INTEGRATED POLICY PRACTITIONERS’ NETWORK (IPPN)

Connecting knowledge and practitioners to lead integrated approaches to the SDGs

Knowledge Café: Foresight and Scenarios Planning for Policy Prioritization of the UNSDCF in Kyrgyzstan

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Kyrgyzstan Scenarios Exercise
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Rationale and purpose

a) Important political changes in the aftermath of the October 2020 parliamentary elections
   - New President (elections in January); New Parliament (November 2021);
   - New Government (4 PMs in October 2020 – October 2021)
   - New Constitution – Presidential system established; new electoral law
   - New Development Plan (2021-2006)

b) Signs of crisis in service delivery (electricity, fuel prices growth)


• The primary goal of the Kyrgyzstan Scenarios Exercise (KSE) was for the UN Country Team to appraise the current trends and dynamics in the country and develop a shared vision on the future of the United Nations role in Kyrgyzstan.
Key prerequisites

Increasing awareness about what the scenario planning is, and what it is not (including learning by RCO):

- Foresight, not forecasting (Plausible scenarios)
- Proactive, not reactive
- Process, not product (foremost learning exercise)
- Inclusive, not exclusive
- Primarily a learning exercise
Elements of the scenarios exercise

Phase 0. Regional Monthly Review

Phase 1. Online survey (28 respondents; 17 UN staff, 11 non-UN; 22 citizens of Kyrgyzstan, 6 internationals; 11 women, 13 men, 4 preferred not to say) – identified top 5 risks

Phase 2. Scenarios exercise workshop

Phase 3. Strategic Prioritization Retreat

Phase 4. Stress testing of UNSDCF Outcomes against scenarios
Key principles and lessons learnt

• Knowledge-based: Engaging external expertise (1) half of responders to the online survey – national experts; enable to compare views/perceptions of UN staff and non-UN experts; 2) 6 external experts with unique views (economist, head of creative business, religious sphere specialist, political scientist, former President invited to the workshop); 3) CCA, RMR results

• Inclusive and iterative preparation (engaging PMT, UNCT to design the process)

• Linked to strategic prioritization of the UNSDCF
Workshop

- Developing a shared language
- Special speakers/participants
- Interactive sessions, gamification
- Drivers, trends -> Critical Uncertainties -> Scenarios modelling -> Implications for UN (e.g. what programming is relevant under scenario, what is UN role under this scenario) -> Contradictions and tensions (between exercise and operation (real life/slow operation of UN vs. ambitions; exercise vs. substance – between “what” and “how”; programme and life - related to workshop agenda and delivered expectations)
A focus on ‘crazy futures’ may be the most adaptive strategy we can encourage people to adopt, and a focus on ‘plausibility’ the most maladaptive. Is your future crazy enough to help you, your organization, your community evolve? Better that we rehearse the full range of surprises that may await us across our futures, than be ill-prepared and unable to adapt. Emergence and evolution are preferable to equilibrium

Wendy Schultz
Outcomes – use for the UNSDCF

• UNSDCF formulation:
  ✓ brings everyone to the same understanding of key development/peace/human rights gaps and plausible futures
  ✓ point of departure in discussion at the UNSDCF Strategic Prioritization Retreat: combining scenarios and accelerators enabled us to develop new methodology for the discussion

• Stress testing of the UNSDCF Outcomes (after they were developed)

• Scenarios also inform other “thought processes” of the UNCT – e.g. PBF programming
Lessons learnt – good practices

• Strong political buy-in by the UNCT; leadership of the UN RC is critical for success;
• Written outputs (document) for every stage;
• Look for internal UN resources to challenge assumptions and gain advice (DPPA, UNESCO, DCO);
• Engage the UNCT at an early stage, and ensure a participatory and inclusive approach;
• Establish a core technical team (RCO -> PMT in KG);
• Engage external resources for the workshop and surveys;
• Apply innovative tools: online questionnaire to summarize the drivers;
• Ensure senior management attendance at the workshop;
• Good planning – everything takes time.
• No less than 3 days for the workshop
• Apply interactive and innovative tools of group engagement – gaming and simulations
• Manage expectations
• Consider engaging the government in a scenarios exercise (not applied in KG)
• Decide between keeping up with the agenda and ensuring flexibility and space for discussion
• Professional external facilitation is advisable
THANK YOU!
Guiding questions for interactive discussions

1. How can foresight help accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda?

2. How does policy scenario analysis incentivize joint programming and collaboration within the UNCT?

3. In your experience, which other tools can be deployed to support strategic prioritization for the UNSDCFs?
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Any questions? Drop us a line at: ippn@sparkblue.org