needs to fund films that demonstrate new developments in pedagogy for behavioural change. Further, it might need to augment faculty numbers in these institutes.

In parallel, it will need to ensure that learning outcomes are rigorously and systematically evaluated, as these institutions' training capacity needs have been. Robust methodologies will need to be developed, and evaluations will need to fundamentally inform pedagogy improvements. A learning evaluation is apparently underway in the Orissa CDLG programme, and is to be completed in later this year.

- **State and District Governments**

Here, there is a strong and resounding call for UNDP to rethink its approach to supplementing governmental capacity. Overwhelmingly, informants observe that the current strategy only serves to create short-term parallel capacity, comprising largely of expensive consultants who work outside the government system. Once the project is over, they are gone, taking their expertise with them. This has especially been the case in its DHDR, District Plan and City Development Plan initiatives, which display a common pattern. All consultants hired were external, which is understandable given the lack of local capacity. However, while they were supposed to live in the district/ city they were contracted, collecting data and consulting with local stakeholders, none did. Most had no planning training or experience, being primarily

²¹ This was certainly the case with the 8 Chhattisgarh draft DHDRs shown to the evaluator, which is now working to edit and finalize them. Moreover, the consultant has not even bothered to incorporate the draft changes proposed.

developmental or research institutions. According to informants, most consultants only “dropped in” three times during the duration of their contract, for perfunctory meetings with the District/ Municipal Government, and worked completely in parallel to them. Most wrote their assignments primarily from desk reviews, often just cutting and pasting from similar assignments.²¹ In consultants’ defence, they say they grappled with Government disinterest and lack of cooperation, and poor governmental data.

Notable exceptions to this pattern are the MGNREGA Technical Cell within the Ministry of Rural Development and the State Project Officers driving UNDP’s planning and local governance efforts in some of the states in which these programmes are operational. In Chhattisgarh, some of the UNVs involved with the DHDR and Index Card initiatives are now working for the Chhattisgarh Government.

Informants suggested three strategies by to build institutional capacity at the State/District/ Municipal level going forward. First is to ensure ongoing capacity building for governmental staff. Second is to anchor the preparation of DHDRs, District Plans, City Development Plans and so on around members of the District Planning team and local academic or research institution, who have a long-term stake in the district and “unlike individual consultants cannot up and vanish.” It should be approached as a long-term process of mentoring, in which Technical Support

Institutions (that would otherwise have been hired to prepare these documents) guide the local institution/ district officials in doing so. The process should be broken into distinct action steps, each lasting two to three months, in which a specific set of tasks is to be completed. The TSI should train the local team intensively at the start of each step, supervise ‘in-step’ conduct of activities, and analyze key lessons and learnings on its completion. Only when data quality has been assured, should the team move on to the next step. Needless to say, UNDP should also be closely involved to ensure that the process is proceeding as planned. Though time consuming, this exercise would not only build local capacity for DHDR and District/ City Planning Capacity preparation, but also for a variety of district data work going forward.

Informants also suggested that UNDP make a more concerted effort to hire local youth for primary data, after a period of intensive training and orientation. To allow sufficient time for this, hiring should begin at least six-to-eight months in advance of project start and jobs should be locally advertised. This would be the most effective way to build local capacity that is lasting, and to ensure that local needs and priorities are truly reflected.

UNDP State and District level staff – Another ‘key institution’ is UNDP’s own State and District level staff - that is, State Project Officers, Technical Support Officers and District Support Officers. Informants said that UNDP needs to invest more in its field staff, training and orienting them more thoroughly, particularly younger, less-experienced District Support Officers.

More generally, UNDP should find a systematic way to retain and re-use short-term program and project staff. Generally, once contracts expire (or when staff resign), UNDP is losing its investment in this talent, which is rarely hired into the Government given budget and procedural constraints, nor re-used by the UNDP system.²² While other development partners suffer from the same problem, some have begun to strategically put field staff on multi-year contracts and to use them across a variety of programmes.

Invest in knowledge products for the District

Many informants said that UNDP should spend more on creating knowledge products and assets that stay within the Government system, rather than only focusing on placing temporary human resource support in government offices. As illustration, they cite the very useful training materials that UNDP financed under the Orissa Dakshyata, CDLG and Access to Information programmes.

²² Of the sample States and Districts visited, the Evaluator found only one case in which former UNDP field has been hired by the Government Department in which he/ she was placed. This was in Chhattisgarh, where a former UNV has been retained by the Directorate of Institutional Finance to edit and finalize this State’s eight draft DHDRs. However, another UNV is supporting the Government as a consultant on a variety of planning-related work.

This is a practice that UNDP might wish to consider, given that its field staff undertakes essentially managerial functions which are applicable across programmes.

4.5 PARTNERSHIP WITH GOVERNMENT BODIES, CIVIL SOCIETY, PRIVATE SECTOR AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

4.5.1 Strong call for more UNDP collaboration with civil society

As discussed earlier, UNDP is credited with having facilitated, or created, unique and invaluable collaborations between the Indian government and civil society across a variety of areas. Key among these is formal civil society input in the Indian national Five-Year Plan process, in the assessment of judicial system needs, in training design and capacity building for right to information, micro-planning, Panchayati Raj and access to justice, among other things. UNDP is also partnering with Indian civil society to pilot novel ICT solutions and livelihood approaches to increase the transparency and efficacy of the MGNREGA.

Given the success of these civil society partnerships, there is a strong and resounding call that UNDP invest more energy in building a deep and strategic partnership with civil society. Although this call is loudest amongst NGO informants, it is by no means confined to them.

UNDP's current Democratic Governance portfolio is marked by a concentration of close partnerships with Government Ministries/Departments and training institutions, all of whom have demonstrably benefitted from the collaboration. A possible reason is GOI's introduction of ambitious new laws and programmes (RTI, MGNREGA, Decentralised Planning) which require dramatic ramp-up and re-orientation of governmental delivery capacity. UNDP has stepped into the breach by funding the design of new training programmes/models and innovative pedagogical materials, all of which have enabled a major expansion of training reach and content. Allying with Government is also more convenient, since it is free of the continual official scrutiny that dogs close development partner partnership with civil society.

The arguments being made for a stronger and renewed UNDP partnership with civil society cluster

in two areas: first, India's changing relationship with development partners and, second, the greater field impact of NGO-partnered strategies.

Allying so closely, and almost exclusively, with Government has increased reach but minimized field impact, argue informants. First, this has "straight-jacketed UNDP" into doing only what the Government considers useful, particularly given its' small budget. Second, it hinders programme delivery, given the Government's entirely different culture and pace. "It is like a three legged race in which you trip each time your partner does."

Most critical, it is difficult for UNDP to hold Government accountable for delivering on its programme commitments, or to fundamentally challenge it on policy. Already, despite UNDP's special closeness to Government, it appears to be finding it difficult to fully leverage this relationship to more actively push the human development agenda in India. Many informants observed that UNDP is so afraid to displease the Government that it has a "subservient, almost reverential" relationship with the Government. This balance will become even more delicate as it moves more fully into the Democratic Governance agenda, and as the Government of India becomes even less needful of development partner advice and support.

If Democratic Governance is to be a driver of UNDP's engagement in India, then it "must have the have the distance to ask tough questions." At the same time, UNDP needs to build an organic partnership with civil society and other local partners, and to capacitate it to maintain the public pressure necessary to improve public service delivery, accountability and transparency. Also, since NGOs are 'impact-oriented', working closely with them is likely to generate more results than working with the bureaucracy.

Here, UNDP is at a particular advantage over other development partners, given its perceived neutrality. This enables it to draw people and institutions from a wide variety of ideological backgrounds and interests. It is also, as manifest already, a trusted bridge between government and civil society. It should build more actively on this advantage, and become a prime channel bringing the people's voice into the corridors of development policy-making.

However, given the intellectual robustness and innovativeness of Indian civil society, UNDP will need to devise more value-added models of collaboration

and engagement, recognizing that a variety of other development partners will also be competing with the same space. It will thus need to develop a deep and detailed understanding of Indian civil society, so that its engagement has the most effective long-term systemic pay-off. Many informants referred to the Ford Foundation as highly successful in this regard.

Civil society informants also made some common observations on current shortcomings in UNDP's engagement with this group of stakeholders:

- **“UN darlings”**

UNDP, like other UN agencies, limits itself to a group of familiar NGOs/ activists, which it invites over and over again to all its events. Other NGOs/ activities thus find it difficult to break into this charmed circle, or even to obtain an appointment with a UNDP programme officer in the New Delhi office.

The perception is that UNDP is comfortable with these “UN darlings” because they are not apt to challenge or critique it. One danger of this closed circle is that this is the only civil society voice being heard in UN meetings to the exclusion of other ideas and solutions. Another is that UNDP is not going out to look for new NGOs and thought-leaders to engage with, as a result of which it is missing out on fresh thinking. It is imperative that UNDP give attention to this issue from both a strategic (i.e. forging a wider coalition) and democratic (i.e. enabling all voices/ ideologies to be heard) perspective.

- **Building new NGO capacity**

There is a similar, and understandable, tendency to work only with established and known NGOs (“big NGOs” as they were christened by informants) when working in the field. However, the best way to “push pilots into the system” is by capacitating a variety of smaller district and grassroots level NGOs. UNDP already has indirect links to many of these through its consultant or NGO partners, who commission them to undertake field surveys, collect data, or mobilize communities on their behalf. UNDP should devise a strategy and mechanisms by which it might begin to deal directly with smaller NGOs as full-fledged partners themselves. This would build their capacity, world-vision and visibility immensely, while taking developmental tools and know-how right down to the grassroots.

UNDP partnership with smaller NGOs would afford these grassroots organizations tremendous respect by local government officials, adding momentum to their growth and development. In this context, informants stressed that UNDP project monies should be given for a minimum of three to five years to such grassroots NGOs. As emphasized earlier, a one-year cycle chokes a project when it is about to take off.

Lastly, continual UNDP engagement, handholding and monitoring is key to the successful development of these NGOs. Giving them money is not enough. There must also be constructive field monitoring, activity monitoring, and financial monitoring.

- **Keep civil society briefed**

Civil society informants said they had only a limited idea of UNDP's various Democratic Governance initiatives, since they do not receive any information on these. What they know is most often merely through hearsay. Interestingly, not one of the third-party civil society informants knew the details of UNDP's Bhilwara pilots, something that UNDP considers a major success story. One informant also said he is often invited for UNDP national events, but never for UNDP state-related events in which its local initiatives are discussed.

4.5.2 Strengthening the UNDP Government Relationship

Informants preferred some advice on how UNDP might strengthen its operational relationship with State Government. First, to get real momentum going on some of its more challenging programmes (District Planning, for instance), it might adopt a model of engagement that is “external to the Government but with the symbols of Government so it has authority.” Most powerful would be an Empowered Committee of Secretaries or Ministers, chaired by the Chief Minister, with the Chief Secretary also a member. Another arrangement is a specially-created Society, created to push a programme as in the Rajasthan's Livelihood mission. A coordinating mechanism, consciously created outside Government, is unlikely to become encumbered by its processes.

Here, a UNDP informant pointed out that there are many instances where such powerful committees have been constituted for development partner

projects but have been non-starters. Many have never even met, for State Chief Secretaries head 125-150 such committees on average, and Chief Ministers even more!

At a more operational level, UNDP might make an effort to “engage on a continual basis rather than expecting an immediate reaction every time it wants a meeting fixed.” Continual, collaborative interaction will seed a natural momentum that might encourage State Governments themselves to ask UNDP for help on knotty issues. Secondly, UNDP

should not anchor all its engagement with partner Ministries/ Departments solely around the Secretary and the National Project Director, for operational momentum breaks when they are transferred. UNDP needs to invest in other high-level tie ups within the Ministry so as to build more broad-based ownership and understanding of its programmes. One strategy is to keep influential officials apprised on major programme developments and achievements through a newsletter; another is to invite them to workshops that brainstorm on programme issues. As one informant said, “UNDP should not merely give money to a State, it also needs to invest in active advocacy with a state’s senior-most officials.”

Equally useful would be to build relationships with other Ministries/ Departments that might interface with a programme on the ground. For instance, the Access to Justice programme would greatly benefit from a working relationship with the Labour and Employment, Social Justice and Empowerment, Tribal Affairs, Minority Affairs, Food Supplies, and Women and Child Departments who actually disburse the services citizens are trying to access through the justice system. Should officers at the highest level understand and back a programme, front-line officials are more likely to perform better.

A final tip is to invest in relationships with junior officers, who generally keep their seniors abreast of pressing issues and commitments.

UNDP should also engage with politicians to drive reform politically, since the issues it works on are all extremely saleable politically. UNDP needs to “run a political campaign within the Government” to persuade Ministers and MLAs to publicly ‘own’ and push key human development agendas. For this, it should go meet MLAs/ MPs and sell new ideas to them. For, they are all on the lookout for good ideas to implement in their constituencies, on how to access funds, or on novel ways to articulate the needs of their constituencies.

4.5.3 Joint Activities with other UN Agencies

All relevant informants alluded to the need for much greater coordination among the various United Nations partners in the UN-GOI Joint Programme on convergence.

²³ The current salary differential is Rs 70,000 a month for the UNICEF District Facilitator and Rs 16,000 a month for the UNDP District Support Officer. The UNICEF District Facilitator is provided a car while the UNDP District Support Officer is not. According to informants, existing differences are tending to create the perception among District Administrations that the UNICEF District Facilitator is senior to the UNDP District Support Officer, while in reality they are meant to be equal partners.

5. Recommendations for Future Country Programmes

UNDP in the project evaluation early findings, UNDP is not a staff reporting development approach quarterly offices with playing separately role in supervising key national objectives in the areas particularly in Chhatigar, Panchayat Raj, and the National RECA time since this program is realizing the justice on the fields of the marginalized United Nations'. They also emphasize the need for greater parity in salaries and other perquisites.

Informants also say that the multiplicity of United Nations actors in this programme results in a unique, deeply appreciated and unchallenged expertise in the area of Human Development protected sign-offs on operational and policy data collection and analysis in the form of its Human Development Reports and Human Development Indices;

- ii) a similar, fairly unchallenged expertise in planning for human development and inclusion;
- iii) an ability to partner innovatively with Government in capacity-building en masse;
- iv) a unique and trusted bridge between Government and civil society, facilitating constructive development-oriented dialogue and collaboration; and
- v) the provision of platforms that enable national and international sharing of experience, 'best practice' and knowledge sharing.

Key institutional weaknesses are seen to be:

- i) a tendency to "spread itself too thin" in "trying to be all things to all people";
- ii) small programme budgets;
- iii) a programme cycle that is too short to pursue issues "through to the end"; and
- iv) inadequate field presence in terms of both quantity and quality.

Thus, what makes most programmatic sense in planning forward is to build on perceived strengths and avoid repeating past mistakes. Equally important is to identify and expand areas of programmatic synergy, even within the Democratic Governance portfolio, to maximize field impact and cost-effectiveness.

By juxtaposing this lens of analysis against informants' suggestions for future programme activity a handful of potential priority areas emerge very clearly. Each is discussed within the broad area it slots into within current programme cycle, even though going forward its classification might not be so easy or neat, as will

be explained.

5.1 PROGRAMME DIRECTION AND ACTIVITIES

5.1.1 Planning for Human Development

All informants urged UNDP to press ahead with its Human Development Report initiative, in particularly its District Human Development Reports which are bringing unique value to district planners, district administrations and district populations. Their suggestion is that UNDP should advance this effort in two ways.

HDRs at more regular intervals

First, UNDP should increase the frequency of its State and District Human Development Reports to once every two to three years. For, HDRs could serve as Gol's primary tracking device for human development performance across the country, especially in measuring the impact of governmental schemes. Needless to say, regular and up-to-date HDR data would be an invaluable input to planning and policy-making at district, state and national level. A handful of informants also encouraged UNDP to also consider expanding its DHDR initiative down to the block level, or at least to support or technically assist district governments or NGOs in doing so. More granular data will play a more useful role in planning. Ideally, District Governments should have complete authority to sign-off on their DHDRs to prevent the delays currently being experienced in final DHDR publication.

To incentivize State and Districts collect, publicly report and better human development performance, some informants suggested that UNDP institute an annual Human Development day, at which states showcase human development statistics, human development improvements, and share 'best practices' Awards could also be presented for Best Human Development Report, Most Innovative Human Development Measure, human development success stories, and so on.

Live district databases of human development statistics

Planning informants also overwhelmingly called upon UNDP to go a step further and convert its DHDR effort into a live district-wide database of human development statistics. Already, UNDP is underwriting a major effort to collect a spread of

primary data from sample villages within DHDR districts. By strategically expanding this effort, it could underwrite and support the collection of comprehensive human development data for entire districts. Informants pointed out that much of this data is already contained within village-level registers, and only needs to be regularly agglomerated and fed into a database. Ideally, the database should be online to facilitate public access, even if it is housed in District Planning Department. The database should also enable continual analysis and regular updation. Chattisgarh's experience with Village Index Cards and Urban Ward Index Cards presents a potential model to follow.

Health-related data is of the essence

Many informants underscored India's current gap in detailed and high-quality health data and analysis at the district level, particularly on such issues as infant and maternal mortality, malnutrition. The suggested that the UN Joint Programme on Convergence focus on putting in place the manpower and infrastructure to collect this data, as also key data on other Millenium Development Goal indicators, and to link these to specific project inputs/outcomes. One senior government informant even suggested that data collection drill as far as the names of those who died, verbal autopsies to determine cause of death, and so on.

Micro-planning

There is also a resounding call for UNDP to expand its planning training effort into micro-planning; in other words, to resurrect aspects of the Rural Decentralization project. The call was loudest from gram pradhans, block development officers and other CDLG trainees, who say that the Government's new generation of rural development schemes (such as MGNREGA, BRGF, and so on) predicate on panchayat-level planning and financial decision-making, a responsibility for which they do not feel adequately prepared. In fact, for much the same reasons, all CDLG-related informants cited the urgent need for training on planning and financial management when they were asked how the CDLG programme might be improved.

Develop local capacity for Human Development research and analysis

District informants emphasized the need for UNDP to invest in local capacity to drive this expanded district-level Human Development effort. External consultants would neither have the time nor commitment to do full justice to the initiative, besides which most district would now have sufficient numbers of rural high-school graduates to assist with this task. As discussed earlier, UNDP could anchor its data campaign around a district partner, strategically building its human development research and training capability.

Some Governments informants also said that UNDP should train a wide range of stakeholders on its Human Development methodologies, so that this knowledge does not remain confined only to a handful of consultants and experts. The more the number of people that understand the methodology, the more it will be used and value-added to.

Many informants also suggested that UNDP provide 'soft' support to the World-Bank-Gol programme to strengthen State statistical architecture and systems, in terms of trained planning personnel at the district Level.

5.1.2 Capacity Development for Local Governance

State government and civil society informants underlined the need for a thorough evaluation of learning outcomes to determine whether and how it is impacting the quality of governance at the grassroots. Additionally, as discussed earlier, they feel that UNDP will need to work with its training institute partners to create "holistic and ongoing learning systems" for PRI officials that result in discernable behavior change and better governance. Equally, capacity-building must move beyond empowering marginalized groups to demand to actually teaching them how to deliver, especially women leaders and elected representatives. Moreover, "training must capacitate them to be more than delivery agents for the state, for their role parallels that of MPs and MLAs." They should thus be empowered to give critical feedback on law and policy, and to critique government schemes and initiatives rather than merely memorizing which schemes exist and how they work.

Informants' also had a variety of practical suggestions on how training duration, delivery and content could be enhanced:

- **Training duration**

One-day training is too short for a sarpanch/ pradhan to effectively absorb all they need to. The programme should, at minimum, aim for a 3-day annual training for at least 3 years of a trainee's 5-year term. Ideally, there should be block-level refresher trainings three-to-four times a year, even if just for a day. Also of immense value would be the setting up of an interactive block-, district- and state-level peer network, from which to draw practical support and ideas. The network could engage partly through physical meetings and partly over the telephone and the Internet.

- **Training should go down to the village level**

The current model of training stops at the 'panchayat' level and does not touch individual villages. However, if village communities are to effectively hold their pradhans to account, they must also be fully cognizant about the role of pradhans, panchayat, government schemes, acts/laws, and so on. Thus, it is imperative CDLG trainings should "come out of the classroom" to capacitate other 'movers and shakers' in a village, even if they are not elected. In fact, the training might give them the knowledge and self-confidence to come forward as potential elected representatives.

- **Training recipients**

Key among these are ward members, who typically number at 13-14 per panchayat but who (since they tend to be from backward castes) rarely have the chance to speak at village meetings, which tend to be dominated by the pradhan and the contractor lobby. Bringing training to the village will also enable more SHG women to attend, another leadership element currently outside the ambit of the programme.

Some suggested that pradhans and ward members be given copies of all the training materials and films used in the workshops, so they can replicate these trainings in their villages. Trainings should be in simple language/ concepts, so that all pradhans – many of them illiterate – can truly understand. Additionally, UNDP might invest in posters on key government schemes, such as RTI and MGNREGA, that could be put up in villages. Ideally, village trainings should be done in the evening, when villagers are free.

- **Practical training essential**

Overwhelmingly, CDLG trainees wished to see their training 'at work', in practical situations

under the guidance of their trainer. (This message also came through strongly from Planning-related informants). For instance, their trainer might take them to the block or district Office to demonstrate how they might most effectively ask for a file, inspect it, and draw actionable conclusions. Or, there could be a field-training in how to draw up a village plan. As one interviewee put it, "Training should show us the way forward and the techniques we should use".

- **Training content**

CDLG trainees expressed a strong desire for more textbooks on the roles of rural functionaries, including panchayat officials, block development officers, and zilla parishad members, as for continual updation on all materials handed out during trainings, most especially scheme guideline, financial controls and laws and acts manuals. Also important is material that explains the different ways in which Government schemes might play out in PESA and non-PESA areas. What is crucial is that they be able to take these books home as reference materials. They also suggested that the programme regularly seek and obtain pradhans' feedback on what materials would be most relevant to them.

(In this context, it might be a useful strategy for UNDP to also focus on producing good information/communications materials, and to ensure that pradhans receive them immediately upon being elected, rather than single-mindedly seeking to boost training numbers through the SIRDs).

- **Finance and planning**

CDLG trainees also, overwhelmingly, asked for training on finance and planning. Of most interest are practical strategies by which to generate independent village-level revenues, so the panchayat does not have to ask the block for money/ approval each time it wants to make a developmental expenditure. In addition, they also want concerted training and handholding on village micro-planning, including how to prioritize problems, map and optimize village resources, design and budget annual plans, and regenerate barren land with people's participation. Also mentioned was training on how to best use the Rs 15,000 'emergency fund' allocated to pradhans for health epidemics and disasters.

- **Village-level departments**

In addition to training on flagship programmes, CDLG trainees want a detailed understanding of

the Departments for which they have last-mile responsibility (that is, the village school, primary health centre, aanganwadi, and so on). This, so they can ascertain that these are being properly run

Recording gram sabha meetings

An interesting suggestion (from Orissa) is that village and gram sabha meetings be recorded and made publicly accessible. This would make it easy for illiterate villagers, third-party 'democracy' monitors and the Government, to ensure that the gram sabha's recommendations are indeed implemented. Currently, pradhans, ward members and government officials collude to approve projects that financially benefit them, often in direct contravention to what is agreed in village meetings. Since palli sabhas meet just two times a year, such filming should not cost more than Rs 10 crores (of the Rs 6,000 crore that the Orissa Government spends annually on schemes), but would be a powerful instrument in checking collusion and enhancing scheme performance.

Ideally, the project should be conducted in partnership with the Election Commission, not State Governments. Firstly, the Election Commission is an independent agency insulated from political pulls and pressures. Secondly, it has more continuity: Election Commissioners have 5-year terms, while Principal Secretaries can change every year. Thirdly, and more importantly, the Election Commission is charged with building the electorate's capacity and protecting its interests, and gram sabhas are a major rural electorate. Most conveniently, the Election Commission – which also runs panchayat elections – already has the necessary village-level network in place, and State Election Commissions run their trainings in State Institutes for Rural Development. So, these two parallel structures are already used to working together.

Since the Government of India would not be permitted to allocate money for such a project from existing schemes, UNDP could usefully bridge the gap by supporting the Election Commission choose partners to train, handhold and film village communities in planning, implementing and auditing village works.

and negotiate the necessary improvements with higher level authorities.

- **Literacy in official documents**

Also necessary is a crash course on official administrative language. Since they currently find it difficult to fully understand Government documents, they are constrained in both duties and authority. For much the same reason, the programme should help illiterate pradhans gain functional literacy on the issues most relevant to them.

- **Leadership training**

A need was also expressed for leadership training on how to mobilize the community around pressing issues, such as preventing school dropouts, minimising alcoholism, dealing with the disruption posed by alcoholics at gram sabha meetings, and gender-related issues.

5.1.3 MGNREGA

Evaluation interviews throw up three dominant themes for UNDP support to MGNREGA implementation for the next programme cycle.

Upgrade the Technical Cell

The Technical Cell has played a useful role in supporting the Ministry of Rural Development in early MGNREGA implementation. However, the programme's national expansion calls for a larger, more 'mission mode' operation, with the authority and know-how to resolve delivery problems on the ground and drive continual value-addition. Most important, MGNREGA expansion will require active support and partnership from grassroots civil society groups throughout the country given limited governmental manpower.

Thus, the Technical Cell will need to comprise of more senior staff, with significant field experience and strong NGO networks at the grassroots. One informant proposed that the Technical Cell be converted into an autonomous, full-blown MGNREGA programme cell within the Ministry of Rural Development. Another felt that the Technical Cell should be funded entirely from the Government's own budgets since MGNREGA is a flagship national programme.

However, whatever form the Technical Cell takes going forward, its work agenda is clear. It must throw its energy into addressing the MGNREGA priorities identified by the Ministry for Rural Development, the

National Advisory Council, the Central Employment Guarantee Council and the Planning Commission. Broadly, these are:

- to strengthen the demand driven character of the scheme, in particular by ensuring the proper recording of the application for work;
- to quickly find lasting solutions to payment problems and delays;
- to ensure that MGNREGA works are technically sound and stem from local priorities;
- to enhance the quality and speed of the measurement of works;
- to ensure that data on the Management Information System is accurate and in real-time; and
- to explore the synergies between MGNREGA and the National Rural Livelihoods Mission to expand long-term livelihood options at the grassroots.

Addressing these challenges is going to require a targeted programme of national capacity-building, along the lines of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj's existing programme for PRI officials. However, the scale and complexity involved in national MGNREGA training will be considerably larger given the variety of stakeholders, including gram pradhans, PRI officials, MGNREGA workers, worksite supervisors, local communities, and local youth. UNDP is the development partner best placed to respond to this challenge. Specialized MGNREGA training for pradhans can easily and immediately be incorporated into its CDLG programme. Moreover, the materials developed for this training could fairly effortlessly be adapted to the needs of other priority MGNREGA stakeholders as well. Moreover, UNDP can draw on the learnings and models from its Orissa Dakshyata and CDLG programmes to pull in a wide network of trainers and NGO partners to help State and District Governments quickly expand the scope and reach of training.

Also suggested is that UNDP streamline and institutionalize the annual evaluations process by the Professional Institutional Network, by refining methodologies and empanelling good researchers so that it does not have to tender each evaluation and lose time. UNDP should also regularly convene meetings for this Network to build team-ship and coordination. Further, it should support a thorough evaluation of the impact of MGNREGA spending, so as to provide pointers on how programme

expenditures could be fine-tuned. In this context, a civil society informant suggested that UNDP upload a detailing of how its support to MGNREGA has been spent as a complement to the audited MGNREGA now up on the Ministry of Rural Development website. As this informant explained, "While every other bit of MGNREGA spending is now publicly audited and accounted for, we do not as yet have a clear picture of UNDP expenditure on the programme."

Establish State-level Technical Cells

All MGNREGA informants said that UNDP should encourage or support the setting up of an MGNREGA Technical Cell within each State Department of Rural Development. Each state cell would mirror the role and structure of the national cell (supporting State Governments in driving and enhancing the MGNREGA programme on the ground), and report to it.

Most important, each state cell should have a dedicated expert for each of the priority issues that need to be addressed – for instance, wages and financial inclusion, quality of works, capacity building, and so on.

Equally, it should have an MIS expert charged with running and overseeing the state's MGNREGA MIS system. Currently, these MIS systems are handled by a single national cell in Delhi, as a result of which there are long delays in repairing state-level malfunctions and in double-checking state-level data.

A Wider Set of National Partnerships

As discussed earlier, many informants underline the need for UNDP to complement its partnership with the Ministry of Rural Development with similar relationships with State Governments and civil society.

One of the ways in which UNDP might do this is to work directly with State Governments to enhance the quality and reach of delivery, and to identify, support and upscale promising MGNREGA pilots. To this end, each State could be given an MGNREGA Innovation Fund (along the lines of the Justice Innovation Fund), for this purpose. The competition for innovative pilots, and winners, should be widely publicized throughout the State, to build programme momentum, encourage knowledge-sharing and further innovation, and enhance transparency. Government institutions, such as Post Offices, should also be encouraged to enter the competition by proposing new solutions to wage payments, for

example. Additionally, UNDP should, once again, invest in creating independent platforms for national experience sharing and cross-state exchange of MGNREGA best practice and new ideas, as it used to do in the build-up to the Right to Information Act.

5.1.4 Access to Justice

The Access to Justice programme should be guided by two priorities over the next programme cycle: first, to expand reach and depth within the judicial system, second, to build mass legal literacy.

Informants said that UNDP should now establish state-level Access to Justice teams, so that it deals directly with State Governments on justice issues, rather than through the Department of Justice as it now does. State teams would complement (and report to) the national team in motivating local judicial officials and in serving as a bridge between the judicial system, civil society and citizens.

Informants also pointed to the need for 'micro studies' on a variety of judicial system issues, such as the working of bail provisions at the district level (i.e. Who is in jail, why and how many times? When does the right to bail kick in? etc) UNDP now also needs to systematically incorporate and upscale the learnings from the Justice Innovation Fund pilot within its broader programme. Similarly, it should expand the scope of practical training for judicial officials, civil society and citizens by, among other things, regularly taking judges and lawyers to villages and the latter two categories courts and police stations. Training should be longer and more comprehensive, particularly for paralegals and community justice workers, and there should be regular refresher courses.

Equally important is to begin a systematic evaluation of programme impact, with a view to fine-tuning it. Issues to evaluate include the learning outcomes of UNDP-supported grassroots legal literacy efforts, how well community justice workers are performing, and so on. Some informants suggested that UNDP should explore some method to recompense community justice workers, who currently work for free and yet incur costs in organizing community legal trainings and film showings. Grassroots NGOs also need technical support on access to justice issues, since these can sometimes be complex and might require expert legal advice.

All informants pointed to the pressing need for a

mass legal literacy campaign throughout the country. "Legal literacy is the first step in legal empowerment, a step that India has not taken yet." A systematic training programme will empower common people to "attack the system on their own, the crux to changing existing power structures", by learning what rights they are accorded under the law, how to protect these and what to do when these are violated. As informants pointed out, most grassroots complaints relate to government entitlements which makes it easy to converge Panchayati Raj and Access to Justice efforts.

To build mass legal awareness, UNDP must strategically harness the mass media, both government and private. "Should we succeed in getting five key legal messages into a blockbuster film or TV show, the mass impact could be considerable," said an informant. Non-electrified villages will pose a challenge. Here, radio could be the primary medium. Also, legal literacy teams should visit villages, organizing legal literacy festivals that pull in a crowd. Law college and university students could be usefully harnessed for these initiatives.

Two senior informants stressed the need for UNDP to concertededly search out new thinking and approaches on access to justice issues in India, and not to fall back on the same crop of consultants and experts used both by Gol and other international development partners. India's access to justice debate has been dominated by "the same advice and same advisors for twenty years," they say.

UNDP should also invest in advocacy to include law in school curriculum. If individuals know the law from an early age, they are less likely to exploit and be exploited, said an informant. For instance, if people were aware that scheduled castes are protected by law, they are likely to treat them with greater respect.

5.1.5 Access to Information and Urban Governance

Many informants suggested that UNDP continue to support RTI capacity-building by including 'access to information' issues into its other programmes. For instance, train PRI officials on proper RTI implementation and community justice workers and paralegals on strategic use of the Act. These informants also highlighted the continuing gap in the extent and quality of Section 4 (*suo moto*) reporting and said this is an area in which UNDP support would be invaluable.

A handful of informants urged UNDP to institute an 'urban governance' programme to radically improve municipal capacity and accountability. They argue that close to a half of India's population is already urban, and a half of this population is poor. It is thus vital to create a cadre of well-trained municipal government officials to address this immense administrative and developmental challenge. UNDP might thus consider an urban parallel to its programme of Panchayati Raj training.

5.1.6 Cross-state exchanges and Knowledge Repositories

Across programmes, informants overwhelmingly proposed more cross-state exchanges and 'best practice' exposure visits. This request came as much from Government officials and programme trainees, as it did from UNDP field staff. They all felt that regular experience sharing in a peer group (both online and offline) and ongoing operational handholding and support would be of great benefit professionally. UNDP might thus investigate how it might build strong and vibrant support and knowledge-sharing groups going forward.

Equally valuable is the online knowledge repositories that UNDP has financed under the Capacity Building for Local Governance and Elected Women's Representatives programmes. By making a wealth of downloadable training material, textbooks, films, research and other useful resources available to the public, it ensures that these will be continually used and are not lost on a shelf.

UNDP might thus wish to consider investing in a series of similar knowledge repositories across other Democratic Governance areas. Key is to ensure that all materials are easily downloadable and available in translation, so that they can be used by NGOs, pradhans and other local communities even in more remote parts of the country. Similarly, it could develop a library of training films and materials on Democratic Governance and Human Development issues for use in awareness building and community mobilization. It might also make available its list of master-trainers and block-trainers to NGOs and other interested parties in the States in which it works. However, establishing these repositories will not be sufficient: UNDP will need to invest in advertising them extensively so that its various stakeholders are aware they exist.

5.2 ADMINISTRATIVE AND ORGANISATIONAL ISSUES

As discussed earlier, a handful of structural and organizational factors are posing a drag on programme success, and it is imperative that UNDP consider how these might be resolved. Some of the Evaluators' broad thoughts on these issues are

Narrow the operational focus and enhance the individual budget for each programme

Since the most dominant observation of the interview sample is that UNDP is spreading itself too thin, and that its project budgets are too small, UNDP should pare down to its 'core competencies' and focus on issues in which it has an unrivalled expertise. Equally, it could decide on the issues in which it wishes to build a unique expertise and throw all its money and resources into doing so. Either way, UNDP seems to have had greatest success with projects that have had budgets of at least US\$5-10 million, with its Supporting States in Planning for Human Development as the key case in point.

Since Human Development and the Millennium Development Goals is what UNDP is best known and respected for in India, most informants said this should be UNDP's prime point of entry and where it should continue to concertedly value-add. Other areas in which UNDP is strategically positioned are capacity-building on Panchayat Raj, MGNREGA-related and access to justice issues, all of which will increasingly inter-relate going forward.

Many informants also suggested that UNDP narrow its geographic focus, concentrating in a smaller number of states or districts, in which it concentrates all its resources on inter-related activities to effect a discernible transformation. In this context, an interesting and eminently actionable suggestion is that UNDP support a handful of target districts attain key MDGs within a fixed deadline. Once this is done, it can support them in tackling the other MDGs. Having understood the process, UNDP can then scale up this experiment to a wider number of districts. Here, it should be pointed out that the CDDP project already marks the beginning of this effort, though helping District Governments actually meet MDG targets might require UNDP support in plan implementation – which is not currently part of the project's terms of reference. It would, therefore, require an injection of considerably greater resources and more intensive district partnering to build local capacity.

Extend the programme cycle and tighten the operational relationship with the field

Narrowing the thematic (and possibly geographic) focus of UNDP programmes will enable a far closer HQ working relationship with the field and help to address the variety of field-related issues that currently hinder optimal project performance on the ground. Extending the programme cycle (to at least five to six years) will enable UNDP to “see an issue through to the end”, tackling the leading shortcoming in its interventions in India.

Tight engagement with the field will enable active supervision, evaluation and course-correction, which informants say is currently the weak link across UNDP's Democratic Governance programmes.

Frequent field visits will enable UNDP India headquarters to understand the nitty-gritty of an operation, build visibility and stature for the project, and more actively guide field staff. It will also help them to boost familiarity with the social, economic and regulatory peculiarities of a partner State or District, and be in better position to find effective solutions to challenges currently left to young contract field officers.

UNDP's growing district level engagement (in CDDP, DHDRs, Access to Justice, and so on) will make a close operational relationship with the field even more important going forward. While, on the one hand, district level activity is required to push reform, on the other it extends the operational distance between HQ and the field. Since UNDP's district-focused programmes are going down through many layers and actors, relying on many external intermediaries to drive them, they are understandably tending to lose momentum.

Frequent HQ visits to the district will infuse UNDP field staff and district officials with more energy and ownership for the programme, by giving them the

intellectual comfort and stimulation of having UNDP work “side by side and shoulder to shoulder” with them.

In this context, many informants pressed UNDP to set up a fully-fledged State Office in each of the states in which it operates. In this context, Chattisgarh emphasized its keenness for a dedicated UNDP office.

Re-think the contractual status of field staff

Given UNDP's growing district involvement, it is *absolutely essential* that it immediately revisit the contractual status of its State and District level staff.

As discussed earlier, CDDP – one of UNDP's (and the United Nations') – flagship Indian programmes is resting on the shoulders of young United Nations Volunteers, amongst whom there is an extremely high turnover. UNDP might thus attack this attrition in one of two ways. First, it should consider converting its field staff – District Support Officers, in particular – into full-fledged employees on par with their State-level counterparts, that is, UNDP's Technical Support Officers. In as far as is possible, UNDP should also ensure broad parity between the salaries and perquisites paid to its District Support Officers and that of UNICEF's District Facilitators.

UNDP might also wish to consider posting a ‘planning team’ to actively build planning capacity within District Administrations. This team comprising of a senior and experienced planner, and one or two assistants, would mentor the Planning Department in enhancing data collection, storage, analysis, planning and DHDR capability. It would also run continuing practical planning trainings for all PRI local officials. However, especial care must be taken to ensure that this team does not merely serve as short-term parallel capacity but, if possible, is absorbed within the local Administration or a local research or training institute partner.

6. Conclusions

In light of the preceding discussion, three broad observations can be made in conclusion.

First, there are intensifying synergies between amongst the key verticals in UNDP India's Democratic Governance portfolio – Planning, Panchayati Raj training, Support to MGNREGA Implementation and Access to Justice. As discussed, PRI informants' prime request from UNDP is that it support targeted training on village-level planning and financial management, most immediately with respect to MGNREGA-related works, even as Gol has made MGNREGA capacity-building at the grassroots a leading priority. Thus, while UNDP might partner with a different national Ministry or State Department in designing and implementing each major Democratic Governance project, the reality is that target beneficiaries are going increasingly to converge on the ground – a fact that will work to its advantage in enhancing cost-efficiencies and core competencies during the next programme cycle. UNDP might thus like to consider actively seeking out and amplifying these synergies.

Second, many of the training films and materials being produced with UNDP support and used in its governmental capacity-building programmes have direct utility to grassroots initiatives to empower local communities. Directly applicable and relevant, for instance, are films and pamphlets that explain the constitutional role of *gram pradhans*, *panchayats* and *gram sabhas*, that showcase rural governance best practice, that explain legal rights and how to defend them, that discuss effective and participatory planning. UNDP could thus very usefully feed civil society's broader effort to build governance know-how and pressure amongst India's large rural population. As many CDLG-related senior government informants pointed out, once innovative films and materials are created users only have the cost of reproducing them. Over its next programme cycle, UNDP might thus wish to noticeably boost its effort to make its knowledge products widely known

and accessible within the country, both online and offline. It might also wish to consider investing in a wider range of knowledge products, for use both within and outside government.

By taking 'governance knowledge' out of the realm of government and broadbasing it amongst citizens, UNDP is likely to trigger the same demand-size pressure for accountability that its RTI and planning-related partnerships have had. Similarly, by training a wider range of stakeholders within and outside government to measure Human Development, it will transform this science, till now restricted to a handful of experts and consultants, into an instrument by which local communities might partner their elected representatives and government officials in improving their human condition.

Third, UNDP's capacity-building effort will slot neatly into two new priority Gol agendas going forward – and thus draw energy from them. One is the national effort to build skills within India's vast rural population, particularly its youth. The Prime Minister's National Council on Skill Development aims to create 500 million skilled people by 2022 through skill systems that have a high degree of inclusivity. The other is the focus on radically enhancing the quality of governance, given the mounting crescendo of criticism about this issue from all quarters.

Thus, as UNDP mulls its Democratic Governance activity for the next programme cycle, it might thus usefully take a step back to consider its contribution against this larger canvas and, in particular, against the words of the Planning Commission, slightly adapted for purposes of argument. "There is a clear case for establishing a pool of local 'barefoot' planners/engineers/technical assistants who could be trained up through an appropriate mechanism, so as to build locally resident skills for governance design, execution and maintenance of rural services and infrastructure."²⁴

²⁴ The original quote, drawn from the MGNREGA section of the Planning Commission's Approach Paper to the Twelfth Plan is "There is a clear case for establishing a pool of local 'barefoot' engineers/technical assistants who could be trained up through an appropriate mechanism, enabling them to fulfil the need for technical and managerial capacity in MGNREGA, so as to build locally resident skills for design, execution and maintenance of rural infrastructure."

6. Annexures

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ANNEXURE I: LIST OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS CONTAINED IN THE ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULT MANUALS

A: Assessment by thematic area

A.1 Relevance

i) Relevance of objectives

- Have you heard about UNDP's programme for capacity building in (*state planning/ RTI/ MGNREGA/ women's participation in local governance/ judicial access for the poor*)?
- In your understanding what does this programme involve? Who does it target, and what problem is it attempting to address?
- Does this programme significantly contribute to your Ministry's/ Department's/ area's operational goal and strategy?

ii) Relevance of approach

- In your opinion, is this programme designed well? (*In terms of approach, resources, conceptual framework and model*). Or, does it need to be modified to align more closely with your Ministry's/ Department's/ area's specific goals and development challenges? How?

A.2 Effectiveness

i) Progress towards achievement of outcomes

- What has been the programme's most significant contribution? Has it triggered a move toward your Ministry's/ Department's/ area's desired long-term outcomes?
- Has it introduced any novel 'best practice'?
- Has it helped you (*or programme trainees*) do your job better? How, and to what extent? (*Is there any rough quantitative indicator that highlights your enhanced performance post-training?*)
- In your opinion, how should UNDP measure the success of this programme? What parameters should it use?

ii) Outreach

- How geographically extensive is the outcomes of this programme (e.g. local community, district, regional, national)?
- Are UNDP's efforts concentrated in regions/ districts of greatest need?

iii) Poverty depth/ equity

- To what extent do the poor, indigenous groups, women, Dalits, and other disadvantaged and marginalised groups benefit?

iii) Other

- Was the course matter relevant? Should the training programme have been differently structured or delivered? How?

A.3. Efficiency

i) Managerial Efficiency

- What implementation issues did you confront?
- How did you address these? How soon after they were first observed?
- In your opinion, how might UNDP modify its programme/s to avoid such issues in the future?
- Has the project or programme been implemented within deadline and cost estimates?

ii) Programmatic Efficiency

- Were UNDP resources focused on the set of activities that were expected to produce significant results?
- Was there any identified synergy between UNDP interventions that contributed to reducing costs while supporting results?

A.4. Sustainability

i) Design for sustainability

- How sustainable is the programme?
- What are the risks to programme sustainability? How might these be minimised or avoided?
- What is UNDP's exit strategy, particularly from projects that have run for several years?

ii) Capacity development and national ownership

- What implementation issues posed a particular threat to sustainability?
- What corrective measures were adopted?
- How has/ should UNDP addressed the challenge of building national capacity in the face of high turnover of government officials?

iii) Scaling up of pilot initiatives and catalytic interventions

- How has UNDP approached the scaling up of successful pilot initiatives and catalytic projects? Has Government taken on these initiatives? Have donors, civil society, the Indian private sector, or others stepped in to scale up initiatives?
- In your opinion, what types of investments/ partnership are needed to scale up such pilots?

B: UNDP STRATEGIC POSITIONING

B.1 Strategic Relevance and Responsiveness

i) *Relevance against the national development challenges and priorities*

- Did the UN system as a whole, and UNDP in particular, address Indian central/ State/ District Government's development challenges and priorities?
- Is the balance appropriate? Are project and programme designs sensitive to the fast changing context of India?

ii) *Relevance of UNDP approaches*

- Is there a balance between upstream and downstream initiatives? Balance between capital and regional/local interventions? Quality of designs, conceptual models?

iii) *UNDP Responsiveness to changes in context*

- Was UNDP responsive to the evolution over time of development challenges and national priorities?
- Did UNDP have adequate mechanisms to respond to significant changes in the country/state situation, in particular a rise in grassroots armed violence?

iv) *Balance between short-term responsiveness and long-term development objectives*

- How has UNDP balanced the need for urgent intervention and support, with the longer term need for national capacity building and systemic change?

B.2 Using Comparative Strengths

i) *Use of corporate networks and expertise*

- In your view, what are UNDP's comparative strengths in building India's capacity for 'Democratic Governance'?
- Did UNDP's strategy/ programme design

maximise this advantage, and build on UNDP's expertise, global network and contacts? What improvements would you suggest, in both strategy and programme design?

- Do you feel that UNDP is effectively documenting the development lessons being learned thought its programme, and sharing these with those who would find these useful?

ii) *Coordination and role sharing within the UN system*

- Are UNDP and other donors 'stepping on each other's toes' and unnecessarily duplicating each other's efforts?
- Which programmes/ activities should UNDP focus on in building India's capacity to deliver 'Democratic Governance'.

iii) *Assisting Government to use external partnerships and South-South cooperation*

- Did UNDP use its network to bring about opportunities for South-South exchanges and cooperation in critical areas, for example, accountability, justiciable rights and electoral reform? *(This question is not really relevant to the subject area, and is covered by the "Use of Corporate Networks" question).*

B.3 Promotion of unvalues from a Human Development Perspective

i) *Supporting policy dialogue on human development issues*

- Is the UN system, and UNDP in particular effectively supporting the Government, in particular, the National Planning Commission, in monitoring achievement of MDGs?

ii) *Contribution to gender equality*

- The extent to which the UNDP programme is designed to appropriately incorporate in each outcome area contributions to attainment of gender equality?

iii) *Contribution to equity and social inclusion*

- Did UNDP programme take into account the plight and needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged to promote social equity , for example, women, Dalits, youth, disabled persons? How has UNDP programmed social inclusion into its programmes and projects?

ANNEXURE 2: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

List of people interviewed

(Democratic Governance Outcome Evaluation – Premila Nazareth Satyanand)

UNDP PROGRAMME MANAGERS		
1.	Sumeeta Banerjee	Assistant Country Director (Governance)
2.	Ritu Mathur	Programme Analyst, Planning
3.	Ruchi Pant	Programme Analyst (formerly handling Rural Decentralization and EWR projects)
4.	Amit Anand	State Programme Officer, Madhya Pradesh
5.	Kanta Singh	Programme Analyst, Access to Justice
6.	Arndt Husar	Programme Specialist, Capacity Development
UNDP NATIONAL/ STATE/ DISTRICT PROJECT OFFICERS		
7.	Swati Mehta	National Project Manager, Access to Justice
8.	Sanjeev Sharma	National Project Manager, Capacity Development for Local Governance
9.	Atul Dev Sarmah	Officer-in-Charge, Programme Management Unit, GoI - UN Joint Programme on Convergence
10.	Sundar Mishra	District Planning Specialist, Programme Management Unit, GoI - UN Joint Programme on Convergence
11.	Nilay Ranjan	National Project Manager/ Convergence Expert, UNDP- Ministry of Rural Development Technical Cell
12.	Adesh Chaturvedi	State Project Coordinator, Capacity Development for Local Governance, Rajasthan
13.	Alka Singh	State Project Coordinator, Capacity Development for District Planning, Rajasthan
14.	Gautam Pattnaik	State Project Coordinator, Capacity Development for Local Governance, Orissa
15.	Mainik Sarkar	State Project Coordinator, Capacity Development for District Planning, Orissa
16.	Nirmalendu Jyotishi	State Project Coordinator, Capacity Development for Local Governance, Chattisgarh
17.	Ritu Ghosh	State Project Coordinator, Capacity Development for District Planning, Chattisgarh
18.	Ashok Kumar Sharma	Project Coordinator, UNDP, Bhilwara District
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS/ PROGRAMME PARTNERS, DELHI		
19.	Anuradha Chagti	Director, RTI Cell, Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel
20.	Vivek Misra	Governance Advisor, DFID India
21.	Amita Sharma	Former Joint Secretary, MGNREGA and National Project Director, Support to MGNREGA Operationalization

22. Govinda Rao	Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy and Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister
23. R Sridharan	Executive Director, Food Corporation of India (formerly National Project Director, Supporting State Plans for Human Development)
24. KK Tripathi	Joint Director, MGNREGA, Ministry of Rural Development (formerly National Project Manager, Supporting State Plans for Human Development)
25. DK Jain	Joint Secretary (MGNREGA), Ministry of Rural Development
26. Tuhin Kanta Pandey	Joint Secretary (State Plans), Planning Commission
27. Indu Patnaik	Joint Advisor, Planning Commission
28. Pronab Sen,	Principal Advisor, Planning Commission
29. Ramesh Abhishek	Joint Secretary, Forward Market Commission (former National Project Director, Access to Justice)
30. Sandeep Dikshit	Member of Parliament
31. Usha Raghupathi	Professor, National Institute of Urban Affairs
32. T Raghunandan	Former National Project Director, CDLG
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN NEW DELHI	
33. Ranjana Kumari	Director, Centre for Social Research Inputs also from Amitabh Kumar, Head, Media and Communication Department
34. Rita Sarin	Vice President and Country Director, The Hunger Project
35. Kaustuv Bandhopadhyay	Director (Global Partnership), PRIA (Society for Participatory Research in Asia)
36. Anju Talukdar	Executive Director, MARG
37. Abha Singhal Joshi	UNDP Consultant (Access to Justice) and former Executive Director, MARG
38. Maja Daruwala	Director, Commonwealth Human Right Initiative
39. Naimur Rahman	Director, One World South Asia and Managing Director, OneWorld Foundation India
40. Amitabh Behar	National Convenor, Wada Na Todo Abhiyan
41. Sachin Chowdhry	Assistant Professor, Indian Institute for Public Administration
42. T. Haque,	Director, Council for Social Development
43. Nikhil Dey	Convenor, National Campaign for the People's Right to Information and Member, Central Employment Guarantee Council
44. Vijay Mahajan	BASIX Also inputs from Dr Rakesh Mahlotra, Vice President and Head, National Consulting Division and BL Parthasarathy, Managing Director, BASIX Consulting and Training Services
45. Kiran Sharma	Vice-President, Development Alternatives
46. Yamini Aiyar	Director, Accountability Initiative and Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Policy Research
47. Nidhi Prabha Tewari	Director, Democracy Connect

OTHER NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND 'THIRD	
48. Pramathesh Ambasta	National Coordinator, National Consortium on MGNREGA and Co-Founder, Samaj Pragati Sahyog
49. Sowmya Krishna Kidambi	Director, Society of Social Audit, Accountability and Transparency
50. VK Madhavan	Executive Director, Central Himalayan Research and Action Group (CHIRAG)
ORISSA	
51. RV Singh	Special Secretary, Planning and Coordination Department, Government of Orissa
52. SK Lohani	Commissioner (Special Projects), Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of Orissa
53. SN Tripathi	Principal Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Government of Orissa
54. R.N. Das	former Principal Secretary, Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Orissa
55. Ashok Singha	Managing Director, CTRAN, Bhubaneswar Inputs also from Saroj Nayak, Consultant, CTRAN
56. Priya Ranjan Rout	Former Executive Director, City Managers' Association of Orissa, Bhubaneswar
57. Saroj Kumar Dash	State Institute for Rural Development, Orissa
58. Bijay Rath and S.Pujahari	Current and former Member Secretary, State Legal Services Authority, Orissa
59. Dilip K Das	Chairman, Antodaya (NGO)
60. Prafulla Kumar Sahoo	Chairman, Centre for Youth and Social Development (NGO)
61. Shalin Pandit	Former District Collector, Sundargarh District
62. Umesh Panda	Deputy Director, District Planning and Monitoring Unit, Sundargarh District
63. PK Naik	Director, District Rural Development Agency, Sundargarh District
64. P.Patnaik	District Social Welfare Officer, Sundargarh District and her assistant, S. Kumura
65. Pramod Kumar Panda	Inspector of Schools, Sundargarh District Inputs also from his assistant, Mr Naik
66. CDLG and/or Change Management trainees, Sundargarh District	i) Shyam Sundar Sahoo, Block Development Officer; ii) Vidyadhar Sahu, Pradhan, Kutara Block; iii) Shibanath Delki, Chairman, Tongspati Block; iv) Jatia Munda, Sarpanch, Niali Pali Gram Panchayat; v) Bedabyasa Dhurua, Wardmember, Turungagarh Meghdega Gram Panchayat
67. Amiya Kanta Naik	Chairperson, Self-Employed Workers' Association Kendra (NGO), Sundargarh
68. Sobhagyanani Satapathy	UNDP UNV, District Planning Project, Sundargarh District
69. Santosh Kumar Patra	UNICEF District Facilitator, Sundargarh District
70. Krishan Kumar	District Collector, Ganjam, District
71. Sarath Kumar Parida	Chief Planning Officer, Ganjam District

72. Aparajeet Sinha	UNICEF District Facilitator, Ganjam District
73. Bima Manseth	Municipal Commissioner, Berhampur, Ganjam District Inputs also from Dr SK Das, Health Officer, Berhampur Municipal Corporation
74. Bibhu Prasad Sahu	Secretary cum Senior Researcher, Youth for Social Development (NGO), Berhampur, Ganjam District
RAJASTHAN	
75. CS Rajan	Principal Secretary, Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Orissa Inputs also from Praveen Gupta, Secretary, Panchayati Raj
76. T Srinivasan	Chief Information Commissioner, Rajasthan
77. Yaduvendra Mathur	Principal Secretary, Revenue Department, Government of Orissa
78. DB Gupta	Principal Secretary, Planning Department, Government of Orissa
79. Dr Anita	Professor and Officer-in-Charge (Panchayati Raj & UN Projects), State Institute for Rural Development, Rajasthan
80. Surjit Singh	Professor and Director, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur
81. George Cheriyan	Director and Head, CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research and Training (NGO), Jaipur
82. Kamal Tak	Coordinator, Suchna Adhikar Manch (NGO)
83. Rupa Manglani	Faculty, Rajasthan Institute of Public Administration
84. Hemant Gera	District Collector, Udaipur
85. Sudhir Dave	Chief Planning Officer, Udaipur
86. Jyoti Mehta	Faculty, Tribal Research Institute, Udaipur
87. Bhagwati Lal Paliwal	Faculty, Rajasthan Institute of Public Administration and Member, State Project Steering Committee, CDLG
88. Magn Mina	CDLG-trainee and Pradhan, Tidi Village, Udaipur District
89. Priyanka Singh	CEO, Sewa Mandir, Udaipur
90. Ashwani Paliwal	Programme Coordinator, Astha Sansthan (NGO), Udaipur
91. Om Nivas Sharma	BASIX representatives, Bhilwara Inputs also from Dileep Kumar Gupta
92. Rishi Raghvanshi	Pratham representatives, Bhilwara Inputs also from Pradip Ilamkar
93. Rehana Riyawala	SEWA coordinator, Bhilwara Inputs also from Dharmishta Behen Rathod and Vimla Darli
94. Ranjeeta Dadeech	OneWorldSouthAsia Bhilwara representative and MGNREGA kiosk coordinator
95. Bhilwara (Suwana Panchayat) MGNREGA kiosk users	i) Munna Mohammad, Secretary, Suwana Panchayat; ii) Ramchandra Jat, Mate; iii) Lakshman Jat; iv) Suchitra Sharma, MGNREGA beneficiary; v) Sita Devi Sharma, MGNREGA beneficiary; vi) Jamna Lal Luhar, MGNREGA beneficiary; vii) Ranjita Kumari, MGNREGA beneficiary.
96. Raj Kumar Moondra	Block Development Officer, Bhilwara

97. Shobhalal Mundra	CEO, Zilla Parishad, Bhilwara
98. S.K.Verma	Assistant Engineer, Bhilwara Municipal Corporation Inputs also from Jagdish Palsania, Junior Engineer and Suresh Kumar Kast, Junior Accountant
CHATTISGARH	
99. Manish Shrivastava	State Coordinator, Samarthan - Centre for Development Support (NGO), Raipur Inputs also from Dinesh Singh and Ashutosh Tamrekar, Programme Coordinators for UNDP-supported programmes
100. Shri P.C. Mishra	Secretary Planning, Member Secretary, State Planning Commission and Nodal Officer, GOI- UN Joint Program on Convergence
101. Dr. P.P Soti	Member, State Planning Commission
102. J.S. Viridi	Deputy Secretary, State Planning Commission
103. Amitabh Khandelwal	Joint Secretary, Directorate of Institutional Finance and Nodal Officer, SSPHD project
104. Bhaskar Rao	Former UNDP UNV, DHDR Project; now DHDR consultant, Directorate of Institutional Finance
105. Vishal Singh	Former UNDP UNV, DHDR Project; now UNICEF consultant
106. Rex Mehta	Founder and Director, Jan Jagriti Kendra (NGO), Mahasamand
107. R.K. Singh	Director, State Institute for Rural Development, Chattisgarh and Nodal Officer, Capacity Development for Local Governance
108. R.P.S. Tyagi	District Collector, Korba
109. Madhu Sahu	Chief District Planning and Statistical Officer
110. Babubhai Shriwas	UNDP UNV, District Planning Project, Korba District
111. Farooque Siddique	District Facilitator, UNICEF, Korba District
112. Dicson Masih	Director, SROUT (NGO), Korba

ANNEXURE 3: DOCUMENTS CONSULTED: DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE OUTCOME EVALUATION

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ANNEXURE 4A: DISTRICT HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT IN INDIA

The following Matrix indicates the status of preparation of the District HDRs being prepared by 15 State governments under the Planning Commission – UNDP project “Strengthening State Plans for Human Development”:

S.No.	District	Status
ASSAM		
1	Bongaigaon	Advanced stage of finalisation
2	Dhubri	
3	Darrang	
CHHATTISGARH		
4	Janjgir-Champa	Advanced stage of finalisation
5	Jashpur	
6	Kanker	
7	Korba	
8	Koria	
9	Mahasamund	
10	Rajnandgaon	
11	Sarguja	
GUJARAT		
12	Amreli	Draft stage
13	Dohad	
14	Jamnagar	
15	Surat	
16	Patan	
HIMACHAL PRADESH		
17	Kangra	Released
18	Mandi	
19	Shimla	
KARNATAKA		
20	Bijapur	Released
21	Gulbarga	
22	Mysore	
23	Udipi	
24	Bidar	
25	Raichur	
26	Dawangere	
27	Chittradurga	
28	Kamrajnagar	
The DHDRs of Bidar, Raichur, Dawangere, Chittradurga, Kamrajnagar are being prepared from State's own budget.		

KERALA		
29	Ernakulum	Released
30	Kannur	
31	Kottayam	
32	Wayanad	Released
MADHYA PRADESH		
33	Balaghat	Released
34	Khargone	
35	Mandla	
36	Satna	Under print
37	Rajgarh	Under print
MAHARASHTRA		
38	Buladhan	Draft submitted to state government
39	Nanded	
40	Sangli	
NAGALAND		
41	Kohima	Released
42	Mon	
43	Phek	
ORISSA		
44	Ganjam	Advanced stage of finalisation
45	Kalahandi	
46	Kandhamal	
47	Mayurbhanj	Under print
PUNJAB		
48	Hoshiarpur	Drafts finalised
49	Sangrur	
RAJASTHAN		
50	Barmer	Released
51	Dholpur	
52	Dungarpur	
53	Jhalawar	
53	Banswara	
55	Chhittorgarh	
56	Jaisalmer	
57	Jalore	
58	Karauli	
59	Sawai Madhopur	
60	Sirohi	
61	Tonk	
62	Udaipur	

SIKKIM			
63	East	Gram Panchayat level reports prepared for all the 166 GPs.	
64	North		
65	South		
66	West		
TAMIL NADU			
67	Cuddalore	Released	
68	Dindigul		
69	Nagappattinam		
70	Sivaganga	Released	
71	Tiruvannamalai		
72	Kanyakumari		
73	Nilgiri		
74	Dharmapuri		
WEST BENGAL			
75	Bankura	District administration	Released.
76	Malda	North Bengal University	
77	Birbhum		
78	Jalpaiguri	Advance stage of finalisation	
79	Coochbehar	Advance stage of finalisation	
80	Uttar Dinajpur,	Released	
81	Dakshin Dinajpur	Released	
82	Purulia	Advance stage of finalisation	
83	Paschim Medinipur	Advance stage of finalisation	
84	Murshidabad	Advance stage of finalisation	
85	South 24 Parganas	Released	
86	North 24 Parganas	Released	

Annexure 4B: KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS - SHDR Project

- **State Human Development Reports**

- 1. **Released**

1. Andhra Pradesh
2. Arunachal Pradesh
3. Assam
4. Chhattisgarh
5. Delhi
6. Gujarat
7. Himachal Pradesh
8. Karnataka
9. Kerala
10. Madhya Pradesh
11. Maharashtra
12. Meghalaya
13. Nagaland
14. Punjab
15. Orissa
16. Rajasthan
17. Sikkim
18. Tamil Nadu
19. West Bengal
20. Tripura
21. Uttar Pradesh

- **Compilation of Successful Governance Initiatives and Best Practices: Experiences from Indian States**

- **Outline of a Human Development Curriculum**

- **Training Modules for Administrative Training Institutes**

- **Human Development Discussion Papers Series**

1. Financing for Development in India: Lessons from the Past; Needs of the Future
2. Decentralisation in India: Challenges and Opportunities
3. Women's Role and Contribution to Forest-Based Database Issues
4. Database Issues: Women's Access to Credit and Rural Micro-Finance in India
5. Estimating District Income in India (with the latter paper becoming the foundation for a subsequently developed Training Manual on the subject)

6. People's Right to Information Movement: Lessons from Rajasthan
7. The Impact of Sub-National Human Development Reports in India
8. Drought Proofing in Rajasthan: Imperatives, Experience and Prospects
9. Estimating Informal Employment and Poverty in India
10. Aajeevika – Livelihoods in Rajasthan: Status, Constraints and Strategies for Sustainable Change
11. Development and Livelihoods in Sikkim: Towards a Comparative Advantage Based Strategy
12. Livelihoods in Madhya Pradesh: Analysis and Strategic Framework
13. Gender Budgeting - Impact of Policies and Programmes on Women of Agricultural Households in Gujarat
14. Impact of Recent Policies on Home-Based Work in India
15. Gender Budget Perspectives on Macro and Meso Policies in Small Urban Manufactures in Greater Mumbai
16. Impact of Maharashtra's Agricultural Policies on Women Farmers: A Gender Budgeting Analysis
17. Gender Analysis of Select Gram (Villages) Panchayats Plan - Budgets in Trivandrum District, Kerala
18. Elementary Education in India: Promise, Performance and Prospects
19. Human Development Goals I X Five Year Plan – Promises and Prospects
20. Right to Information – Election Manual
21. Human Poverty and Disadvantaged Groups in India

- **Essays on Gender and Governance**

