



Evaluation Branch
Division for Oversight Services (DOS)

Country Programme Evaluation Bolivia (2008-2011)

Abstract

Subject of the Evaluation

This evaluation is an independent programme-level evaluation of the UNFPA support to Bolivia covering the fourth 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 present key findings, draw lessons learned, and provide a set of clear and forward-looking options leading to strategic and actionable recommendations for the next programming cycle; d) to provide an analysis of the monitoring and evaluation system of the country programme.

Methodology

The evaluation had 2 levels of analysis to assess the contribution of UNFPA to Bolivia, namely: a) analysis of the UNFPA three focus areas in terms of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and potential sustainability; and 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 monitoring and evaluation system of the Country Programme was addressed as a complementary assessment. 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 4 subsequent phases: 1. preparation and design; 2. data collection and preliminary analysis; 3. detailed analysis and synthesis; 4. management response and dissemination of the evaluation report.

Main Conclusions

The UNFPA activities in Bolivia are aligned with the principles of UNFPA's Strategic Plan (2008-2013) in relation to development of national capacities and focusing on vulnerable groups, but South-South cooperation has not been integrated systematically as a cooperation modality. Support to the development of

national capacities shows *positive results but there is no formalized strategy to ensure sustainability* of interventions in this area.

The Country Office had a *key role in strengthening and promoting inter-agency coordination, and dialogue mechanisms, and demonstrated leadership, commitment, and thematic and context knowledge*. However there is no overall UN strategic vision about the role of each agency or a clear plan of action.

The *Country Office was highly responsive* to demands from partners and was able to successfully adapt to a changing political context and to the appearance of new stakeholders. The response provided was of good quality, fast, flexible, respectful of national sovereignty and leadership and did not try to impose an agenda. However, there is a *lack of a selection criterion when it comes to prioritizing demands* from partners, which led to responses without a clear justification or sustainable exit strategies.

The UNFPA added value as a development partner is high, demonstrating diverse comparative strengths such as experience in the field, capacity to engage with and mobilize stakeholders and proximity to communities and social movements. UNFPA has acted as a facilitator, has contributed to important public policies, has led and placed sensitive themes on the national agenda, strengthened networks and promoted rapprochements between donors, government, civil society and social movements.

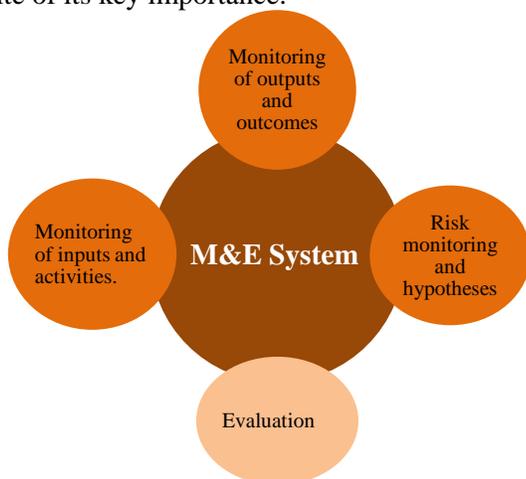
The UNFPA Country Programme is relevant vis a vis Bolivia's needs and priorities (adolescent pregnancy, maternal mortality, and violence against women), international agreements, ICPD priorities and MDG 5 and is coherent with national strategies and policies. There have been *tangible achievements* in three areas, namely policy dialogue, capacity development and institutional strengthening. Better links and coordination between focus areas would allow for a more strategic and comprehensive programmatic approach. The Country Office has contributed to the generation of useful information and reports but there

is *no knowledge management strategy in place* to use knowledge for programme and policy purposes.

Programme efficiency by focus area is good overall, but *execution of activities is affected by problems in the ability to absorb funds on the part of national counterparts* thus forcing the country office to switch from national execution to direct execution to ensure programme execution.

Potential sustainability of results varies depending on the strategies implemented, as well as the area, level and partner and it is one of the greatest challenges for UNFPA. Furthermore, institutional weakness of national partners is one of the greatest threats to sustainability.

The quality and effectiveness of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system of the country office varies depending on the M&E components analyzed: monitoring of resources and activities 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 the different programme components and cannot be held accountable in an objective manner. This lack of functionality is closely linked to quality issues with outcome and output indicators.

Main Recommendations

Strategic recommendations: the country office and the regional office should develop a more systematic and integrated programme for the next cycle. This should

translate, in particular, in a clear definition of topics, criteria and mechanisms at the strategic and operational levels together with of a better alignment of Country Office’s human and financial resources. Headquarters and the regional office should prioritize an appropriate allocation of resources to bring about a corporate policy on results-oriented monitoring at the country level.

Recommendations associated to the programme: the country office should develop strategies, tools and mechanisms to increase the potential sustainability of achievements, in particular by way of integrating sustainability at the planning stage and as a key element for its implementation (e.g.; exit and replication strategies, knowledge management, and innovative capacity development strategies). Furthermore, the country office should develop a comprehensive capacity development strategy that includes indicators for measuring the effects of the strategy. South-South cooperation should also be incorporated in the new country programme and become a permanent element in the dialogue with national and local government.

Cross-cutting issues and the M&E system: the evaluation recommends the development and institutionalization of mechanisms and tools for gender and youth mainstreaming as well as the systematization and harmonization of a conceptual framework of development terms and topics. Headquarters and the regional office should prioritize the development of mechanisms and tools for quality control of results-oriented monitoring. The country office should establish the bases, within the organizational structure that are necessary to allow for the development of a results-oriented monitoring system. This should be supported, at the corporate level, by a substantial improvement in terms of quality and operationalization of the UNFPA results-oriented monitoring tools as well as the development of instruments for the improvement of the monitoring of risks and assumptions. Furthermore, the country office should develop an evaluation plan based on the strategic and programmatic decision-making needs of the office. Finally, the country office should champion the establishment, at country level, of an inter-agency technical group for monitoring and evaluation to share experiences and lessons.

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