

Title of evaluation report: Evaluation of the UNFPA 8th Country Programme of Assistance (CP8) to the Government of Viet Nam (2012-2016). Evaluation Report. FINAL. 30 March 2016

OVERALL QUALITY RATING: Good.

Summary:

The evaluation of the eighth country programme of assistance to the Government of Vietnam is a sound report that meets the basic standards of a good evaluation, which given its unusual focus in responding to both the requirements for the UNFPA country programme and the common Country Programme document (DaO) make it a challenging and unique evaluation. The report has a clear structure and logic and is very well designed. The methodology used is particularly thorough. The evaluation provides an assessment of progress in addressing the respective evaluation questions and presents the finding in the context of how the country program has implemented its activities and outputs as well as outcomes that have been accomplished. The report has a chapter “Transferable Lessons Learned” that distinguishes this report from other UNFPA evaluation reports. The lessons learned section serves as a valuable complement to the conclusions and recommendations sections in providing a basis for developing options on issues that have implications for the next programming cycle.

Quality Assessment criteria	Assessment Levels			
	Very good	Good	Poor	Unsatisfactory
<p>1. Structure and Clarity of Reporting</p> <p><i>To ensure report is user-friendly, comprehensive, logically structured and drafted in accordance with international standards.</i></p> <p>Checklist of minimum content and sequence required for structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Acronyms; ii) Exec Summary; iii) Introduction; iv) Methodology including Approach and Limitations; v) Context; vi) Findings/Analysis; vii) Conclusions; viii) Recommendations; ix) Transferable Lessons Learned (where applicable) 	<p>Good</p> <p>The evaluation report is user-friendly, comprehensive, logically structured and drafted in accordance with the standard structure promoted by the Evaluation Office. The basic elements of the main report and the annexes are present, with the exception of the semi-structured Interview Guide which was an important omission given it provided for consistency within the evaluation team and framing critical issues, and the survey developed during the conduct of the evaluation. Section 5: Lessons Learned, a notable item in that checklist that is often not included in other evaluation reports, underscored important issues for the future Vietnam program that would otherwise not have fit into the structure.</p>			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum requirements for Annexes: ToRs; Bibliography; List of interviewees; Methodological instruments used. 				
<p>2. Executive Summary</p> <p><i>To provide an overview of the evaluation, written as a stand-alone section and presenting main results of the evaluation.</i></p> <p>Structure (paragraph equates to half page max):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Purpose, including intended audience(s); ii) Objectives and Brief description of intervention (1 para); iii) Methodology (1 para); iv) Main Conclusions (1 para); v) Recommendations (1 para). Maximum length 3-4 page. 	<p>Good</p> <p>This section is a clearly presented and well-written stand-alone piece that presents the essence of the main evaluation results. The executive summary has relevant structure, contains the required parts, and presents report resume. But it is five pages long.</p> <p>Executive summary explains the Purpose of the evaluation, but does not include intended audience. Executive summary has Objectives and Brief description of intervention which are about 1 para. Methodology is 1 para; main conclusions equates to about 1 page; recommendations paragraphs equates to about 1 page.</p> <p>Findings are presented in the executive summary as well (one and a half page).</p>			
<p>3. Design and Methodology</p> <p><i>To provide a clear explanation of the following elements/tools</i></p> <p>Minimum content and sequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explanation of methodological choice, including constraints and limitations; Techniques and Tools for data collection provided in a detailed manner; Triangulation systematically applied throughout the evaluation; Details of participatory stakeholders' consultation process are provided; Details on how cross-cutting issues (vulnerable groups, youth, gender, equality) were addressed in the design and the conduct of the evaluation. 	<p>Very Good</p> <p>Design and Methodology chapter provides clear and detailed explanation of the evaluation approach. Minimum content and sequence is fully satisfied. The evaluation design takes into account both the results of the alignment of the UNFPA country programme as well as the UN Common Country program Document making it a unique approach to UNFPA evaluation. Due to the complexity of evaluating a country program that combines both the country programme and the combined common programme, the evaluation team developed (in conjunction with the country team) a Theory of Change that related the results of the common program to the outputs and outcomes of the country program in a manner that was adequate for analyzing the program as a whole. A very thorough evaluation and evidence matrix was developed and used to ensure that appropriate data were acquired.</p> <p>Design and Methodology are explained in the Introduction section. The sub-chapters "1.3. Methodology and process," "1.4. The evaluation criteria and evaluation questions," "1.5. Methods and tools used for data collection and analysis"</p>			

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	<p>describe methodological choice, techniques and tools for data collection, and triangulation. It is said in the report that “Triangulation was ensured throughout the evaluation process by cross-checking sources of information.” There was only a generic explanation of the major evaluation methods used and a minimal explanation of the factors affecting the sampled population. The report would be stronger if the methods used and the actual sample strategy had been described in specific terms. Primary data was collected from a wide set of stakeholders, including through field visits to two provinces, but apparently with a limited number of program participants.</p> <p>Details of participatory stakeholders’ consultation process are provided and explained. For instance, the report notes that “At local level stakeholders of projects stakeholders included community group leaders, teachers, health workers, private sector actors such as pharmacists, and community members. These meetings were conducted as focus group discussions and individual interviews” (p. 18).</p> <p>Cross-cutting issues (vulnerable groups, youth, gender, equality) were addressed in the design and the conduct of the evaluation. Evaluation Scope included the thematic coverage “Population and development, Gender equality and Sexual and reproductive health.” However, as one of the few weaknesses, neither the TOR nor the consultants provide specific methodological approaches to address cross-cutting issues during the evaluation. For instance, disaggregation and inclusion of specific stakeholder groups could be explained in more details. Gender disaggregation could be also added into the evaluation indicators, for instance, the number of men and women within “vulnerable populations, including young people and ethnic minority population.” As gender equality is one of the topics, gender sensitive methodological elements and indicators could have been added to the evaluation.</p>			
<p>4. Reliability of Data</p> <p><i>To clarify data collection processes and data quality</i></p>	<p>Good</p> <p>Sources of qualitative and quantitative data are provided in the Annex 3: Stakeholders met during the evaluation and the Annex “References.” Annex 3 includes mostly people from the UNFPA, international organizations and</p>			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources of qualitative and quantitative data have been identified; Credibility of primary (e.g. interviews and focus groups) and secondary (e.g. reports) data established and limitations made explicit; Disaggregated data by gender has been utilized where necessary. 	<p>government. The methodology specifies that interviews were conducted with “UNFPA stakeholders including government ministries, UN agencies, donors NGOs. At local level stakeholders of projects stakeholders included community group leaders, teachers, health workers, private sector actors such as pharmacists, and community members” (p. 18). But there are no sources of data on other people met. The limitations and constraints of the data were established early in the report, including the implications that had on the data collection and data analysis processes.</p> <p>Credibility of primary and secondary data is established and limitations are made explicit. The consultants use evidence to prove their findings, for instance, they have tables explaining sources of data (p. 60). They also refer to this approach in the description of findings such as “a sufficient evidence base is available in four cases and a partly sufficient evidence base in seven...” (p. 43).</p> <p>Disaggregated data by gender are utilized in presenting the findings. Annex 3 “Stakeholders met during the evaluation” has also titles of people interviewed.</p>			
<p>5. Findings and Analysis</p> <p><i>To ensure sound analysis and credible findings</i></p> <p><u>Findings</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Findings stem from rigorous data analysis; Findings are substantiated by evidence; Findings are presented in a clear manner <p><u>Analysis</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpretations are based on carefully described assumptions; Contextual factors are identified. Cause and effect links between an intervention and its end results (including unintended results) are explained. 	<p>Good</p> <p>Findings stem from rigorous data analysis, including literature review, interviews and data triangulation. Findings are fully substantiated by evidence. The consultants clearly explain assumptions.</p> <p>The report is very logical and well-structured. The evaluators provide enough evidence to support their arguments such as “Through feedback from partners and stakeholders, and the results of the various policy and legislation initiatives that UNFPA supported, it was evident that using population data had taken place and that this represented a significant step forward” (p. 53).</p> <p>Findings are organized according to the Evaluation Questions in each program Component. They are presented in clear manner and in order through the chapter. In some cases findings have very broad formulations. For instance, in the Finding 5 it is said that “inconsistent outcomes indicating an uneven approach to implementing the capacity building strategy”. Words “inconsistent” and “uneven</p>			

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	<p>approach” are too broad. Another example is such as follows “...effectiveness in implementing multi-faceted and integrated approaches, whereby UNFPA uses multiple entry points for work... “(Finding 9). Such words as “multi-faceted and integrated... multiple entry” are not specific.</p> <p>Interpretations are based on carefully described assumptions in the beginning of a new finding, for instance, “For this question on effectiveness, the evaluation tested the assumption that UNFPA contributed to the increased availability of high quality data, disaggregated by sex and demographic factors” (p. 59), “This evaluation question examined two assumptions” (p. 62).</p> <p>Contextual factors are identified in the beginning of the chapter Key Finding (p. 39).</p> <p>Cause-effect links are discussed carefully in the text. For instance, the report concludes that “With UNFPA’s support, at national level the Ministry of Health has developed new evidence-based policies”. The consultants prove this outcome with such outputs as “UNFPA has supported capacity development such as funding training... health staff have been trained” (p. 62).</p> <p>Most of the findings are organized around outcomes, but one set of findings relates to strategies and outputs and how the program monitors them. The evaluators say that “...the monitoring was limited to output monitoring on the whole, missing opportunities to measure effectiveness of interventions...Overall, the “story” of the programme was difficult to follow and identify, despite the CO achieving significantly throughout the period (see Table below).” The Table 5 “CCPD achievements against indicators (self-assessed by UNFPA CO)” is used to demonstrate the effectiveness in the Country Programme and shows the extent to which UNFPA outputs are achieved, or not.</p>			
<p>6. Conclusions</p> <p><i>To assess the validity of conclusions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conclusions are based on credible findings; • Conclusions are organized in priority order; 	<p>Good</p> <p>Conclusions are based on credible findings. Each conclusion has the origin findings and associated recommendations.</p> <p>Conclusions are organized in priority order and logically connected.</p>			

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclusions must convey evaluators' unbiased judgment of the intervention. 	<p>Conclusions convey evaluators' unbiased judgment of the intervention as they are based on credible findings. Nevertheless, it seems like some conclusions have unclear or too broad statements. For instance, the evaluators say that "There are still important learning opportunities in this cycle that need to be captured to inform the next, particularly in relation to understanding the gaps between policy and implementation." Learning opportunities are not clarified (there are no cross-references as well). The evaluators do not specify policy they talk about; gaps between policy and implementation are not clear.</p> <p>Similar unclear statements occur in other conclusions and discussion part as well:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "...there is potential for the project approach" (project approach is unclear); "Some capacity building initiatives have transferred learning and skills better than others" (too general statement). <p>Also, some conclusions include the recommendations such as "It will be important for the Country Office to analyse with partners the reasons for successes as much as the reasons for challenges," "...the Country Office will need to continually update its skills and strategies as the moves" (pp. 78-79).</p> <p>A particular part of the report is the chapter 5 "Lessons learned for UNFPA in Viet Nam." It is built based on the findings and reflect special cases which might be useful for the next program cycle.</p>			
<p>7. Recommendations</p> <p><i>To assess the usefulness and clarity of recommendations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recommendations flow logically from conclusions; Recommendations must be strategic, targeted and operationally-feasible; Recommendations must take into account stakeholders' consultations whilst remaining impartial; Recommendations should be presented in priority order 	<p>Very good</p> <p>Recommendations flow logically from conclusions. There is the Figure 11 "The links between the Conclusions and Recommendations" that shows this connection.</p> <p>Recommendations are strategic, targeted and operationally-feasible. The evaluators specify the process of change-making and clarify the actors, for instance, "With partners, implement a more strategic view on the political economy, and analyse the intersection between the political economy and policy influencing."</p>			

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	<p>Recommendations take into account stakeholders' consultations. The report refers to the consultations with stakeholders, for instance, it is said that "As an issue that all actors aware of and seem to agree on the need to address it..." (p. 81). In the methodology section it is specified that consultants shared the findings of the report with the stakeholders. With regards to the recommendations it is mentioned that "In the final phase UNFPA will distribute the evaluation report to stakeholders to consult on the recommendations."</p> <p>Recommendations are presented in priority order: High or Medium.</p>			
<p>8. Meeting Needs</p> <p>To ensure that Evaluation Report responds to requirements (scope & evaluation questions/issues/DAC criteria) stated in the ToR (ToR must be annexed to the report). In the event that the ToR do not conform with commonly agreed quality standards, assess if evaluators have highlighted the deficiencies with the ToR.</p>	<p>Very Good</p> <p>The evaluation generally responds to the ToR which is a major accomplishment given the complexity of the wholistic approach of assessing both the DaO and Country programme even as it was evolving as a work in progress. The report has a separate chapter "5. Lessons learned for UNFPA in Viet Nam."</p>			

Quality assessment criteria (and Multiplying factor *)	Assessment Levels (*)			
	Very good	Good	Poor	Unsatisfactory
1. Structure and clarity of reporting (2)		2		
2. Executive summary (2)		2		
3. Design and methodology (5)	5			
4. Reliability of data (5)		5		
5. Findings and analysis (50)		50		
6. Conclusions (12)		12		
7. Recommendations (12)	12			
8. Meeting needs (12)	12			
TOTAL	29	71		

(*) Insert the multiplying factor associated with the criteria in the corresponding column e.g. - if “Finding and Analysis” has been assessed as “good”, please enter the number 50 into the “Good” column. The Assessment level scoring the higher number of points will determine the overall quality of the Report