



**Evaluation Branch**  
*Division for Oversight Services (DOS)*  
**Country Programme Evaluation Cameroon (2008-2011)**

*Abstract*

**Subject of the Evaluation**

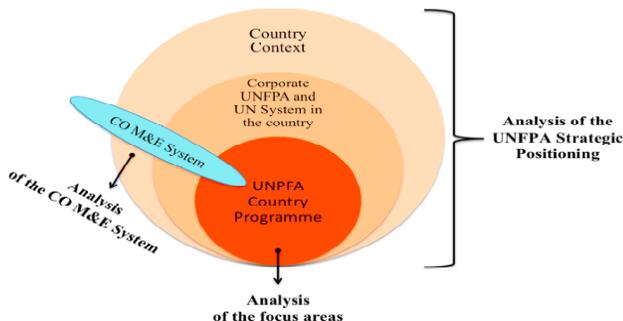
This evaluation is an independent programme-level evaluation of the UNFPA support to Cameroon covering the fifth Country Programme (2008-2011).

**Purpose of the Evaluation**

The purpose is: a) to assess the progress, or lack thereof, towards the expected results envisioned in the UNFPA programming documents, highlighting whenever appropriate unexpected results or missed opportunities; b) to provide an analysis of how UNFPA has positioned itself to add value in response to national needs and changes in the national development context; c) to draw lessons learned, and provide a set of clear and forward-looking options leading to strategic and actionable recommendations for the next programming cycle.

**Methodology**

The evaluation had two levels of analysis to assess the contribution of UNFPA to Cameroon, namely: a) analysis of the UNFPA programmatic areas in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and potential sustainability; b) analysis of the UNFPA strategic positioning according to the domains of strategic alignment (corporate and systemic), responsiveness and added value. The analysis of the country programme's monitoring and evaluation system was addressed as a transversal aspect.



The evaluation used a multiple method approach to data collection and analysis, and ensured validity of data by means of triangulation techniques. The evaluation process unfolded in four phases: preparation and design; field and preliminary analysis; detailed

analysis and synthesis; management response and dissemination of the evaluation report.

**Main Conclusions**

The UNFPA activities in Cameroon are well-aligned with the **principles of the UNFPA Strategic Plan** (2008-2013) as far as disadvantaged and vulnerable groups are concerned, with young girls and women receiving particular attention. However, support to the development of national capacities demonstrates mixed results, with support for training showing the greatest added value. The use of South-South cooperation has not been systematized, and there is a lack of a South-South strategy within the framework of the Country Programme. The Country office has made a key contribution to improving the inter-agency coordination, and its leadership has helped address issues arising from a large and fragmented UN country team.

The CO is highly **responsive** to demands from partners and to changing priorities. It also takes advantage of new opportunities, and is highly appreciated by partners and beneficiaries. The role of the two regional sub-offices is key to strengthen the CO office capacity to respond to evolving national demands and challenges. However, the support, while of good quality, can in some case lack clear strategic justification.

The UNFPA **added value** as a development partner is high, particularly where UNFPA has acted as a facilitator. Its ability and commitment to placing sensitive themes on the national agenda, such as obstetric fistula, is well-recognized by partners and beneficiaries.

The UNFPA Country Programme is **relevant** vis a vis Cameroon's needs and priorities but it is difficult to discern with confidence the achievements. This is further undermined by lack of continuity of support and poor monitoring. There are good indications of tangible **effects** subsequent to the interventions sponsored or directly funded by UNFPA in the field of Reproductive Health. In particular, quality of attention to pregnant and delivering women has improved. In the

field of Gender, positive signs are also visible, such as the multiplication of women's associations or the rise of discussion around themes covered by the UNFPA programme in the media and at community level. However, the UNFPA intervention in RH and Gender suffer from a lack of continuity in such areas as sensitization and community-level work. At the decentralized level, the 5<sup>th</sup> country programme concentrates mostly on rural populations, leaving large urban centers uncovered although a significant part of their population suffers from similar lack of access to services and information as in rural areas.

The integration of P&D issues has been progressively achieved both in general strategy documents and the relevant ministries. However, integrating P&D issues in sectoral policies is poor, lacking consideration of how the use of P&D data at sectoral level affects planning. As a result, P&D issues are not fully considered in key policies that impact on the economy and society. UNFPA and the Government have committed a considerable proportion of resources to improve the availability of reliable data in Cameroon. However, the manner in which this data is then transformed into clear and usable information for policy planners has not been fully addressed, and remains a gap at all information levels from the Census to sectoral studies. The decentralization process in Cameroon and the upcoming new responsibilities for the municipalities makes it critical that partners operating at the local level are aware of the importance of data for planning and management.

The quality and effectiveness of country office's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system varies: monitoring of activities and risks is functional and effective but monitoring of outputs and outcomes constitutes the weakest aspect of the M&E system in spite of its key importance. As a consequence of having a non-operational results-oriented M&E system, the country office cannot measure the degree of achievement of these programme components, thus it cannot be held accountable, or understand what has worked and what has failed.

### **Main Recommendations**

**Strategic recommendations:** The lack of an exit strategy should be addressed through the incorporation of elements to boost sustainability in the country programme action plan and annual work plans as well

as the design of a Capacity Development Strategy for the entire programming cycle. Effort is needed by the country office to help prevent dependency on its support and to send a clear message to national partners on the need for sustainability of intervention benefits. The country office should expand its strategy of support for P&D to encompass decentralization. In particular it should play a direct role in building capacity at the local level, encourage the Institute of National Statistics to identify what is needed to support its role in bringing about a coordinated system for statistics.

### **Recommendations associated with the programme:**

The country office should strive to integrate its response to RH challenges into the wider health care system and look to play a leading role in a more coordinated, complex and integrated response to RH challenges. This could be supported by ensuring the availability of SRH data through the development of the Health Management and Information Systems. Strengthening the referral systems is also key. The country office should likewise support the health system to develop effective supervision to ensure that the benefit of training are fully realized and help to maintain a high level of quality.

A comprehensive strategy for Female Genital Mutilation is essential, building on previous work, and should be envisaged as a UNFPA flagship intervention supporting the Cameroon Government.

The country office activities should be expanded to include large urban centres, which are increasing in size and face unique health challenges, whilst maintaining support for rural areas.

Sectoral policies should now be at the core of UNFPA's strategy to bring real changes for the citizens. Focus the UNFPA support on sectoral ministries with a role in planning and strategies affecting the socioeconomic situation of the country, as well as with capacity and the will to collaborate.

### **Recommendations associated with the M&E system:**

UNFPA needs to prioritize appropriate allocation of resources to make effective the corporate emphasis on the need for results-oriented monitoring, and which should be accompanied by the development of mechanisms and control tools associated with these frameworks.

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Full document can be obtained from UNFPA website at: <http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/about/pid/9920>