

Report of Community of Practice Meeting for UNDP Practitioners Supporting Human Rights and Justice in the CEE / CIS Region: 9-10 October 2004

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List of Annexes

See separate file for annexes. Main annexes are for reference in continuing community building. They are available as separate files as well as in a set supporting this report.

- Annex 1: Agenda Overview and Participant List
 - Annex 2: Opening Remarks, Introductions to Practitioners' Work in Human Rights
 - Annex 3: Ten Dimensions of a Community of Practice and Links to Practitioners' Priorities
 - Annex 4: Complete Input from Buzz Groups on Strategic Entry Points / Niche
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15 Oct 2004 working versions of report and annexes prepared by Patricia Keays, external facilitator, for review by internal leads on the community of practice meeting facilitation team (Sergei, John, Louise, Lina.)

1. Introduction

UNDP Country Office practitioners from six countries – Armenia, Georgia, Lithuania, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan - met with colleagues from the Regional Centre in Bratislava, the Oslo Governance Centre, and consultants experienced with support to human rights in the region, after the IV Roundtable for Ombudsmen in the CEE/CIS region (held in Vilnius Lithuania from 4-8 October 2004). The purpose of the meeting was to consider strategic directions, priorities and next steps for a regional community of practice supporting human rights and justice. This work spans both support to national human rights institutes, such as the Ombuds offices and Human Rights Commissions, and support to wider work on human rights and justice. See Annex 1 for a list of participants and an agenda overview. See Annex 2 for points from introductions relating to people's experience with human rights work.

Participants shared with each other the base of experience they have in the area of human rights, including current work. An introduction to the *community of practice* and *knowledge management* concepts then set a common frame of reference. This review built directly on the introduction to the knowledge management theme that was provided to the informal community of practice members who were able to be at a first meeting in Prague at the previous Round-table. This illustrates how the development of the community of practice on justice and human rights is proceeding incrementally, step by step. See Annex 3 for the ten dimensions of a community of practice and links to practitioners' areas of challenge and strategic priority.

Buzz groups took stock and identified priority entry points for the community of practice strategic directions. These buzz groups combined people from different countries and bases of experience. Three main sets of points were discussed and shared through report-backs. The first is major challenges and problems experienced in people's work. The second is the strategies people have attempted and the results. The third highlights in particular the unique contributions and a possible value-added role for UNDP. The consolidated inputs on these topics are the core of this report.

Against this background, the group identified the priority strategic directions and actions for the emerging community of practice. See Annex 4 for the full results of buzz group work, and below in the report for the consolidated profile of priorities and strategic direction.

An evaluation of the *community of practice* meeting yielded generally positive feedback, with some specific recommendations and suggestions for ways practitioners feel they can be better prepared to contribute to the next meeting. See Annex 6 for evaluation input in summary and point forms.

2. Key Points from Discussion about Knowledge Management and Community of Practice

Knowledge management in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States was summarized in written form in a set of handouts distributed to participants. The set includes an overview and the templates for main knowledge products – prospectus, action reflection note, and how-to guide. The knowledge services team had also prepared a CD ROM with core reference documents in electronic form.

The facilitator followed the review of regional perspectives on knowledge management and the community of practice with an introduction of the ten standard elements or dimensions of a practice architecture. See Annex 3 for reference to the ten dimensions or elements. Practitioners had a number of key points to make about knowledge management and development of the community of practice on justice and human rights:

- a recommendation from the participant group is that all acronyms be removed from the Power-point presentation. People appreciate receiving the CD ROM and depending on whether the presentation is on it, and the Action Reflection Notes on human rights work in the region, look forward to receiving those documents as well;
- on knowledge products, advice is “don’t think too narrowly”. It’s important to keep in mind *both* knowledge products to support practitioners in Country Officers *and* to support partners in Government, civil society. UNDP role and niche may be *facilitating* development of needed knowledge and capacity support products, for partners;
- other sub-regional communities of practice, such as the one in human rights / access to justice in Asia, started with a core group (not all members of the community have to be involved directly in the early developmental stages);
- maintaining the *momentum* and *engagement* of people in the activities of a community of practice is critical, after meetings and visioning / initial direction is set;
- process by which materials from across a community are *collected*, then *organized in relation to standards important to the Community of Practice*, then *connected to the end-users* in a supportive way, are steps important to keep in mind during the start-up stages;
- on action reflection notes, the basis is there for analysis, and for subsequent action reflection notes. The process is relatively new, and the analytic step has not been taken yet on those that have been collected, for example four on human rights work from this region. The analysis of lessons learned is a key next step in the knowledge management cycle;
- Within UNDP’s structure, there is a practice leader, a practice manager, and a knowledge network facilitator for each substantive area. These are in New York. There are coordinating support structures at the regional level, for example in the Bratislava Regional Centre. Not all network at regional and sub-regional networks have facilitators or coordinators. This decision depends on the community of practice members;
- Depending on the interests and situation of a community of practice, if one “dies” or “moves on”, it doesn’t necessarily mean a failure; it can be a success, depending on the group members needs, situations and decisions.

The following documents were endorsed as a useful review and information package, as distributed:

- Knowledge Management in Europe and the CIS; overview of strategy, core concepts relating to community of practice and knowledge management
- Knowledge Management in Europe and the CIS – “Bringing concepts of Practices and Knowledge Management to life in Europe and the CIS region” with list of current knowledge products
- Guidelines for Action Reflection Notes
- Guidelines for Prospectuses (with template)
- Guidelines for How to Guides
- Asia Pacific Access to Justice and Human Rights Sub-Practice, Summary of Activity

The flipchart sheet with ten elements of the practice architecture or dimensions of a community of practice served as a useful reference for the practitioners. It is recommended for inclusion in briefing packages for future community of practice meetings for this and other regional sub-practices.

Using face-to-face meetings as opportunities to brief each other as well as to get inputs and feedback to transfer back to individual work places and functions appears to meet immediate practical as well as longer-term strategic interest of the community in strengthening effectiveness and accelerating progress in its substantive area of work, justice and human rights in the region. The relationship between *knowledge management* and *community of practice* needs continuous analysis, in relation to the ongoing daily work of the practitioners, the Country Offices and partners.

3. Key Areas of Regional Challenge and Problems in Areas of Support to Human Rights

Four groups reported back on main areas of challenge and problems experienced in work on human rights in the CEE/CIS region. The following list consolidates those into a working list of ten main areas of challenge, on which priority need for continuing work is endorsed;

1. specific challenges associated with **creating and sustaining or maintaining national human rights institutes**, in different specific circumstances;
2. the **sustainability of local capacities** both in National Human Rights Institutes and the wider human rights work and results, linked to *National ownership and buy-in* and the importance of building genuine **partnerships**;
3. **capacity** – the use of local capacity, and the need to build capacity, also linked to the importance of sustainability measures;
4. **the need for advocacy**, along with the recognition that this is hard work, as long-term as it is essential, is the recognition that advocacy is central to success in human rights work;
5. **the need to increase public awareness** and support of the public and all stakeholders in a human rights based approach;
6. **the need for systematic education and training** (legal, judiciary, courts, UNDP partners) as well as public awareness on human rights and a human rights based approach – building on the work done to this point and extending it;
7. **missing strategy**, resulting in ad hoc and unconnected work (missed opportunities);
8. **the lack of donor / partner coordination** affects all, in different ways at different levels;
9. **a general lack of knowledge** about what is going on, what others are doing, and **lack of a communications system or strategy** so people can find out what is going on;
10. **attitudes** of local partners, Government, and the public – even of some UNDP / UN system colleagues in relation to **implementing an integrated human rights based approach**.

4. Key Entry Points and Opportunities for Value-Added, UNDP Potential Niche

The same four groups also identified current approaches and entry points for a potential strategy that reflects UNDP value-added and niche in human rights work in the CEE/CIS region. Eight main areas below organize inputs and main elements of a strategy for development of the community of practice. See Annex 4 for details and complete input on each of the following eight areas of priority, which are not organized here in any particular order. See Annex 6 for a rough arrangement of the areas of priority action for the community of practice as elements of a developing strategy:

1. **strategic planning and strategy for CoP development;**
2. **communications strategy, or communications theme in a wider strategy;**
3. **capacity development and training strategy, or integrated theme;**
4. **partnership strategy, or partnership theme as part of a wider strategy;**
5. **strong advocacy theme integrated in foundation and ongoing work and strategy;**
6. **key contribution to donor coordination on human rights** - with a *resource management* theme, sharing information to avoid waste and unnecessary replication;
7. **human rights based approach in action** – practical as well as strategic implementation;
8. **knowledge management.**

5. Priorities for Community of Practice Capacity Development and Training

In addition to identifying capacity development and training of partners in national human rights institutes, development colleagues and the public as priorities within a community building strategy, practitioners also identified the following as top priorities for their *own* professional development.

Three main areas dominate practitioners' interest in training and capacity development:

- introduction to human rights based approach
- professional development on a regular cycle, starting with reporting bodies
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Rapporteurs.

Key points from practitioners' discussions about each of the three priorities are summarized here.

Introduction to Human Rights Based Approach

- desired focus is on practical applications to programming;
- best practices and lessons learned, in relation to programming are identified as being particularly useful to practitioners;
- this is a strategy entry point because Resident Representatives and heads of agencies need help and ideas on how to integrate the human rights theme in the programming process, especially taking into account UN reform processes;
- *it may be useful to circulate Frequently Asked Questions on human rights based approach, before the next meeting.*

Professional Development (Regular Cycle) – starting with reporting bodies

- for example, on *reporting* on human rights and treaty bodies
- designed for people at the country level, relevant to their work
- what UN system approaches are and require
- * *some of this will come in the Practice Note on Human Rights, although there not many examples of good practice yet; the Oslo Governance Centre colleague will share eight to ten good practice cases with the CoP;*
- This theme of emphasis corresponds directly to the community of practice element of *professional development*, in the ten point practice architecture.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and Special Rapporteurs

- Focus of coverage is to include mandate / tools / expertise and links with UNDP;
- A current joint initiative in Central Asia is underway, can involve updates, once contact persons are identified (as members of the community of practice, too);
- one priority is how the organizations can work together;
- a second priority is how the work of Special Rapporteurs can be used in programming, particularly strengthening informed links between the UN system *treaty processes and agenda* and the *development processes and agenda*;
- the relationship is not well understood, between the two agencies;
- a Memorandum of Understanding exists, and implementation of that MoU can be a valuable focus for capacity development coverage.
- also, HURIST, which is a joint programme of the two agencies, offers Country Offices a human rights assessment, and this can be included in future training opportunities and approaches for the community of practice.

Monitoring and evaluation are topics of interest for future training, specifically how programmes can include mechanisms and country offices share experiences and issues.

Links with Capacity Development and Training with National Human Rights Institutes

As part of its continuing strategy development, the community of practice members will want to consider taking action on their own capacity development needs in conjunction or in parallel with action on the capacity development needs of partners. From the meeting with representatives of national human rights institutes, the following profile of highest priority needs for knowledge products as well as topics for future round-tables is of useful reference.

Top Priorities as Rated by National Human Rights Institute Contacts – for Round-Table + Products	Highest Priority	Priority	TOTAL	<i>Product</i>
1. Investigation techniques	7	6	13	10
2. Strategic planning / strategy	10	-	10	6
3. Ombudsman and Courts	5	4	9	5
4. Multi-Ombuds Institutes – and alternatives				1
5. Regional Offices	4	2	6	5
6. Management Ombuds offices – including budget processes	2	3	5	2
7. Legislation – harmonization	2	3	5	4
8. Comparative Analysis of Laws on Ombuds Function	2	3	5	6
9. Monitoring strategies – for different institutions	-	2	2	2
10. Regional cooperation – rights of citizens abroad	-	2	2	1
11. National Human Rights plans and strategies	1	2	3	6
12. Ombudsperson-initiated complaints	-	3	3	6
13. Team building	1	2	3	7
14. Anti-Discrimination	-	-	-	1
15. Land/Property problems and complaints, role	-	1	1	1

Additional topics that were identified in country reports and discussions, but which unfortunately did not make it to the list for priority setting and which will require attention in future, are: public education and awareness-raising; media campaigns and how to work with the media.

**** Please note that the highest priorities for next Round table topics are not the same as the highest priorities for knowledge products. Some analysis and continuing consultation with practitioner partners about needs are important steps in continuing work to develop the community of practice.** Even with some continuing confusion about what knowledge products are, and what knowledge management means, significant opportunity presents to support national human rights institutes with the two parallel strands of partnership already in place – face to face meetings, and capacity development supports directed at filling priority capacity gaps (through guidelines, examples of good practice, communication and advocacy instruments, for some specific examples). National Human Rights Action Plans were identified as an area in which community of practice members can make a unique coordinating contribution, making this an area of mutual interest and attention in the coming years, as the CoP gets further established.

6. Follow-up on Guidelines for National Human Rights Institutes

The drafting authors of one of the guidelines joined the community of practice meeting. The accepted proposal was that authors would divide feedback received from representatives of national human rights institutes into several categories, including points they will incorporate, points they do not agree with or which were not intended to be in this guideline, which they will not incorporate, and points they do not fully understand. On this last group, practitioners agree to provide inputs that may help clarify the intent and meaning of the input, as well as to contact partners to encourage them to provide examples from national law and experience.

The intent of the guidelines to serve as an international reference and standard, with some adaptation and adjustment to local laws and circumstances, was reiterated and reinforced. Support for dissemination when the guidelines are done include plans to prepare country-level brochures, for distribution to likely end-user groups.

Problems in transfer of meaning that relate specifically to translation and interpretation problems will continue to be addressed by the authors and the practice lead. A glossary will be developed to provide consistent definitions and explanations of usage for key words, terms and concepts. The introduction to the guidelines will provide pointers on use – both what the guideline is intended to be and do, and what it is not. A process in which practitioners have more opportunity to be systematically involved, earlier and throughout the drafting process, was noted by all as being the preference for development of future guidelines. As the community of practice is still at an early formative stage, it was not possible for the two guidelines in process at this time to involve practitioners as much as intended in future.

Guidelines were also noted as being of three main types – those that need to be developed by practitioners, based on their experience, those that need to be developed by technical specialists, because of the content, and those that are a hybrid, involving both groups. Different processes will be followed for the different kinds of guidelines. In general, recommendations and agreements are for more involvement at key stages by members of the community of practice. Even when not directly involved with the substantive content, they are and will be an invaluable source of guidance and feedback from the perspective of end use and implementation, as well as helping set priorities on continuing needs for guidelines and other capacity development supports.

Annex 5 gives details of decisions taken by the practitioner group in the community of practice meeting. These are organized roughly as elements of a strategy to support continuing community building, in Annex 7.

7. Priority Next Steps for the Continuing Development of the Community of Practice

Important for all practitioners was that plans for next steps be *realistic* as well as *useful*. Four key decisions were taken together, on three priority areas for next steps. Two relate to communications, one to knowledge management, and one to a next face to face meeting. See Annex 5 for implementation details.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. **communication and follow-up on inputs to the guidelines** is an immediately priority, involving PSPD Bratislava Centre lead and all practitioners who will contact their national human rights institute colleagues for example, as well as provide feedback to the drafting authors on feedback not immediately clear as to intent;
2. **communications about the Vilnius meeting with expanded group of practitioners;** the report and records from the meeting will be ready within a week. When available, the

practice lead will forward to people at the meeting, as well as to human rights focal points and practitioners in other countries who are logical members of the developing community of practice, with an update and invitation for them to join the formative initiative (including forwarding resources);

RESOURCES – INFORMATION FOUNDATION FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

3. **resources and information about people's work on human rights** will be forwarded to the three leads volunteering for next steps on this knowledge management theme. All practitioners will forward either core documents and information or links to already-posted documents. The working group will tentatively develop a standard template to increase efficient access to and location of core information about programme work, and share it with the group for inputs; (John Macaulay, Louise Nylin, Lina Jankauskiene to work on the template and organization of resources collection, with all practitioners forwarding resources);

NEXT MEETING

4. **a next meeting for the community of practice is** being planned, also to be in conjunction with the Round Table of national human rights institutes [NHRIs] Some participants feel a stand-alone meeting of the community of practice, in time, will allow more concentrated energy, something to be considered as an option in future. The next planned face-to-face meeting may be able to be held within the first half of 2005, scheduling depending first on availability of representatives from NHRIs. Agreed decisions include to invite other focal points in the region to join the community of practice. The lead on follow-up is Sergei, with PSPD team supporting.

The importance of the community of practice to its members was discussed as a current reality as well as in potential terms. Maintaining the positive atmosphere and encouraging tone of the community of practice meetings so far was identified as mattering to all the members. This reinforces the multi-purpose nature and benefits of a sense of belonging to a community including provision of mutual support and encouragement to others working in the particularly challenging area of justice and human rights in the CEE/CIS region. See Annexes for details from practitioners' perspectives as shared in the community of practice meeting. Annex 8 organizes inputs provided in the meeting as a rough strategy.

8/ Evaluation, Conclusions and Recommendations

Participants positively evaluated the community of practice meeting and its success in meeting set objectives. So did the facilitation team, in its regular and final debriefing meetings. A summary and details of evaluation inputs are in Annex 6. (Separate records of facilitation team meetings are available for those who are interested). Things participants particularly liked included the organization and facilitation, the positive atmosphere of mutual support, and the opportunity to meet face to face to discuss challenges and strategies. Things participants did not like so much included an absence of prior consultation on the agenda and systematic opportunities to prepare ahead of time, plus the non-attendance of some potential members of this community of practice and some aspects of the venue. A number of recommendations were made for strengthening the next meeting, practical points that can be incorporated into planning, while maintaining the elements that worked.

Conclusions are that this group of practitioners is taking positive, incremental steps towards being able to function as a genuine community, strengthening capacity to be more effective in coordinated regional work on human rights and justice. The main recommendation is to continue to support practitioners in setting their own strategy, implementing the decisions for next steps and continuing contact taken together at this meeting.