

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION

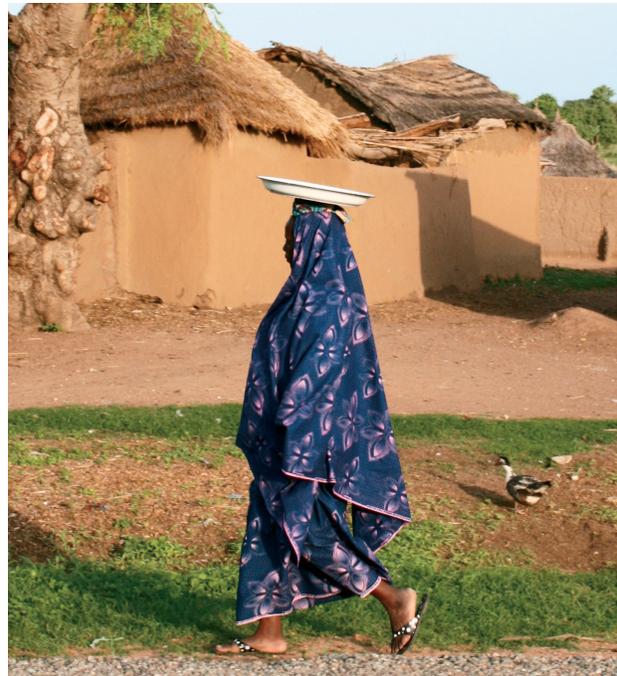
CAMEROON

2008 - 2011

Context

This report is the result of the independent evaluation of the UNFPA fifth country programme in Cameroon covering the period 2008-2011.

The country programme has three focus areas: (a) reproductive health, (b) population and development (P&D); and (c) gender equality. Its overall budget amounts to \$17.75 million.



Objectives and scope

The objectives of the evaluation were:

1. to assess the relevance and performance of the UNFPA country programme in Cameroon in its three components;
2. to analyse the UNFPA strategic positioning in the national development context;
3. to identify key lessons with a view to improving the next country programme, currently under preparation;
4. to assess the quality of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system.

Methodology

The evaluation relied on the methodology for country programme evaluations recently developed by the Evaluation Branch at the Division for Oversight Services, with a view to testing it.

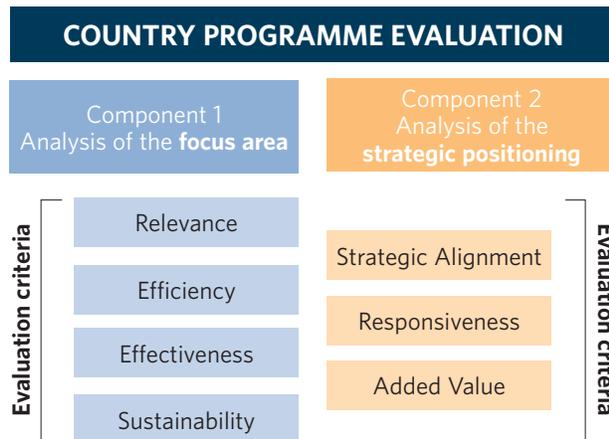
The evaluation was based on a set of questions dealing with corresponding evaluation criteria. For the

assessment of the three programme components, the four following evaluation criteria were examined: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. Three specific criteria were used for the analysis of the strategic positioning: strategic alignment, responsiveness and added value.

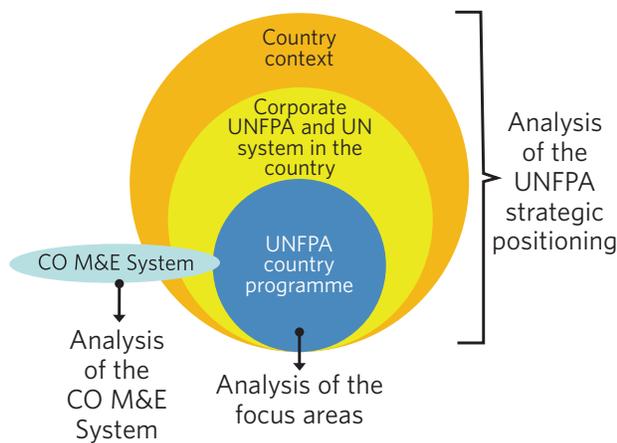
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The quality of the monitoring and evaluation system of the country programme was assessed by way of the analysis of five different points: monitoring of inputs and activities, monitoring of outputs and outcomes, monitoring of assumptions and risks, integration of evaluations into the M&E system and support to national partners in their M&E system and capacity.



Further to an extensive review of programme and intervention-related documentation along with national public policies and strategies, evaluation tools consisted in direct interviews and focus groups involving a wide range of stakeholders across the country. Overall, the evaluation team consulted 311 people during their field mission.

In the conduct of the evaluation, the team faced a number of limitations, among which: (1) the

Institutions	Number of people	Site visits
UNFPA	27	Yaoundé, Douala, Bafoussam, Bamenda, Mamfe, Abong, Mbang, Bertoua, Betare Oya, Maroua, Mokolo Kousseri
Central Government	36	
Regional Government	97	
International Organizations	31	
Civil Society	54	
Final Beneficiaries	87	
Other	6	
Total	311	

country programme's over-ambitious results framework, particularly as regards the outputs of the reproductive health component; (2) an inadequate identification and formulation of indicators at outcome and output levels, impeding an objective assessment of the degree of effectiveness; (3) the limited availability of monitoring data and results of past evaluations at programme and intervention levels; (4) the poor quality of reporting. Limitations were addressed by organizing extensive stakeholder consultations to allow for the systematic triangulation of data and by an in-depth documentation review.

Main conclusions

Strategic level conclusions

UNFPA is contributing to the improvement of the coordination of a large and fragmented UNCT through its participation in different technical groups and, in some occasions, by taking the lead on major issues such as the launch of the CARMMA initiative and the consultation process for the coming UNDAF (2013-2017).

The UNFPA country office is able to provide a quick and flexible response to demands from partners and to changes in national needs and priorities, notably thanks to its two regional sub-offices. However, the response, while of good quality, sometimes lacks a clear strategic justification.

The UNFPA country office has demonstrated a clear added value in its three focus areas by acting as a facilitator and engaging actively in policy dialogue. The UNFPA ability to place sensitive themes on the national agenda is particularly recognized by its partners.

The absence of an exit strategy in the UNFPA programme puts at risk the sustainability of its benefits. Moreover, training activities that have often proved effective have not been conceived within an overall capacity development strategy. This appears to be a further limitation to sustainability.

Conclusions related to focus areas

There are indications of tangible effects of UNFPA supported activities in the fields of reproductive health and gender. However, measuring their actual magnitude remains difficult. The UNFPA interventions in reproductive health and gender also suffer from a lack of continuity, particularly as far as sensitization and community-level work is concerned. At the decentralized level, the fifth country programme essentially focuses on rural populations. It leaves large urban centers uncovered, although a significant part of their population suffers from similar lack of access to services and information.

Integration of P&D issues is progressively being achieved in the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development at a general level. However, this integration did not translate into sectoral planning and policies. Furthermore it has not reached decentralized levels of government, with responsible staff at local level remaining insufficiently aware of the importance of P&D data for planning and management.

Conclusions related to the M&E system

The country office monitoring and evaluation system is of uneven quality. Monitoring of inputs and activities is, generally speaking, satisfactory. Monitoring of risks and assumptions is done in a regular and

effective manner, yet not in a systematic and formalized manner. More importantly, the results-oriented monitoring (focused on outputs and outcomes) is not operational. Evaluations do take place yet they are not integrated in the M&E system and, as a result, remain underutilized.

Main recommendations

Strategic level

UNFPA should develop exit strategies within key programming and implementation documents. A capacity development strategy for the entire programming cycle should also be designed. Both the country programme action plan (CPAP) and annual work plans (AWPs) should include an exit strategy that creates conditions for sustainability of benefits and prevents from substitution effects that generate dependency. To complement the CPAP, a five-year capacity development strategy should integrate knowledge sharing and the development of capacities of strategic partners.

UNFPA should provide support for the decentralization process in Cameroon as part of its strategy. There should be a larger allocation of the budget of UNFPA for the support to decentralisation, and a focus on high added value activities such as raising awareness and helping to integrate local data and census information into local planning and policy design. The country office should also support the National Institute for Statistics to address needs arising from the decentralization process.

Recommendations related to focus areas

The country office should strive to integrate its response to sexual reproductive health (SRH) challenges into the wider health care system.

Supervision capacity in the healthcare system should be strengthened and primarily conducted by *Equipes Cadre de District*, and, occasionally, by regional and central staff. UNFPA should design a comprehensive

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strategy in order to ensure continuity in the provision of obstetrical fistulae related services.

UNFPA should consider a comprehensive strategy addressing female genital mutilation as a flagship activity. The strategy should address both the supply and demand aspects.

UNFPA should expand its work in the SRH and gender components beyond the current focus on rural areas with the aim to address the specific needs of the least privileged populations of urban centres and peri-urban areas.

UNFPA should focus its support in the P&D component to sectoral ministries with a view to

ensuring the transformation of data into usable information for planning and policy making. Support for the interpretation of census data and its incorporation into planning should also be a core concern for UNFPA.

Recommendations related to the M&E system

UNFPA headquarters should ensure a sufficient allocation of funds to allow the establishment of a results-oriented monitoring system (guidelines, tools and control mechanisms). The country office should request the hiring of a monitoring and evaluation coordinator for the set-up, supervision and accompaniment to the M&E system.

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Full document can be obtained from UNFPA website at:

<http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/about/Evaluation/EBIER/CPE>