



Formative evaluation of the UNFPA engagement in the reform of the United Nations development system

UNFPA Evaluation Office

2022



Objectives

- To assess the **contribution** of UNFPA to the design, development and the operationalization of the reform (including how UNFPA has adapted to the reform).
- To analyse the **effects of the reform** on the strategic positioning, the ability to deliver and the organizational structure and the institutional efficiency of UNFPA.
- To assess the extent to which UNFPA has been able to **leverage the reform** to accelerate the achievement of UNFPA's transformative results and the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.
- To draw **lessons and good practices** from UNFPA's engagement in the reform, and formulate recommendations on how UNFPA can contribute more effectively to the operationalization of the reform while benefiting better from the effects of the reform.

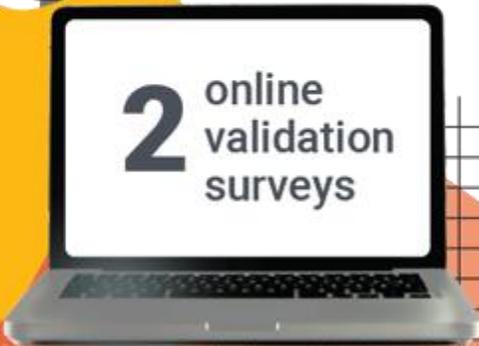
Scope

UNFPA's contribution to the reform as well as the effects of the reform on UNFPA at global, regional and country levels. It covers the period from January 2017 to the end of data collection in May 2022.

Sources of evidence



260+
key stakeholders
interviewed



2 online
validation
surveys

200+ documents
reviewed



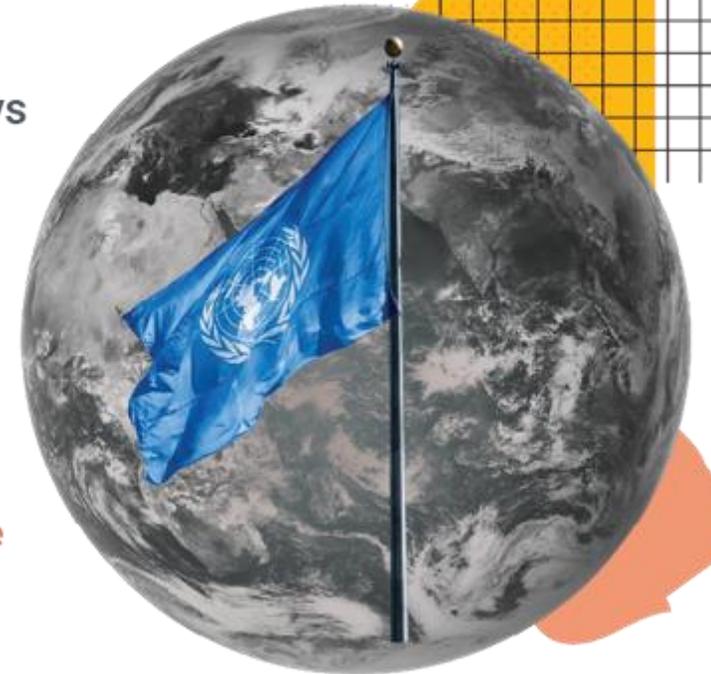
Analysis of

- internal UNFPA surveys on UNDS reform
- external data sets

9 countries
1 subregion
studied in detail

Caribbean (subregion)
Cote d'Ivoire
Eswatini
Ethiopia
Kazakhstan

Indonesia
Serbia
Somalia
Timor-Leste
Tunisia





Conclusions

Conclusion 1



- UNFPA support for repositioning the United Nations development system has stood out throughout the design, development and operationalization of the reform elements
- All levels of the organization have engaged actively to advance the reform, including by being constructively critical when appropriate

Conclusion 2



- UNFPA's engagement in reforming the United Nations development system has helped to advance the repositioning processes
- In the context of uneven progress in implementing the reform, UNFPA has also, for the most part, been able to capitalize on the reform for the benefit of its stakeholders and beneficiaries

Conclusion 3



- Although UNFPA has benefited from the reform and is likely to continue to do so, engagement does come with costs as well as risks
- While benefits may outweigh them, efforts need to be made to reduce the costs and manage the risks

Conclusion 4



- While UNFPA has strongly engaged in the reform, the organization has not provided an explicit strategy for engagement to maximise the benefits
- Nor has it consistently internalized the elements in its policies, strategies and guidance in order to ensure broad ownership and application across the whole organization
- This is a particular issue for UNFPA's work in humanitarian contexts

Conclusion 5



- Internal communications and working arrangements have facilitated the positive corporate approach to engagement in the reform of the United Nations development system
- But they have not been able to integrate the spirit of the reform in the everyday work of all staff

Conclusion 6



- Given the nature of the reform of the United Nations development system, it is clear that further strengthening of UNFPA's contributions to and benefits from the reform require a collective effort of the wider system



Recommendations

Recommendation 1

UNFPA should provide stronger strategic direction for its workforce within the framework of the Strategic Plan for its engagement with the UNDS reform

Priority: Very High | **Target:** Policy and Strategy Division, Division for Management Services, Division for Human Resources, Change Management Secretariat

- Develop an explicit strategy for UNFPA engagement in the UNDS reform
- Examine whether the UNDS reform should be considered as an accelerator in the context of the Strategic Plan
- Review strategies and policies to ensure consistency with the UNDS reform
- Engage with DCO on the IMS questionnaire for greater efficiency

Recommendation 2

UNFPA should work towards broadening the ownership and deepening the institutionalization and internalization of the reform of the United Nations development system at all levels of the organization

Priority: High | **Target:** Office of the Executive Director/Change Management Secretariat, Policy and Strategy Division, Humanitarian Response Division, regional offices

- Establish a formal change management process that encourages change in the understanding and mindsets of staff, tailored to different groups
- Examine and adapt as necessary the roles and responsibilities of different UNFPA business units
- Strengthen its internal communication of the reform, including additional practical examples of good practices

Recommendation 3

UNFPA should address human resource challenges arising from the reform of the United Nations development system, and incentivize more staff to work in collaboration with their colleagues from other United Nations agencies

Priority: High | Target: Division for Human Resources, Division for Management Services

- Ensure that UN reform related responsibilities are planned, acknowledged and accounted for in individual staff PADs
- Prepare guidance on using the PAD system to incentivize and recognize staff who collaborate with and leverage other United Nations agencies to achieve their work objectives
- Ensure that the concerns of its operations staff about potential negative implications of the transition to shared service centres on jobs and career paths are taken into account

Recommendation 4

UNFPA should address UNDS reform-related challenges and risks for its programme work

Priority: High | **Target:** Policy and Strategy Division, Technical Division, regional offices, Enterprise Risk Management Secretariat

- Clarify and improve the derivation of the priorities of its CPDs from Cooperation Frameworks, working with the IAWG on Programme Development and Results
- Adapt corporate guidance and support mechanisms for including relevant transformative results indicators across UNSDCFs
- Advocate for a clearer division of labour between DCO/RCOs and United Nations agencies for coordinating and implementing UNDS reform processes and mechanisms
- Ensure effective management of associated risks and potential constraints on UNFPA's programmes as a consequence

Recommendation 5

UNFPA should re-assess the way it works in multi-country environments to deliver impact, and accelerate the implementation of the commitments made to the MCO Review

Priority: High | Target: Policy and Strategy Division, regional offices, subregional offices

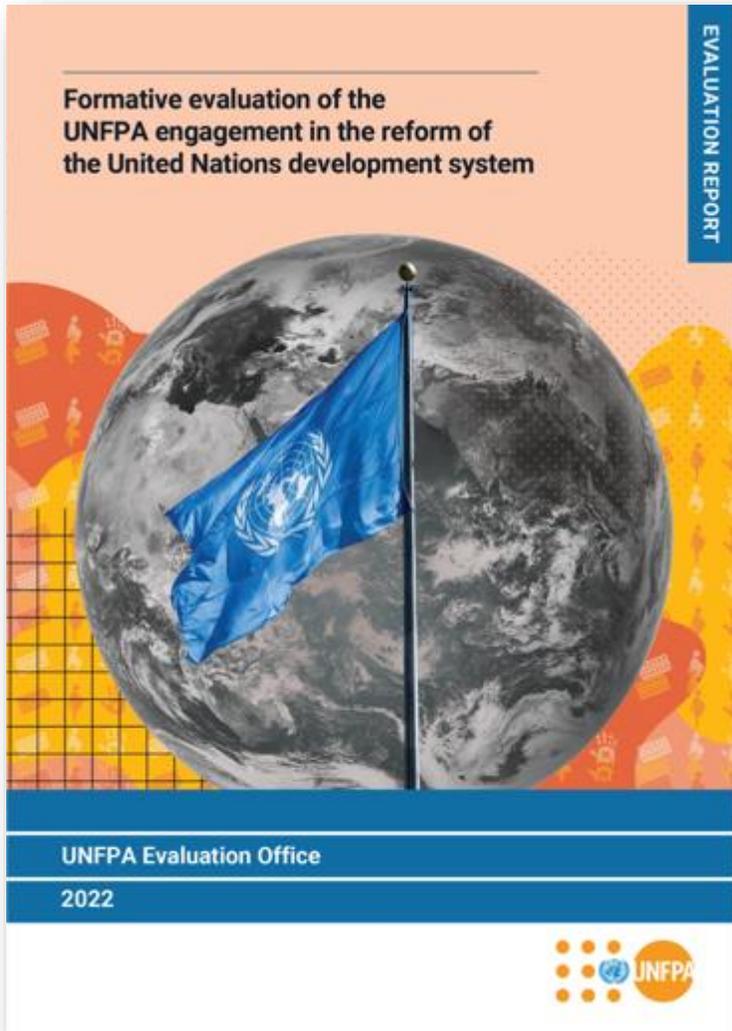
- Further reflect on and define the ways UNFPA will engage with programme country governments and UNCTs in MCO environments, starting with the Pacific and the Caribbean
- Accelerate the commitments UNFPA made to the MCO review
- Explore benefits for other situations where UNFPA staff are dealing with multiple programme countries and UNCTs (e.g., in the Indian Ocean)

Recommendation 6

UNFPA should make special efforts to ensure that those working in humanitarian contexts make the best use of the reform of the United Nations development system, especially to use the reform in working with partners across the development-humanitarian-peace continuum

Priority: Medium | Target: Humanitarian Response Division, Policy and Strategy Division

- Encourage more active participation of the HRD into discussions on the reform
- Develop better internal communication of the implications of the UNDS reform for UNFPA humanitarian operations
- Undertake better integration of UNDS reform into UNFPA humanitarian guidance and policy documents



Thank you

#UNreformEval

For more information, see the evaluation materials available at

unfpa.org/evaluation

- Evaluation report
- Evaluation brief (En, Fr, Sp)
- Management response
- Short video

For further information, contact Hicham Daoudi
(daoudi@unfpa.org)

 [@unfpa_eval](https://twitter.com/unfpa_eval)

 [UNFPA Evaluation Office](https://www.youtube.com/UNFPA-Evaluation-Office)