

SEESAC

South Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons

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SEESAC ACTIVITY REPORT ASSESSMENT OF UNDP ALBANIA SALWC PROJECT

SEESAC FUNCTIONAL AREA	FA 3 - Management Information FA 5 - SALW Collection Programmes
SEESAC OPERATIONAL ACTIVITY	SG 1 - Capacity Building SG 4 - Project Support SG 5 - Resource Mobilisation

The UNDP Albania Small Arms and Light Weapons Control (SALWC) project was undertaken during 2002 - 2003 by UNDP, in cooperation with the Albanian government, at a programme cost to the international community of US\$ 3.4 million. Its objectives were to help remove illegally held weapons and explosives from the population, to make the population more aware of the dangers of the illegal possession of such items and to enhance the ability of the authorities to control the private possession of arms and ammunition.



In judging its success and its cost-effectiveness, one must bear in mind that it was not a straightforward SALW collection programme. Instead of offering individual rewards to people handing in weapons, it offered collective incentives in the form of community-based development projects. This avoided many of the problems associated with individual rewards for the surrender of illegal weaponry. This was an innovative approach that has moved concepts of micro-disarmament theory forward, and it was for this reason that SEESAC agreed to fund an independent evaluation of the project by the **Bonn International Centre for Conversion (BICC)** (www.bicc.de) in order that lessons could be learned and incorporated into the Regional Micro-Disarmament Standards (RMDS). UNDP Albania must be thanked for their excellent cooperation during this assessment of their project.



The SALWC project was different from these earlier projects in that it covered a much larger number of communities, it offered smaller projects, and it did not reward all participating communities. Instead, the communities had to compete for a project by handing in as much weaponry as possible. All in all, the project resulted in the collection of over 8,000 weapons during 2002 - 2003, together with a large amount of illegally held explosives.

The assessment concluded that the benefits to Albania in terms of removing illegal weaponry and ammunition, making people

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more aware of the risks of keeping such items, providing development assistance to poor communities, and encouraging such communities to tackle their problems in a constructive and co-operative way, seem worth the money and effort invested. The authors do not believe it is fair or appropriate to judge the success of the project only, or even primarily, by the cost of the programme per weapon collected. Engaging communities in a competition for collective rewards for the surrender of illegal SALW and ammunition seems to have worked well. It used the available resources more effectively and does not appear to have provoked much resentment among the losers, or as the project prefers to call them, those who did not win.

In terms of the incentive mechanism, the report concludes that this particular incentive (Weapons in Competition for Development (WCD), will only succeed if the possessors, to some degree, regard the SALW as common property and, once the decision is made to surrender SALW, discourage people from opting out.

UNDP's decision to focus more on promoting security sector reform than on weapons collection after the end of the SALWC project also seems an appropriate choice, hence the development of the ongoing Support to Security Sector Reform (SSSR) Project.

The full report will be promulgated on the SEESAC website within the next week.



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