

UN Trust Fund for Human Security

Bridging the Humanitarian-Development Nexus in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Applying the Human Security concept to stabilize communities in Canton 10

A three-year programme implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, and IOM in collaboration with municipal authorities, the Red Cross and civil society.

Background

Nearly two decades after the war, Bosnia has made visible progress. But its transition from conflict to sustainable peace remains fragile and incomplete. The multi-layered institutional and governance structure established under the Dayton Peace Agreement has not fully succeeded in addressing the social, economic, personal and community insecurities of the population. Vulnerable groups such as IDPs and returnees feel particularly insecure, with the fear that gains made in the post-war stabilization and development period will unravel. Canton 10, the most underdeveloped region in the country, grapples with longstanding political, economic and social cleavages that continue to undermine sustainable outcomes from national and international assistance programmes. Therefore, to support prevention efforts, the UNTFHS programme combined activities to address immediate needs and reduce risk while improving living conditions and equitable access to development gains.

Overview of the UNTFHS Programme

With the overarching goal of eliminating community, personal, health and economic insecurities that place Canton 10 at risk of instability, the UNTFHS programme contributed to mitigating social and economic inequalities faced by returnees and IDPs; enhancing the capacities of local authorities to provide better quality services; promoting peace and conflict prevention in communities and schools; and providing new opportunities for income generation. Activities included: establishing inclusive governance mechanisms for joint planning in the Canton; building the capacity of services providers and local communities to combat all forms of violence; enhancing education and prevention in schools; providing mobile health and social services to the most vulnerable people; ensuring access to clear water; expanding legal aid to socially vulnerable groups, including returnees and IDPs; and increasing incomes through entrepreneurship and other livelihood activities.

With diverse stakeholders working synergistically and building on comparative advantages to implement the above initiatives, the programme was able to support the transition towards longer-term development objectives while addressing short-term needs. As such, it contributed to an improved the relationship between the Government and society, and enhanced social cohesion among diverse communities. Through the human security approach, the programme placed emphasis on addressing the root causes of inequity and underdevelopment thus building resilience and closing the divide between humanitarian and development assistance.

Lessons Learned

- By bringing together international, national and local humanitarian and development actors, the programme was able to work with local communities and provide social services universally without bias to ethnic or religious divisions. This combination of actors and activities helped guard programme activities from external factors such as political instability and changes in government following elections.
- Effectively addressing the integration of IDPs and returnees into local communities requires a comprehensive and coherent strategy that recognizes not only the breadth of need (health, safety, economic, community), but also the importance of short-, medium- and long-term interventions. In addition, it requires that community-based efforts to reduce vulnerability are matched with improvements in the capacity of local authorities to manage risk and guide development moving forward.
- Connecting the work of humanitarian and development actors can facilitate inclusive and equitable interventions, which is vital to peace and stability in a context such as Bosnia and Herzegovina where real or perceived preferences can inflame underlying tensions. Complementary services to the beneficiary populations of specific entities helped reinforce social harmony while reducing vulnerability.



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