



Organizational unit: Evaluation Office Year of report: 2023

Title of evaluation report: Formative evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth

Overall quality of report: **Very good** Date of assessment: 19 May 2023

Overall comments: This is a large formative evaluation of UNFPA's Strategy on Adolescents and Youth titled "My Body, My Life, My World: Rights and choices for all adolescents and youth". The purpose of the evaluation was to consider the framework of this strategy, learn about good practices and provide recommendations for future work in the area. A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods were used to gather and analyze data from 15 country case studies, 419 stakeholder interviews (NGOs, government, other UN agencies, UNFPA, donors and academics) and 832 young people engaged in focus groups. An extensive document and literature review was also conducted, as was an online survey of 70 UNFPA staff. The evaluators have made a strong effort to engage youth in the evaluation, not only as research subjects, but also as significant participants in the process - this is exemplary. The results are generally very well presented in a readable document although more judicious use of footnotes is suggested. It would have been helpful to see more specific citing of evidence by stakeholder group which would have made the perspectives of youth respondents, in particular, more apparent throughout the analysis. It also would have been useful if the report had included more detail about the steps taken to ensure the evaluation was conducted in an ethical manner beyond statements that it was conducted in accordance with UNEG ethical principles. These concerns notwithstanding, this is a very good evaluation.

Assessment Levels **Very Good** strong, above average, best practice **Good** satisfactory, respectable **Fair** with some weaknesses, still acceptable **Unsatisfactory** weak, does not meet minimal quality standards

Quality Assessment Criteria Insert assessment level followed by main comments. (use 'shading' function to give cells corresponding colour)

1. Structure and Clarity of Reporting	Yes No Partial	Assessment Level:	Good
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To ensure the report is comprehensive and user-friendly

1. Is the report structured in a logical way? Is the report easy to read and understand (i.e. written in an accessible language appropriate for the intended audience) with minimal grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors? Is there a clear distinction made between analysis/findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned (where applicable)?	Partial	The report is very well structured and organized. Clear sections on context, approach and methodology, findings, conclusions and recommendations proceed in a logical order. The writing is excellent - very clear with minimal use of jargon. No significant grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors were observed (except in the annex on Integrating HRGE). The document is formatted simply, but clearly. There are a few graphs in the text which are useful, but could have been made larger, and this will presumably be addressed in the final design. The report's readability is occasionally hampered by heavy use of footnotes (in some cases taking up to 1/4 of a page) containing information that could and probably should be in the main text or in an annex. For example, many of footnotes reference sources very generally ('regional respondents', 'Colombia case study') which would have required less space if they were in-text citations rather than taking a whole line in the footnotes. Also, key information can get overseen if in footnotes which is the case in how it was identified that one recommendation was developed by youth.
2. Is the report of a reasonable length? (maximum pages for the main report, excluding annexes: 60 for institutional evaluations; 70 for CPEs; 80 for thematic evaluations)	Partial	This is a formative evaluation of a major UNFPA global strategy and it comes in at 84 pages, not including the executive summary and front pages.
3. Do the annexes contain – at a minimum – the ToRs; a bibliography; a list of interviewees; the evaluation matrix; methodological and data collection tools used (e.g. interview guides; focus group notes, outline of surveys)?	Partial	The annexes include sections on approach and methodology, a guiding framework, human rights / gender equality in the evaluation, the evaluation matrix, a list of key informants, a bibliography and the terms of reference for the evaluation. However, the data collection protocols are not included.

Executive summary

4. Is an executive summary written as a stand-alone section, presenting the i) Purpose; ii) Objectives, scope and brief description of interventions; iii) intended audience; iv) Methodology; v) Main results; vi) Conclusions and Recommendations?	Yes	The executive summary is very clearly written and organized. It includes all of the expected components.
5. Is the executive summary reasonably concise (e.g. with a maximum length of 5 pages)?	Yes	Yes, the executive summary is just under 5 pages long and provides a good level of information with no repetition or unnecessary information.

2. Design and Methodology	Yes No Partial	Assessment Level:	Very good
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To ensure that the evaluation is put within its context

1. Is the development and institutional context of the evaluation clearly described and constraints explained?	Yes	Yes, the organizational context of the UNFPA's work with adolescents and youth is very clearly presented. The purpose of the evaluation - to assess the UNFPA's Strategy on Adolescents and Youth titled "My Body, My Life, My World: Rights and choices for all adolescents and youth" - is outlined very well. The purpose and scope of the evaluation is made clear and the information about the history and context of the strategy is well presented.
2. Does the evaluation report discuss and assess the intervention logic and/or theory of change?	Yes	The strategy that is being evaluated is part of the UNFPA's overall strategic plan and is discussed in that context. The logic of the strategy as an intervention is discussed, but not really assessed. There is no theory of change as such, but the evaluation does present and consider a guiding framework which is included in Annex 1.

To ensure a rigorous design and methodology

3. Is the evaluation framework clearly described in the text and in the evaluation matrix? Does the evaluation matrix establish the evaluation questions, assumptions, indicators, data sources and methods for data collection?	Partial	The matrix is quite complete, with 8 key questions plus sub-questions. Indicators, sources of information and methods are provided for all but one of them (EQ6). However, the matrix does not address the assumptions despite claiming to in the header of the table and in the main text of the report Section 2.2.
4. Are the tools for data collection described and their choice justified?	Yes	In the section on evaluation methodology, the tools used to gather data are described and the reasons for their choice are explained. Tools include a literature review, semi-structured key informant interviews, focus groups, online surveys and country case studies. Of note is the attention to using methods that would meaningfully involve and engage youth in the evaluation, including a Youth Steering Committee.

5. Is there a comprehensive stakeholder map? Is the stakeholder consultation process clearly described (in particular, does it include the consultation of key stakeholders on draft recommendations)?	Yes	The evaluation report does not contain a stakeholder map although it is noted that one was included in the inception report. That said, the process for consulting the stakeholders is clearly outlined. Youth were involved in many aspects of the data gathering and analysis. Data analysis workshops were conducted. Preliminary findings were shared with the various country offices and the draft report was shared with the Evaluation Reference Group for their feedback. It is not stated whether other stakeholders were consulted on the recommendations. Vulnerable groups other than youth are not discussed specifically and although the inclusion of the key results of the stakeholder mapping would likely have made this aspect more clear, Annex 3 highlights the efforts made to involve groups typically left behind. The list of interviewees shows that there was representation of persons with disabilities amongst consulted stakeholders.
6. Are the methods for analysis clearly described for all types of data?	Yes	Two specific approaches were used in the evaluation: appreciative inquiry and most significant change. Data was collected into an "evidence database" structured around the evaluation questions. Four specific methods of analysis were used on the qualitative and quantitative data: descriptive analysis, content analysis, contribution analysis and comparative analysis. Each is explained. It is also noted that two data analysis workshops were held with the Evaluation Office.
7. Are methodological limitations acknowledged and their effect on the evaluation described? Does the report discuss what was done to minimize such issues?	Yes	There is a section (2.5) on limitations and mitigation measures which outlines three main limitations and if / how they were addressed.
8. Is the sampling strategy described?	Yes	The country case studies were chosen through purposive sampling which is described in some detail along with the selection criteria. The sampling for the focus groups, key informant interviews and online survey are also described. It is noted that the initial stakeholder mapping for the inception report and consultations with country level UNFPA staff were used to determine the sample for the key informant interviews. The online survey was sent to relevant UNFPA staff. The process appears valid given the goals of the evaluation.
9. Does the methodology enable the collection and analysis of disaggregated data?	Yes	Based on the text in Annex III, it appears that at least some of the data collected was disaggregated by sex and age. Beyond showing evaluation participants disaggregated by gender and stakeholder groups, there is no explicit discussion about this in the main report. That said, the methodology certainly allows for it, even if it is unclear the extent to which it was done.
10. Is the design and methodology appropriate for assessing the cross-cutting issues (equity and vulnerability, disability inclusion, gender equality and human rights)?	Yes	Annex III is a discussion of how human rights and gender equality were integrated into the evaluation. Given the UNFPA strategy being evaluated, questions related to youth are central, however human rights, gender and leave no one behind are also considered and a human rights-based approach appeared central to the whole evaluation process. There is no explicit reference to persons with disabilities in the discussion of the design of the evaluation but it is apparent they were covered as part of marginalized groups.
3. Reliability of Data		
	Yes No Partial	Assessment Level: Very good
<i>To ensure quality of data and robust data collection processes</i>		
1. Did the evaluation triangulate data collected as appropriate?	Yes	Triangulation was undertaken through the use of multiple sources and by comparing the results from different data sources with respect to specific areas of investigation. The evidence databases were used to undertake this. The evaluators also presented their preliminary findings to the country office for each case study. Additionally, the team held two data analysis workshops with the evaluation office and the draft report was shared with the reference group for validation.
2. Did the evaluation clearly identify and make use of reliable qualitative and quantitative data sources?	Yes	Yes, extensive appropriate and reliable data sources were used, although the study relied mostly on qualitative data. 419 stakeholders (NGOs, government, other UN agencies, UNFPA, donors and academics) were interviewed. 832 young people were engaged in focus groups. An extensive document and literature review was conducted, as was an online survey of UNFPA staff. The limitations section mentions some data that was unavailable or incomplete.
3. Is there evidence that data has been collected with a sensitivity to issues of discrimination and other ethical considerations?	Partial	There is a brief section on ethical considerations in the main report that notes alignment with UNEG guidance and the phases of the evaluation in which it was applied. However, no further details are provided except that use of consent forms is mentioned in the Executive Summary
4. Analysis and Findings		
	Yes No Partial	Assessment Level: Very good
<i>To ensure sound analysis and credible findings</i>		
1. Are the findings substantiated by evidence?	Yes	The findings are described in detail and with reference to the data collection method, data sources (for documents), context, etc. There could be more precision in the citing of primary data - this evidence is mainly identified by method and country case study but infrequently by stakeholder group - however it is also recognized that there may have been sensitivities that limited further specificity of sources. One consequence, though, is that the voices of youth are occasionally seen (ie. finding #10) but are not as apparent as they might be throughout the analysis.
2. Is the basis for interpretations carefully described?	Yes	The findings are carefully described and draw out a number of key issues relevant to each question.
3. Is the analysis presented against the evaluation questions?	Yes	Each question is systematically addressed in detail in the findings.
4. Are the cause and effect links between an intervention and its end results explained and any unintended outcomes highlighted?	Yes	As is appropriate for a formative evaluation, the Effectiveness section explores the extent to which UNFPA can measure impact and finds that the measuring of outcome-level results is not as advanced as at the output level, and therefore limiting the assessment of contribution of the A&Y programming to the transformative results of the UNFPA Strategic Plan. The consideration of unintended outcomes is highlighted in the methodology section and is discussed in relation to the promotion of youth-claimed spaces.
5. Does the analysis show different outcomes for different target groups, as relevant?	Yes	This type of detailed analysis would not generally be expected of a formative evaluation, especially when the evaluation found shortcomings in the systematic collection of outcome-level data. However the evaluators did discuss different practices and outcomes in different countries that emerged from the country case studies.
6. Is the analysis presented against contextual factors?	Yes	Contextual factors and regional differences are discussed in relation to the findings.

7. Does the analysis elaborate on cross-cutting issues such as equity and vulnerability, disability inclusion, gender equality and human rights?	Yes	Gender equality and human rights are the most prominent cross-cutting issues. Vulnerability (particularly of youth) and leave no one behind are discussed. Disability inclusion is addressed, but mostly from the perspective of persons with disabilities being one of several types of vulnerable groups.		
5. Conclusions	Yes No Partial		Assessment Level:	Very good
<i>To assess the validity of conclusions</i>				
1. Do the conclusions flow clearly from the findings?	Yes	Conclusions are explained and links are explicitly made to specific findings. This is well presented.		
2. Do the conclusions go beyond the findings and provide a thorough understanding of the underlying issues of the programme/initiative/system being evaluated and reflect as appropriate cross-cutting issues such as equality and vulnerability, disability inclusion, gender equality and human rights?	Yes	There is a good focus on the UNFPA's work for adolescents and youth, its limitations and opportunities for improvement. Cross cutting issues, especially gender and human rights, are reflected in the findings.		
3. Do the conclusions appear to convey the evaluators' unbiased judgement?	Yes	It is hard to know the evaluators' biases of course, but there is nothing in the text to suggest that these are anything other than evidence-based conclusions.		
6. Recommendations	Yes No Partial		Assessment Level:	Very good
<i>To ensure the usefulness and clarity of recommendations</i>				
1. Do recommendations flow logically from conclusions?	Yes	The recommendations are clearly derived from the findings and conclusions and are presented with quite a bit of detail and specificity.		
2. Are the recommendations targeted at the intended users and action-oriented (with information on their human, financial and technical implications)?	Yes	The recommendations are targeted at the intended users, mostly UNFPA's Technical Division and Policy and Strategy Division, as well as country and regional offices. Each major recommendation is broken down into specific actions that could/should be taken. For the most part, the recommendations emphasize human and technical implications rather than financial aspects, though the latter are not completely absent.		
3. Do recommendations appear balanced and impartial and address, as relevant, key cross cutting issues such as equity and vulnerability, disability-inclusion, gender equality and human rights?	Yes	Recommendations are very much in the spirit of improving UNFPA's work for youth and adolescents and they do address cross-cutting themes, including mention of disability. Recommendation 9, which was developed by the youth steering committee members and the young evaluation, is an excellent example of youth participation.		
4. Are the recommendations prioritized?	Yes	Recommendations are presented as either high or medium priority.		
7. Gender	0 1 2 3 ⁽⁸⁹⁾		Assessment Level:	Very good
<i>To assess the integration of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW) ^(*)</i>				

<p>1. Is GEEW integrated in the evaluation scope of analysis and indicators designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data to be collected?</p>	<p>a. Does the evaluation include an objective specific to assessment of human rights and gender equality considerations or was it mainstreamed in other objectives? (Score: 0-3) 0 - there is no such objective or anything in the scope of the evaluation b. Was a standalone criterion on gender and/or human rights included in the evaluation framework or mainstreamed into other evaluation criteria? (Score: 0-3) 2 - Gender issues were explored within the rubric of a human rights-based approach under Relevance but GEEW was not highlighted as part of the main questions stated in the methodology section. c. Is there a dedicated evaluation question or sub-question regarding how GEEW was integrated into the subject of the evaluation? (Score: 0-3) 2 - GEEW is only explicitly mentioned as part of one subquestion, however as mentioned above, it is considered as part of a HRBA which is the topic of EQ 3. d. Does the evaluation assess whether sufficient information was collected during the implementation period on specific result indicators to measure progress on human rights and gender equality results? (Score: 0-3) 3 - Yes, this is discussed in the findings</p>
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<p>2. Is a gender-responsive methodology used, including gender-responsive methods and tools, and data analysis techniques?</p>	<p>a. Does the evaluation specify how gender issues are addressed in the methodology, including: how data collection and analysis methods integrate gender considerations and ensure data collected is disaggregated by sex? (Score: 0-3) 3 - The discussion on Integrating HR and GE in the Evaluation in Annex III outlines how gender was addressed, including the efforts to have a gender balance in the informant pool. b. Does the evaluation methodology employ a mixed-methods approach, appropriate to evaluating GEEW considerations (collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, and ensuring the appropriate sample size)? (Score: 0-3) 3 - An appropriate mixed-methods approach was used. c. Are a diverse range of data sources and processes employed (i.e. triangulation, validation) to guarantee inclusion, accuracy and credibility? (Score: 0-3) 3 - There is a good range of data sources and methods; both triangulation and validation are evident. d. Do the evaluation methods and sampling frame address the diversity of stakeholders affected by the intervention, particularly the most vulnerable, where appropriate? (Score: 0-3) 2 - A diverse range of stakeholders was consulted, and there was clear intent to ensure vulnerable and under-represented groups were engaged. The extent to which the final sample did actually include vulnerable groups is less clear. e. Were ethical standards considered throughout the evaluation and were all stakeholder groups treated with integrity and respect for confidentiality? (Score: 0-3) 2 - The discussion on ethical considerations is quite scant but it is noted that UNEG principles were followed and that there was training of those involved in country-level data collection.</p>
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<p>3. Do the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis?</p>	<p>a. Does the evaluation have a background section that includes an intersectional analysis of the specific social groups affected by the issue or spell out the relevant normative instruments or policies related to human rights and gender equality? (Score: 0-3) 3 - The background section is more focused on youth as a whole, although gender-specific issues such as child marriage, adolescent pregnancies, and the worsening of gender and power inequalities are also identified. b. Do the findings include data analysis that explicitly and transparently triangulates the voices of different social role groups, and/or disaggregates quantitative data, where applicable? (Score: 0-3) 1 - This is to some extent implicit since the data collection involved FGDs with beneficiaries. However, the evidence in the report is not presented in a way that shows the stakeholder group from which the data was obtained (the citation is just by method) and as such, the voices of youth respondents, girls, those with disabilities, etc. are not apparent. c. Are unanticipated effects of the intervention on human rights and gender equality described? (Score: 0-3) 0 - Although the intent to cover unanticipated effects is clear, the analysis does not address unanticipated effects on HRGE. d. Does the evaluation report provide specific recommendations addressing GEEW issues, and priorities for action to improve GEEW or the intervention or future initiatives in this area? (Score: 0-3) 3 - Yes, one of the recommendations covers GEEW and other cross-cutting areas.</p>
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(*) This assessment criteria is fully based on the UN-SWAP Scoring Tool. Each sub-criteria shall be equally weighted.
(**) Scoring uses a four point scale (0-3).

Overall Evaluation Quality Assessment

Quality assessment criteria (scoring points*)	Assessment Levels (**)			
	Very good	Good	Fair	Unsatisfactory
1. Structure and clarity of reporting, including executive summary (7)		7		
2. Design and methodology (13)	13			
3. Reliability of data (11)	11			
4. Analysis and findings (40)	40			
5. Conclusions (11)	11			
6. Recommendations (11)	11			
7. Integration of gender (7)	7			
Total scoring points	93	7		

Overall assessment level of evaluation report **Very good**

The evaluation integrates adequately cross cutting issues of gender equality, human rights and disability inclusion, even though is not included as part of the evaluation objective.

Cross-cutting issues are central to this evaluation. This is most explicit in the analysis under EQ 3 where human rights, gender and LNOB issues are assessed. Disability issues are discussed briefly in the background section and the UNFPA response. The findings include some analysis of youth with disabilities, but mostly as one of several vulnerable groups.

Consideration of significant constraints (e.g. COVID-19 or civil unrest)

The quality of this evaluation report has been hampered by exceptionally difficult circumstances: Yes No

If yes, please explain:

Covid-related restrictions did limit the ability of the core evaluation team to travel and collect primary-level data in-person.