Helpdesk Research Report: The impact of Area Based Programming
26.10.2011

Query: What is the evidence to support the theory that area based programming will achieve greater impact in an environment such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as opposed to sectoral/issue based approaches?

If there is evidence that area based development approach/programming can deliver real impact, what lessons exist to inform answers to the following:

- How broad a geographic "area" is it reasonable to consider when developing area based development approaches?;
- What type(s) of programmes should be clustered together to promote real synergies (e.g. infrastructure, basic services, WASH, governance, security and justice etc?);
- How should such synergies be best promoted through programme design and management; and
- Are there practical examples that we can draw upon of area based programming which will help inform the development of an effective approach in DRC?

Enquirer: DFID DRC

Author: Erika McAslan Fraser

Contents

1. Introduction

Area-Based Development (ABD) approaches use the geographic 'area' as the main entry point for intervention, rather than a sector or target group. ABD can be defined as: "Targeting specific geographical areas in a country, characterised by a particular complex development problem, through an integrated, inclusive, participatory and flexible approach".[1] The first part of this report explores the evidence to support the theory that the area (as opposed to the sector/issue) is indeed an appropriate point of entry in an environment such as DRC.

The second part of the report looks at what lessons can be learnt to inform answers to the following:

---

[1] This definition comes from UNDP/RBEC Area-Based Development Practitioners Workshop, Crimea, Ukraine, 29-31 October 2003 and is used in Harfst's (2006) Practitioner's Guide to Area-Based Development Programming.

- How broad a geographic "area" is it reasonable to consider when developing area based development approaches?;
- What type(s) of programmes should be clustered together to promote real synergies (e.g. infrastructure, basic services, WASH, governance, security and justice etc?); and
- How should such synergies be best promoted through programme design and management?

The report concludes with practical examples of area based programming to help inform the development of an effective approach in DRC.

---

2. ABD programming vs. sectoral/issue-based approaches in conflict-affected countries

---

- What is the evidence to support the theory that area based programming will achieve greater impact in an environment such as DRC as opposed to sectoral/issue based approaches?

The idea of addressing development and conflict situations through targeted geographical action has been around for a long time, but area-based programming in its current guise started with the UNOPS-executed PRODERE (Development Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America) in 1989 in six Central American Countries, four of which had just emerged from violent civil war (see Section 5 for further details). Since PRODERE, ABD approaches have been actively applied across the world by UNDP, UNOPS and other organisations in support of crisis prevention and post-conflict recovery objectives (Harfst, 2006).

ABD approaches are recommended as appropriate in environments with problems that fall into the following four main categories:
1. Conflict-related: pre- or post-conflict situations affecting a specific area of a country that require preventive development actions, post-war reconstruction, peace-building and reconciliation, reintegration of returning refugees, IDPs, former combatants, etc.
2. Disaster-related: natural and/or man-made disasters that affect a specific area of a country, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, drought, land erosion, nuclear disasters, etc.
3. Poverty-related: related to "spatial poverty traps" that have emerged as a result of geographical isolation, climate, terrain, demography, economic restructuring, etc.
4. Exclusion-related: related to groups/categories of people concentrated in a specific part of a country, such as regional ethnic minorities, that feel or are marginalised and excluded from participating in society (UNDP/RBEC, 2003).

Based on the categorisations above, it could be argued that DRC presents a suitable environment to apply area-based programming. Indeed, evaluations of ABD programmes implemented by international organizations suggest that they are often **very effective in responding to complex conflict characteristics on sub-national levels** across the world , although they are not without their limitations (Vrbensky, 2008; UNDP, 2007; UNDP, 2003).

It is perhaps not surprising that ABD has been most widely applied in conflict and disaster-affected countries, which demand comprehensive and complex programmes with a range of humanitarian, peacekeeping and development organisations, donors and local stakeholders, often working within a specific geographical area. As Harfst (2006) has observed, "the sheer complexities of the challenges called for comprehensive, integrated, multi-agency, multi-sector and multi-level responses and above-all flexibility to adequately respond to sometimes rapidly changing conditions" (p.12).

Area-based programming is widely used in conflict-affected parts of Europe, the Middle East, South and Central Asia (e.g. the republics of the former Yugoslavia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Iraq and Afghanistan).   ABD has been less commonly used in Africa, and where it has been applied, the programmes tend not to be as comprehensive and ambitious.   Examples of impact from ABD programmes are presented in Section 5.

The most comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of ABD programmes in conflict/post-conflict settings has been conducted by Vrbensky (2008). The main strengths, benefits and limitations of this approach are shown in the table below.

Summary of ABDs strengths, limitations and special benefits in conflict/post-conflict settings[2]

Strengths and benefits	Limitations	Specific strengths in conflict/post-conflict setting
Integrated approach – allowing for holistic solutions and encouraging horizontal linkages and cross-sectoral responses even if problems are sector-specific as development and conflict prevention requires addressing a number of issues holistically to become sustainable (aspect mentioned in 9 questionnaires).	Missing macro picture – broader strategic context not sufficiently taken into account, weak understanding of macro situation and policies (4).	Local presence, ability to understand context and area-specific conflict characteristics and factors, ability to implement targeted interventions mitigating the conflict (6).
Platform for partnership and coordination – high potential for better coordination in a broader programmatic instead of a limited project approach, promoting cross-sectoral partnerships and division of labour (5).	Inability to respond to structural problems – even in the case of a good understanding of broader context, there is no or limited influence on structural issues (e.g. related to conflict, governance, poverty, unemployment) (5).	Support to good governance, public pressure on leaders and decision makers, concentration on socio-economic issues often linked to problems leading to conflict, development of human capital, generating employment and improving living conditions (6).
Promoting regional cooperation – utilization of economies of scale, facilitation of inter-municipal cooperation and trust building, establishment of regional institutions and investment in regional infrastructure (4).	Limited partnerships and lack of coordination – insufficiently broad partnership or inadequate coordination, where partners have no sufficient capacity or mandate to deal with the problems, insufficient focus on or inability to deal with economic development (4).	Non-discriminatory character in relation to groups involved in conflict, concentration on unifying rather than dividing factors (4).
Understanding of local context – understanding and taking into account specificity of the local situation, high level of insight and closeness to issues and beneficiaries (7).	Fragmentation – local approaches leading to fragmented thinking and realization, partial solutions and duplications (6).	High level of operational flexibility in responding to the fast-changing conflict and post-conflict environment, ability to ensure proper participation, monitoring and adjustment of action (3).
Involvement of local people – local empowerment, building of human capital, local people as agent of change (4).	Lack of focus – dealing with a broad range of issues superficially leading to a lack of concentration on key problems and results (3).	Working in the broader region not only in conflict municipalities/areas promoting integration, inclusiveness and cohabitation, encouraging social cohesion, tolerance and coexistence, bringing together different sides (3).
Enhancement of local democracy – promotion of integration, inclusiveness and non-discrimination through the involvement of the entire community rather than specific group, promotion of participation and transparency, avoiding stigmatization and mentality issue, reduction of perception of social inequality (9).	Visibility trap – concentration on the most visible and easy-to-implement activities instead of promoting systemic change (3).	
Support to local governance – promoting subsidiarity and decentralization, capacitating local administration, supporting institutional development and organizational reform leading to increased effectiveness (4).	Dependency – developing dependency on external support, often lack of well planned exit strategy, Government reliance on external support leading to lack of involvement and support, preferential treatment for some areas (3).	
Manageability and flexibility – focus on manageable size allowing for integrated, comprehensive approach, keeping programme relevant in changing context (5).	Capacity substitution – reducing urgency of systemic change, substituting for inefficiency of sectoral policies, insufficient institutional capacity or budgetary support (3).	
Improved monitoring and cost-efficiency – better monitoring of results and reflection of lessons learned, improved cost-efficiency through coherent approach avoiding duplications and addressing real needs (3).	Donor-driven and short-term approach – interventions often donor-driven with high expectations and short timeline where conflict context and special development situation requiring longer time frame to generate systemic change (5).	

Source: Vrbenksy (2008, p.31)

With regard to the application of sector wide approaches (SWAps) in post-conflict contexts, there is 'a notable paucity' of studies, although there is recent evidence from DRC, Timor Leste, and Sierra Leone that health SWAps in fragile states are frequently challenged by the existence of diverse aid modalities, weak government leadership and capacity, and unpredictable donor policy and behaviour (Rothmann et. al, 2011).   A relevant GSDRC query in 2007 on best practice and lessons learned in SWAps for DFID Afghanistan concluded that there are not yet examples of SWAps operating successfully in post-conflict environments.

It should also be noted that **no comparative studies of ABD vs. sectoral/issue based approaches** were found during this query. Although it is not possible to use rigorous analysis to conclude which approach would have the greatest impact in an environment such as DRC, from the evidence reviewed it is likely that ABD is a more appropriate approach than a sectoral/issue-based one.

---

3. Defining the 'area'

- How broad a geographic area is it reasonable to consider when developing ABD approaches?

ABD has been applied at several geographical scales, from individual villages or neighbourhoods in cities to one or more districts, municipalities, regions, provinces, or even a large part of a country (i.e. the North-East). Where possible, the intervention area should **correspond with existing administrative areas** to ensure long-term sustainability and involvement of authorities. The area may also cross borders if several neighbouring countries find themselves in a similar security or development situation.

The question of what constitutes a reasonable geographic 'area' depends largely on the development situation and the area affected by that situation, be it conflict, disaster, poverty or exclusion-related. As Harfst (2006) has suggested, "applying an ABD approach is only appropriate **if the problem as defined can be realistically and effectively addressed at the *level of the area*.** Problems that can be solved at the national level, for example through legislation, should be addressed at that level" (p.9).

Although there is no clear-cut geographical limit to how broad an 'area' should be, the question of **size vs. manageability** is an important one and was raised as a concern in a recent conference on 'Facilitating an Area-Based Development (ABD) approach in rural regions in the Western Balkans': "The larger the area, the higher the managerial costs and efforts, i.e. the more time needed to travel and access all municipalities and the higher the number of municipality representatives, the harder it becomes to gather people, engage them in active participation, and animate stakeholder meetings. Ultimately, this makes it rather difficult to guarantee a sense of common identity, history and tradition, elements that are indirectly important to ABD implementation" (European Commission, 2011, p.5).

Considerations of social cohesion are also critical when choosing how broad the geographic area should be.   In their report on community security and social cohesion, the UNDP (2009) has observed that "targeting a larger, rather than a smaller, area may be less likely to fuel tensions with neighbouring communities. It can also provide a means of bringing separate geographic communities together and building positive relations between them" (p.35).

It is also important to analyse the **'economic space'** when defining the geographical boundaries of an 'area' and developing a suitable ABD strategy. In their guidelines for Local Economic Recovery (LER)

in post-conflict countries, the ILO (2010) have observed that while conflict-affected areas tend to have geographically limited networks and be relatively inaccessible, it is important to explore how economic flows connect a specific 'area' to other, not necessarily adjacent, territories.

Rural and urban economies also face very different issues, requiring tailored ABD strategies. Amongst others, rural challenges include land scarcity, insecure tenure and landlessness, poor infrastructures and services, and significant gender-based disparities. Issues in urban areas include unemployment, urbanisation, and the challenges of increasing demand and pressure on urban infrastructure and services (ILO, 2010).   Typically, ABD programmes have been implemented in rural areas, although there are examples of urban-based ABD approaches such as the Municipal Governance and Sustainable Development Programme in the Ukraine.

4. Building synergies in ABD programmes

- What type(s) of programmes should be clustered together to promote real synergies (e.g. infrastructure, basic services, WASH, governance, security and justice etc?)

ABD approaches are 'integrated' by nature with complex area-specific problems requiring an inter-sectoral or multi-sector approach (Harfst, 2006).   Indeed, recent assessment of UNDP's local development projects in 22 European and CIS countries highlighted the importance of **an interlocking design** that addresses multiple development dimensions – economic productivity, participation and inclusion, energy management and environmental protection (Romanik, 2011).

Looking at recent examples of ABD programmes (see Section 5 for further details of programme components), the **main types of intervention** are:
- Economic recovery and diversification;
- Conflict resolution;
- Infrastructure;
- Basic services, such as education, healthcare, and WASH;
- Agriculture and natural resources management;
- Development of the energy sector (particularly rural renewable energy); and
- Local governance mechanisms.

Several programmes also incorporate **cross-cutting issues** into their strategies, for example:
- Gender (e.g. Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme (SARDP) in Ethiopia;   Area Based Early Recovery (ABER) in Somalia; National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) in Afghanistan; and Batken Area-Based Development Programme in Kyrgyzstan);
- HIV/AIDS (e.g. SARDP, ABER);
- Environmental protection (e.g. NABDP); and
- Early warning (e.g. ABER).

Capacity building is a central objective in all ABD programmes, with emphasis placed on developing capacity at all levels and throughout programmes.   Participatory methodologies are often used so that local people can identify critical needs and priority interventions.   Where local people have been involved in setting priorities and identifying where/how money should be invested, a considerable share of the budget is often spent on infrastructure development and the creation of job and income generation possibilities. For example, in Ethiopia, local communities decided to spend a large share of SARDP funds on opening up isolated areas by building bridges and roads.

However, the evidence is limited about which types of programmes should be clustered together to best promote synergies, and this query was unable to find any academic or policy analyses on which programmes have the greatest potential for cross-over or complementarity.

- How should such synergies be best promoted through programme design and management;

Vrbensky (2008) has argued that in order for ABD programmes to be effective in a conflict setting, they need to move towards a **broadened, integrated and multilevel approach**, incorporating multi-sector and multilevel interventions within a well-coordinated strategic and operational framework (see matrix below).

Conflict characteristics matrix and current and proposed broader ABD approach.

	ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL	POLITICAL	ENVIRONMENTAL	STRUCTURAL
CROSS-BORDER	Regional economic policies and trade Existence of Diaspora		Scarcity of resources Environmental degradation Environmental externalities	Role of neighbouring states/inter-state security concerns History of conflict, problematic group histories Ethnic geography Illicit and criminal activities
NATIONAL	Macro-economic problems Low level, slow growth and structure of income Level of unemployment Failure of social contract	Weak state and governance Exclusionary national ideologies Identity politics Discriminatory political institutions	Natural resource endowment Scarcity of resources Environmental degradation Environmental externalities	Weak state History of conflict, problematic group histories Patterns of cultural discrimination Illicit and criminal activities *(Mountainous country/ rough terrain / Size of the population / Ethnic geography / Strength of the military)*
REGIONAL/LOCAL	Level of unemployment Vertical inequalities Horizontal economic inequalities Horizontal social inequalities Male secondary education enrolment	Weak governance Identity politics Discriminatory political institutions	Scarcity of resources Environmental degradation	History of conflict, problematic group histories Patterns of cultural discrimination Illicit and criminal activities

Source: Vrbensky (2008, p.36)

Given the complexity of developmental situations within conflict and post-conflict areas, it is important to **keep the programme design manageable and be realistic about the resources** (time, budget, human resources) available.   Vrbenksy observes that not all interventions need to be included in the initiative itself, and some of the conflict factors can be addressed through **parallel, but well-coordinated, activities**.   This coherence should also avoid raising false expectations.

Effective and coherent programme design and management are critical when several stakeholders are involved, as in the case of the US$30million Local Area Development Programme (LADP) in Iraq. The LADP operates in three regions of Iraq (Sulaymaniyah, Hillah and the Marshlands) and requires a high degree of coordination between multiple UN agencies. The table below shows LADP

programme implementation and how **lines of responsibility are clearly demarcated** between different agencies and different areas.

Iraq: Local Area Development Programme (LADP) – Area Lead Agencies

UNDP (Area coordinator role in southern area)	• National level programme coordination and reporting • Support to the NSC & Liaison with central and local governments • Improvement of intergovernmental coordination and communication mechanisms • MIS and database development and maintenance in all three areas • 4 sectors: water & sanitation; electricity supply; agriculture; culture and traditions
ILO/ UNOPS (Area coordinator role in the northern area)	• Lead agency for improvement of the financial and regulatory environment for small and medium business development and for support to the creation and development of micro and small businesses • Local economic development component of LADPs • Strengthening financial service providers • Small business advisory services
UN-HABITAT (Area coordinator role in the central area)	• Housing, community facilities and schools component of LADPs • Construction training to housing contractors and unemployed youth • Rehabilitation of housing and community facilities • Rehabilitation of schools
UNIFEM	• Gender assessments & addressing gender issues as part of LADP process • Incorporating gender mainstreaming considerations into all programme activities • Training and community awareness on gender mainstreaming • Implementation of gender awareness campaigns
WHO	• Health needs assessment and Health facilities survey as part of LADP process. • Completion of health development plan • Training for local health authorities • Implementation of health awareness campaigns • Improvements to priority community health services and facilities • Technical assistance in the area of water and sanitation, and school health
UNESCO	• Lead agency for skills enhancement • Vocational and educational training needs assessments • Vocational, technical, apprenticeship and life skills training • Strengthening capacities of vocational training providers

Source: Al-Kadhimi (2010)

Collaboration between different agencies and organisations within one programme has several benefits. Firstly, it allows for more **diverse technical expertise within the programme**. Secondly, it can **save on operation/staffing costs**, **avoid duplications, as well as sharing evaluation, auditing, and capacity development**. However, even with clearly defined roles, it has taken time to build synergies within the Iraq LADP. One of the challenges of the programme has been overcoming the temptation for each agency to work independently at its own pace, and the establishment of coordination mechanisms and actual sharing of an agreed common programmatic approach and vision took some time (Al-Kadhami, 2010).   Indeed, a recurring learning point from evaluations of different ABD programmes is the **need to develop, implement, and support institutional mechanisms for more effective information flows and coordination** between the many different actors and sectors.

Another lesson learned for building synergies is the **alignment of ABDs with national development policies and strategies**. For example, the Afghanistan NABDP is well aligned with several GoA documents, such as the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) which puts emphasis on laying foundations for economic and social development particularly in context of agriculture and rural development in Afghanistan. NABDP is also **implemented in coordination with other national programmes**, such as the National Solidarity Programme (NSP), Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Programme (AREDP), National Rural Access Programme (NRAP), Water and Sanitation Programme (WATSEP) and SAISEM/UNDP. As well as being implemented through the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the NABDP also actively **collaborates with other related ministries**, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), and the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW). A strong partnership is also being built with the Afghanistan Institute for Rural Development (UNDP Afghanistan, 2010). Likewise, one of the achievements of the Iraq LADP is improved communication and coordination mechanisms between central government and local authorities in the three target areas (PWC, 2011).

At a local level, synergy can be enhanced by placing emphasis on **building local capacity and encouraging participation**. For example, a key component of the ELS/ABD Programme in Uzbekistan is the participation of local communities, particularly in terms of efforts to improve access to, and quality of, basic services. Local people develop Community Development Plans and are involved in administering community-level micro grants. The programme attempts to build capacity for analysis and strategic thinking, so that communities not only prepare for individual infrastructure projects, but are **able to identify synergies themselves** and influence other local service-delivery and income generation initiatives. Communities are also encouraged to work together to establish clear management arrangements for the upkeep and expansion of their renewed infrastructure at the wider district level. For example, in one District, where five Mahallas (local self-government authorities) are cooperating in installing 5km of gas pipeline, a committee with representation from each Mahalla ensures that on a routine basis groups of 'pipeline monitors' check the whole length of the pipe to check for any leaks, problems or illegal attempts to connect to the pipe.

Several ABD programmes have found it useful to **fast-track 'smart investments'**. For example, Kyrgyzstan's Area-Based Development in Batken Province placed emphasis on strategic small infrastructure projects that could be rapidly implemented but aligned with medium and longer-term priorities. Similarly, Iraq's LADP uses a fast-track concept to address immediate local needs, as shown in the box below.

Fast-Track Methodology - Iraq's LADP criteria for Fast-Track Projects include:
- Identified local priorities;
- Generated short and long-term employment;
- Economically and/or socially productive investment and added value to existing or planned public investments;
- Positive impact on marginalized and vulnerable groups;
- Validation by community as a service desired;
- High visibility and quick impact, but with long-term view on sustainability and aligned with MDGs;
- Were within the sectors of health, education, WASH, agriculture and livestock, electricity;
- That included the cross-cutting issues of gender and environment;
- Targeted one or all of the following: poor Marshland communities, women and/or youth

---

(Source: Sida, 2011, p.13).

Another key lesson learned from evaluations of ABD programmes is the need for a **central node that serves as an information and communication hub** between the different target areas. For example, the Cserehat programme (in one of north-east Hungary's poorest regions) established a social resource centre which conveys best practices across the region, brings in helpful partners, and enables people and organisations within and outside the region to communicate with each other (Marczis, 2011).

---

5. Practical examples

Area Based Early Recovery (ABER), South Central Somalia
This pilot ABD early recovery project focuses on two selected regions in Somalia – Middle-Shabelle and Bay – which are affected by several mutually reinforcing factors: seasonal flooding, droughts, disasters, resource and clan-based conflicts, the impact of large numbers of internally displaced persons and dependency on humanitarian assistance. The project aims to build communities' coping mechanisms, increase households' livelihood assets and opportunities available, and ensure policies and structures are in place for livelihood development and disaster management.

Started in 2008, this UNDP-funded project uses an integrated approach with three key elements:
- Income-generating opportunities through training and vocations development;
- Employment generation and micro-grants; and
- Community management of natural resources.

The UNDP Somalia Evaluation Office (2010) reported that during the first year of operations, "some 4,400 persons in 50 communities benefited from activities that included training in various agricultural, livestock management and small business skills as well as hygiene, sanitation, participatory approaches, leadership, conflict management, early warning, drought management, HIV/AIDS, and gender. A micro-grant programme helped 156 families and 134 women-headed households in getting stable income. In parallel, 220,000 workdays were generated through one-time employment for the rehabilitation of infrastructure" (p.34). It is also reported that the success rate for the microfinance grants is high – at about 90 percent.

PRODERE Area Development and Peacebuilding in Central America
The PRODERE development programme was a local-level, multi-disciplinary, multi-agency UN programme for displaced persons, refugees and returnees, implemented between 1990 and 1995 in Central America. It consisted of six national projects in Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, and three regional sub-programmes. The programme benefited approximately 510,000 persons directly in an area totalling 480,000 km, involving 93 municipalities and 2,200 local communities. The cost per direct beneficiary was calculated as US$46 per year. It generated additional parallel funding of approximately US$40.5 million (UNDP, 2008).

From the outset, PRODERE adopted a local development strategy based on a decentralized, integrated and bottom-up approach to development in limited geographical areas. However, the approach developed from one of primarily humanitarian assistance and restricted operations in 1990 to a full-scale development programme by 1994, operating at the departmental (supra-municipal) level.

PRODERE's strategy was as follows:
1. **Promoting Human Rights** – providing individuals with proper documentation in securing property titles; promoting the organization of local branches of human-rights offices; facilitating the local administration of Justice and raising public awareness.
2. **Building consensus around development issues** by restoring basic services and infrastructure, focusing on basic food production, and ensuring effective participation of local stakeholders across political lines.
3. **Facilitating the reintegration of returnees** by giving financial and technical assistance for returnees so that they could cultivate maize and beans and recuperate abandoned coffee plantations.
4. **Restoring basic services** in such areas as health, education and housing.
5. **Reactivating the local economy** by: repairing access roads to production; linking the local economy to the national and global economies; establishing a dialogue with the relevant institutions at the national and international levels and informing them about local level initiatives; and providing credit and loans to individuals who otherwise would not be able to access the credit.

By 1995, PRODERE had achieved the following:
- The resolution of more than 75,000 legal issues including personal documentation, land ownership and permits for residence and work under its rights protection activities.
- Creation of 815 civil society organizations, including development committees, associations and cooperatives.
- Production, employment and income-generating projects benefited more than 37,000 persons through technical assistance and skills training, and more than 28,000 producers received credit totalling in excess of US$11 million for microenterprises and agricultural development. Local development agencies (LEDAs) were established in which organizations of small and medium producers participated.
- More than 340 schools were built or rehabilitated, 4,700 educators trained, 53,000 people received adult education and school curricula were developed.
- A total of 105 healthcare centres were built or rehabilitated and more than 9,000 community health workers were trained.

Key factors in PRODERE's success include: its support for local institutions; its strategic planning; its establishment of local systems of production and employment, health, education and environmental management; its protection of human rights and justice; its good linkages to national sectoral policies; its support to government investment and disbursement; its operation of social investment funds; and the triggering of complementary efforts by other donors (UNDP, 2008).

The programme also highlighted the importance of building sustainability for area-based programming. Factors contributing to sustainability include:
- Importance of ensuring social acceptance and sustainability by conducting needs assessments with the local population, working with policymakers at central government level and raising public awareness of the programme.
- Local capacity building contributed to the programme's independence, sustainability and acceptance by the local community – to this end, most LEDAs set up technical committees to advise and guide staff
- Financial sustainability was a fundamental objective and the PRODERE experience has shown that a period of at least 2-3 years external support is necessary to guarantee a minimum of services and work towards full financial sustainability. The administrative income

derived from the LEDA's involvement in credit operations is usually sufficient to finance a number of basic services. LEDAs can generate additional income by charging membership fees, becoming executing agency for international and national technical cooperation projects, charging for services (incl. training) provided and mobilizing external resources. (Lazarte, 1999)

<u>ELS/ABD programme, Uzbekistan</u>

The Enhanced Living Standards (ELS) and Area-Based Development (ABD) programmes aim to raise living standards in three target areas: the Fergana Valley, Karakalpakstan, and Karshi regions of Uzbekistan. Although the ELS project is funded by the EU and the ABD by UNDP, they are implemented as a combined programme and often referred to as 'ELS/ABD'. There are three key elements to the programme:

1. **Training for local officials** on such topics as local development planning, the monitoring and evaluation of local development projects, and the local application of the Millennium Development Goals.
2. **Increasing local community participation in the design and construction of local infrastructure projects**, particularly as concerns energy, water and sanitation, and health and education facilities).
3. **Delivering agricultural cooperative and extension services**, such as demonstrating the advantages of agricultural cooperatives (e.g., buying in bulk, sharing farm machinery) or the use of energy- and water-saving technologies (Ahmedov, 2011).

One of the central components is the **'process' oriented methodology** which engages traditional social institutions within rural communities (some of which are formal structures like the Mahalla, and others informal, such as the aksakals[3]), while also building up new capacities within the communities and local administrations (UNDP Uzbekistan, 2010).

<u>Local Area Development Programme (LADP), Iraq</u>

This ABD programme is a joint initiative of seven UN agencies (ILO, UNOPS, UNHABITAT, UNDP, UNESCO, WHO and UNIFEM) in three target areas in Iraq: the Governorates of Sulaymaniyah, Hillah and the Marshlands. The programme has three interlinked aims:

(1) **Local development planning:** Strengthen the abilities of local authorities to prepare and implement human rights based, gender sensitive, strategic development plans at the sub-governorate level;
(2) **Local economic recovery and development**: Stimulate economic recovery by improving the business environment, entrepreneurial and vocational skills, and providing quick--impact assistance to entrepreneurs; and
(3) **Enhancing access to essential services** by improving social and physical infrastructures and the service delivery capacities of local authorities. Essential services include: water and sanitation, schools, health care centres, housing, electricity, cultural sites, agriculture and trade (Hoyle, 2011).

The full governance structure for the LADP is shown in the diagram below. National Steering Committees (NSCs) provide strategic advice on programme design and implementation, support the Local Steering Committees (LSCs), and facilitate the involvement of ministries in preparing and

---

[3] Mahalla is a traditionally geographically defined community, which today forms the lowest level of public administration in Uzbekistan, and 'aksakal' refers to community elders

implementing local area development plans. The LSCs are responsible for preparing local area development plans, identifying 'fast-track' projects, encouraging partnerships with governorate, local government officials and other stakeholders, and monitoring implementation of programme activities.

LADP Governance Structure
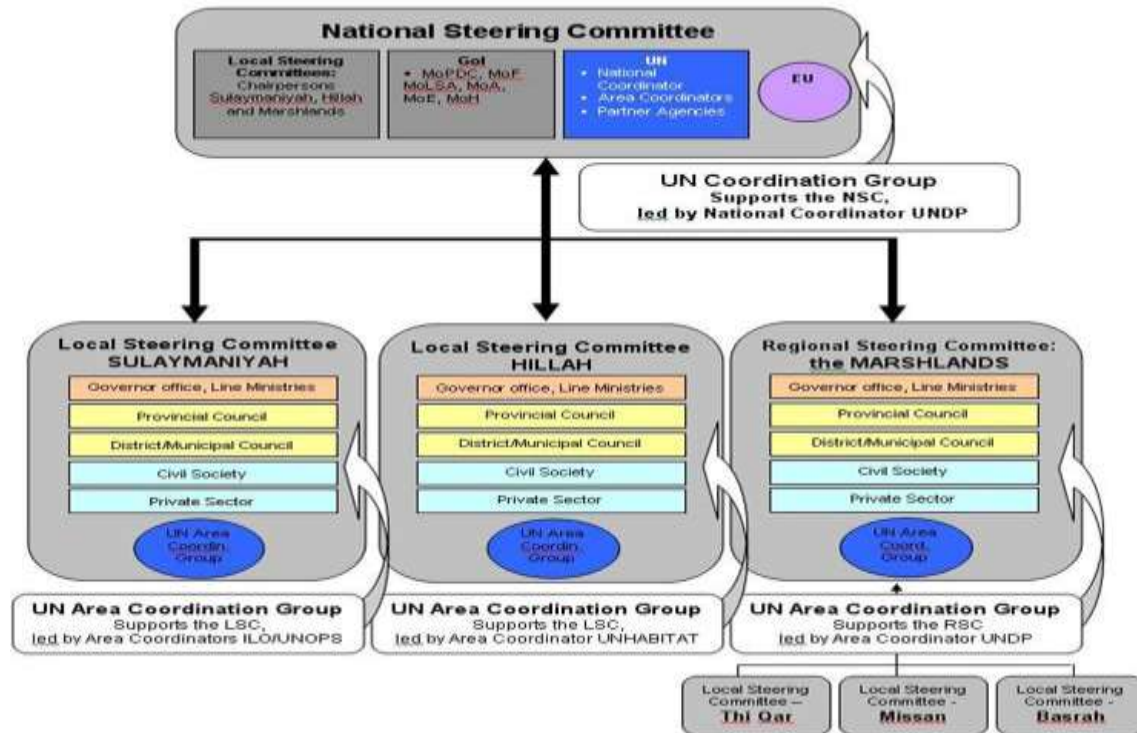
Source: LADP (2009)

An independent external joint evaluation in 2010 found that in terms of development results, the LADP has mostly achieved its programming aims: "Collectively these results have been considerable given the relative short time frame of the programme especially when one takes into account the slow start of the LADP, implementing the programme through seven agencies, and the diverse implementing contexts that the programme operated in across Iraq" (Pallen et al, 2010, p.8). Examples of LADP impacts[4] include:

- 132 fast-tracked projects, including water and sanitation projects, electricity and health facilities, generating 135,000 person days of employment.
- Technical training on business-development practices was given to 2,685 beneficiaries, including 156 female-owned businesses.
- 3,400 enterprises were supported and 463 businesses were created
- 28 water and sanitation projects implemented and services improved in three areas;
- 16 school and youth centre facilities rehabilitated;
- 6 health centres fully built or rehabilitated;
- 25 capacity building programmes conducted for healthcare workers, teachers and community members;
- 35 community electrical facilities implemented and services improved in the three areas; and
- 14 projects implemented that aim to restore and construct buildings on sites reflecting culture and tradition

---

[4] LADP project impact is based on the latest figures available, taken from LADP 2009 UNDG ITF Annual Report.

<u>Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme (SARDP), Ethiopia</u>

Operating from 1997 to 2010, SARDP was a long-running ABD programme which aimed to improve food security and reduce rural poverty in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia. The SARDP had several components:

- **Support for land tenure security** – introducing a land administration system, and providing landholders with certificates to their land to encourage them to invest in it
- **Improving agricultural productivity and natural resources management** – introducing new crops, livestock breeds, farming techniques and small scale irrigation together with innovative approaches.
- **Economic diversification** – supporting the development of non-farm enterprises and creating new sources of income for local people.
- **Developing infrastructure and social services**, such as roads, bridges, drinking water supply schemes, irrigation systems, schools, health posts and centres.
- **Promoting gender equality and mainstreaming HIV/AIDS** into programme activities
- **Decentralization and capacity building** – enabling local governments and communities to make decisions that concern them, and ensuring that government staff and local people have the skills and resources they need to promote development (SARDP, 2010).

Some of SARDP's achievements include: nearly 900,000 landholders received primary certificates for their land; 4.9 million parcels were demarcated and registered; more than 200 irrigation schemes of various types were completed, and over 100 savings and credit cooperatives were established. Nearly 1,300 km of roads were built, nearly 300 health facilities were built or upgraded, and over 1,000 water supply systems of various types constructed (SARDP, 2010).

<u>Decentralisation, Local Governance and Rural Development, UNDP Assistance in Ukraine</u>

Three ABD programmes have been implemented in Ukraine:

- The Chernobyl Recovery and Development Programme (CRDP) which aims to mitigate the long-term consequences of the Chernobyl disaster and identify positive development outcomes;
- The Municipal Sustainable Development Programme providing sustainable development in urban Ukraine; and
- The Crimea Integration and Development Programme (CIDP) – UNDP's flagship conflict prevention programme.

All three programmes use an ABD approach to provide training and seed capital to implement plans and community projects under partnership agreements. A 2007 evaluation found that the three programmes supported the implementation of 350 projects in health, heating, education, buildings, water and other social sectors, with cost sharing locally of approximately 60% (Singh and Girard, 2007).

While the programmes were judged to be 'islands of success', the Ukraine evaluation questioned whether they could be scaled-up (both geographically and quantitatively). It concluded that there was a **need for a programmatic approach and a central node** to coordinate the different ABD programmes. The report recommended that the three existing programmes were transformed into one operational function - a new umbrella instrument called the Local Development Programme (LDP) which would provide knowledge-based policy advice at the central level (Singh and Gerard, 2007).

In fact, a much more comprehensive intervention emerged in 2007 when the Community Based Approach to Local Development Project (CBA) was launched in Ukraine, funded by the European Commission and co-financed and implemented by the UNDP. Target districts (approximately eight in every region) and target communities (approximately five in target districts) are selected by the Regional and District state administrations and councils on the basis of specific criteria such as: social-economic condition, level of interest and support of project implementation, and participating communities' commitment to further co-financing of the initiatives.

National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP), Afghanistan
The NABDP aims to promote recovery and longer-term development in Afghanistan, while building the government's capacity to lead and coordinate participatory approaches to development.   Starting in 2002 as a joint initiative between the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and UNDP, the programme is in its Third Phase (2009-2014), with the following thematic objectives:
1. **Local institutional building**, in particular the capacity building of District Development Assemblies (DDA), will help promote the partnership between the public and private sector.
2. **Develop rural development infrastructure** to promote the creation of rural incomes, employment and economic opportunities.
3. **Natural resource management**, to strengthen community-based productive natural resources management, which will contribute to enduring economic livelihoods.
4. **Rural energy development**, to harness existent rural energy, especially renewable rural energy, to contribute to development of energy sector in Afghanistan
5. **Rural economic development**, to create a conducive environment for rural enterprise initiatives accordingly with the comparative advantages of the locality and the market potential (UNDP Afghanistan, 2011)

As of May 2011, the NABDP has established District Development Assemblies (DDAs) in 382 districts, with District Development Plans (DDPs) compiled through community consultation processes in all the districts.   227 DDAs have received training on local governance, conflict resolution, gender equity, finance and procurement, and project implementation and management topics.   Other achievements include the launching of 16 District Information Centers, which will collect and provide reliable data regarding development, social, and economic aspects of their respective districts once fully operational.

NABDP has also completed 1,891 productive rural infrastructure projects, covering diverse rural development sectors, such as irrigation, transport and education.   A further 803 projects are on-going and 1,252 are in the survey and design process. Another key element of the NABDBP is the promotion of the sustainable use of resources, and there are 28 on-going micro-hydro power (MHP) and 22 biogas schemes currently underway.

Conflict prevention is also integral to the Afghanistan ABD, and the Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) unit is working in 110 districts where armed groups have been disbanded in order to implement productive infrastructure projects. (UNDP Afghanistan, 2011)

Batken Area -Based Development Programme, Kyrgyzstan
The Batken Area-Based Development Programme aims to improve livelihoods and enhance the environment for sustainable development through integrated area based programming and by empowering communities through community institutions, to articulate and address their needs and priorities.   Batken oblast is situated in southern Kyrgyzstan and is one of the poorest, geographically

isolated, and conflict-prone areas, with a multi-ethnic population that requires conflict-sensitive programming (UNDP Kyrgyzstan, 2008).

Programme impacts from the Batken ABD programme include:
- Reductions in poverty from 85% of the population living in poverty (in 2003 at the start of the programme) to 45% by 2007. Batken oblast is no longer the poorest region in Kyrgyzstan.
- More than 2,000 people from target villages became members of Self-Help Groups, which became institutionalized organizations with over KGS 2 million of internal savings used for internal lending, improvement of village infrastructure and charity within their association.
- Improvements in the social infrastructure of target villages, including roads, telephone access, electricity provision, irrigation and supply of potable water.
- Better access to clean drinking water immediately improved public health situation in target villages, with a 36 percent decrease in the incidence of water-borne diseases such as intestinal diseases, hepatitis, and typhoid.
- Small grants support in combination with business capacity development helped to establish 122 new businesses.
- More than 16,000 villagers in the most remote and low-potential areas benefited from access to electricity, drinking and irrigation water and improved infrastructure (e.g., roads, bridges, telephones) (UNDG, 2011).

6. Sources

Ahmedov, S., 2011, 'Innovation in Local Development Planning in Uzbekistan'. http://developmentandtransition.net/Article.35+M51068b0c324.0.html

Al-Kadhimi, S., 2010, 'Local Area Development Programme (LADP)', Powerpoint Presentation, November 26th 2010. http://css.escwa.org.lb/sdd/1352/Session3-4.pdf

European Commission, 2011, 'Conference on 'Facilitating an Area-Based Development (ABD) approach in rural regions in the Western Balkans,' Information Briefing, Belgrade, Thursday 5 May 2011. http://www.eastagri.org/meetings/docs/meeting54/briefdocABDConf.pdf

Foum, A., Laike, A., Andersson, T., and Olofsson, A., 2010, 'Does rural development support pay off in Ethiopia? Sida 13 years down the line in Amhara region. Reflections after a field trip' http://www.swedenabroad.com/SelectImageX/219265/etiopiens_framtid.pdf

GSDRC, 2007, 'What are best practice and lessons learned in SWAps, particularly relating to the justice sector?' Helpdesk Research Report: SWAps and Justice, 13th April 2007. http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/HD385.pdf

Harfst, J., 2006, 'A Practitioner's Guide to Area-Based Development Programming'. UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS. http://europeandcis.undp.org/files/uploads/LG/ABD%20tooltik.doc

Hoyle, A.L., 2011, 'Practical Implementation Modalities of the Regional Strategy: Recent ILO experiences in Peacebuilding environments', Presentation at the Employment for Peace, Stability and Development A Regional Strategy for the Horn of Africa Stakeholders' and Development Partners' Conference. http://www.ilo.org/public/english/region/afpro/addisababa/pdf/efp_crisisresponse.pdf

ILO, 2010, 'Local Economic Recovery in Post-Conflict: Guidelines', ILO, Geneva.
http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_emp/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_141270.pdf

Lazarte, A., Hofmeijer, H. and Zwanenburg. M., 1999. 'Local Economic Development in Central America: The PRODERE Experience'. International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva
http://publish.yorku.ca/~ishd/LEDCD.SP/Links%20BQ/70_Local%20Economic%20Development%20in%20Central%20America%20The%20PRODERE.pdf

Lochhead, D. and Musoke, R.A., 2010, 'Evaluation of the Building Sustainable Peace and Development Project in Karamoja', UNDP/Republic of Uganda.

Marczis, M., 2011, 'The 'Cserehat model': Area-based development and Roma inclusion', UNDP Development and Transition.
http://www.developmentandtransition.net/Article.35+M56cd23b2d17.0.html

Pallen, D., Al Ammar, A., and Mustafah, S., 2010, 'Independent External Joint Evaluation of "Local Area Development Programme"', UNDP Baghdad.
http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/downloaddocument.html?docid=4086

PWC, 2011, 'United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund: Lessons Learned Exercise', Final Report, 29 June 2011. http://www.mdtf.undp.org/document/download/6851

Romanik, C., 2011, 'A New Definition of Local Development', UNDP Development in Transition.
http://developmentandtransition.net/Article.35+M56b903f6cad.0.html

Rothmann, I., A. Canavan et al., 2011, 'Moving towards a sector-wide approach (SWAp) for health in fragile states: Lessons learned on the state of readiness in Timor Leste, Sierra Leone and Democratic Republic of Congo'. KIT Working Papers Series H5. Amsterdam: KIT.
http://www.kit.nl/net/KIT_Publicaties_output/ShowFile2.aspx?e=1749

SARDP, 2010, 'Building Ethiopia's future: The Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme'. Sida-Amhara Rural Development Programme. Bahir Dar, Ethiopia.
http://www.orgut.se/files/Final%20SARDP%20Book_web.pdf

Sida, 2011, 'Support to Iraq for Job Creation and Local Development through the UNDP Local Area Development Programme, LADP, Final Narrative Report', Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation / LADP / SIDA / UNDP-Iraq. (Paper attached: Support to Iraq for Job Creation and Local Development though the UNDP LADP Programme SIDA Final Report)

Singh, R. and Girard, J., 2007, 'An Outcome-based Evaluation of UNDP Assistance to Local Development in Ukraine',
http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=2361

UNDG, 2011, 'Area Based Development in Batken Province', MDG Good Practices Databank, United Nations Development Group, http://mdgnet.undg.org/?q=node/43

UNDG Iraq Trust Fund, 2009, 'Iraqi Trust Fund, Annual Programme Narrative Progress Report, Reporting Period: 1 January – 31 December 2009', UNDG Iraq Trust Fund, Baghdad. http://www.unesco.org/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Iraq/pdf/Reports/Annual/Annual_Report_C10-08_Samara_2009.pdf

UNDP, 1999, 'Governance Foundations for Post-conflict Situations: UNDP's Experience'. Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP, New York http://mirror.undp.org/magnet/Docs/crisis/AcknowledgementsandExecSummary.doc.html

UNDP, 2003, 'UNDP and Area-Based Development Programmes: An Overview', Bureau for Crises Prevention and Recovery, New York.

UNDP, 2007, 'Supporting Capacities for Integrated Local Development', Practice Note, BCPR, New York.

UNDP, 2008, 'Post-Conflict Economic Recovery: Enabling Local Ingenuity', UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, New York. http://www.undp.org/cpr/content/economic_recovery/PCER_rev.pdf

UNDP, 2009, 'Community Security and Social Cohesion: Towards a UNDP Approach,' UNDP, New York http://www.securitytransformation.org/images/documentos/687_UNDP_BCPR_CSSC_Concept_Paper_Final.pdf

UNDP Afghanistan, 2011, 'National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) Factsheet', May 2011, http://www.undp.org.af/Projects/Report2011/nabdp/Project-NABDP-May2011-factsheet.pdf

UNDP Afghanistan, 2010, 'National Area-Based Development Programme (NABDP) Annual Progress Report-2010', http://www.mrrd-nabdp.org/Data/1-%20NABDP%20Annual%20Report_03,03,2011.pdf

UNDP Kyrgyzstan, 2008, 'Batken Area-Based Development Programme Project Document'. http://www.undp.kg/en/resources/project-database/article/1-projects/827-batken-area-based-development-programme

UNDP/RBEC, 2003, 'Area-Based Development Practitioners Workshop', Crimea, Ukraine, 29-31 October 2003. http://europeandcis.undp.org/index.cfm?menu=p_search\p_result\p_documents&DocumentID=4002

UNDP Somalia Evaluation Office (2010) 'Somalia: Assessment of Development Results: Evaluation of UNDP Contribution', UNDP Somalia. http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/37/14/47861786.pdf

UNDP Somalia (2010) 'Area-Based Early Recovery for Affected Communities in South-Central Somalia', Project Facts Somalia. http://www.undp.org/cpr/documents/disaster/arab_states/Somalia_Early%20Recovery%20for%20Affected%20Communities%20in%20South-Central%20Somalia.pdf

UNDP Ukraine, 'Local Development', http://www.undp.org.ua/en/local-development-and-human-security

UNDP Uzbekistan, 2010, 'Enhancing Inclusive & Equitable Growth through Local Capacity Development: Good Practices & Lessons Learnt from the ELS/ABD Programme Community Development', Draft for Discussion (Paper attached: Lessons Learnt (SF3))

Vrbensky, R., 2009, 'Can Development Prevent Conflict? Integrated Area-Based Development in the Western Balkans', Conflict, Security and Development, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 75-110
http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/23360/

Websites visited
UNDP, ILO, Google, Eurasia Social Change Collective, OECD, UNHabitat, UNDG

Experts consulted
Simon Forrester, Managing Consultant of the Eurasia Social Change Collective
Sudipto Mukerjee, Head of Economic Recovery and Poverty Alleviation Pillar, UNDP Iraq
Lionel Laurens, Programme Management Advisor / Area Based Development & Local Service Delivery, UNDP Iraq
Saad Al Kadhimi, Manager, UNDP Baghdad Office / Program Support Coordinator

---

About Helpdesk research reports: Helpdesk reports are based on 2 days of desk-based research. They are designed to provide a brief overview of the key issues, and a summary of some of the best literature available. Experts are contacted during the course of the research, and those able to provide input within the short time-frame are acknowledged

---