



©UNFPA. Field mission of GBV and harmful practices evaluation. India, March 2017

IMPACT

The UNFPA Evaluation Office Newsletter

Issue 6. June 2017



Welcome to the sixth issue of our newsletter, **Impact**. We, at the Evaluation Office, are saddened by the sudden passing of UNFPA Executive Director **Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin**. A stalwart defender of the sexual and reproductive health and rights

of women and girls, Dr. Babatunde believed in the importance of using evaluative evidence to ground and inform the programmes and policies he championed. We will honour his legacy as we continue to work to strengthen evaluation at UNFPA.

This newsletter features the key results of a recently completed institutional evaluation of the **architecture supporting the operationalisation of the UNFPA Strategic Plan (2014-2017)** and the thematic evaluation of **UNFPA support to adolescents and youth (2008-2015)**, completed early this year. The Evaluation Office also completed a synthesis of **lessons learned from country programme evaluations (2014-2015)** with the aim of contributing to organizational learning and evidence based programming.

Together with the Evaluation Division at Global Affairs Canada and the Evaluation Office at UNICEF, our office recently completed a joint evaluation of the **H4+ joint programme supported by Canada and Sweden (2011-2016)**. The results of and lessons generated through this joint exercise will be featured in the next newsletter.

Other evaluations and studies under the quadrennial budgeted evaluation plan (2016-2019) have kicked off and are currently in various stages of implementation. For example, the **formative evaluation of the UNFPA innovation initiative** is in its final reporting stage and the India case study of the Evaluation of **UNFPA support to the prevention, response to and elimination of gender-based violence and harmful practices (2012-2017)** has been completed. The case study offers interesting learning insights on the work on gender-biased sex selection and social norms in India.

We would like to point you to the **annual report on evaluation**. Presented to the Executive Board formal session on June 7, 2017, the report provides information on 2016 evaluation activities at corporate and decentralized levels.

I am very pleased to share that, following the good results of the independent quality assessment of country programme evaluations reports produced in 2015 (12 out of 13 were assessed as 'good'), all 2016 reports have,

thus far, been quality assessed as 'good'/'very good'. I wished to specifically congratulate the evaluation team and the colleagues involved in the **country programme evaluation of Papua New Guinea (2012-2017)**, which received the quality assessment rating of 'very good', a first for decentralized level evaluations.

In early 2017, the Evaluation Office introduced a **revised evaluation quality assessment grid**, which is currently being piloted. The grid strengthens the assessment of gender and human rights dimensions by directly integrating the UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator. This template together with other tools and guidance are available on our **webpage**.

From May 15-19, the Evaluation Office participated in the **2017 UNEG Evaluation Week**. Held in Vienna, Evaluation Week helped strengthen UNFPA partnership with other UNEG members, offered the opportunity to present results from the work undertaken, and provided space to discuss upcoming planned actions. Furthermore, during the Evaluation Practice Exchange (EPE) session, the Evaluation Office participated in a panel discussion focused on: **"No one left behind: evaluating vulnerable and marginalized groups"**. This is the first time a UNEG EPE stream focused exclusively on the topic of vulnerable and marginalized groups within evaluation.

I would like to thank all the interns that have joined us this year for their excellent work and commitment. **Jovanna Yiouelli, Joy Anne Muthee, Maheen Rashid and Rebecca Schwartz**. Finally, I wished to send a special thank you to **Andrea Cook**, who is the new Director of Evaluation in the **World Food Programme**, for her leadership and dedication during the years she was the Director of UNFPA Evaluation Office.

Alexandra Chambel
Director a. i., Evaluation Office UNFPA



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UNFPA support to adolescents and youth (2008-2015)



by Valeria Carou-Jones

This is the first time UNFPA has undertaken an independent evaluation of its support to adolescents and youth. The exercise was conducted from 2014 to 2016 by the independent Evaluation Office in collaboration with an external, multidisciplinary team of evaluators and thematic experts from the **Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH)**.

In February 2017, the Evaluation Office presented the evaluation to the UNFPA Executive Board, during the first regular session (see the video [here](#)).

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the performance of UNFPA in its support to adolescents and youth during the period 2008-2015, falling under the UNFPA Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth and UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (including the midterm review). The evaluation also provided key learning to contribute to the implementation of the current UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth 2012-2020 under the current **UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017** and inform the development of the next **Strategic Plan 2018-2021**.

The evaluation's scope includes all support provided by UNFPA to adolescents and youth at country, regional and global levels, with a particular focus on the countries and regions captured in the five field case studies (**Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kyrgyzstan and Nicaragua**), the four extended desk studies (**Lao PDR, Mozambique, Nepal and Niger**) and the three regional reviews (**Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific and East and Southern Africa**).

Data collection methods included: document and literature reviews, a detailed financial analysis, interviews with key informants, group interviews, focus group discussions, a survey of UNFPA country offices, direct observation in countries visited, and an e-Roundtable. Based on a stakeholder mapping at all levels, 670 stakeholders were consulted of which nearly half were adolescents and youth.

The evaluation concluded that UNFPA had significantly increased its priority, policy and programmatic focus in its support to adolescents and youth during the period under evaluation (2008 to 2015).

During this period, UNFPA leadership helped implement the International Conference on Population and Development Programme for Action and other internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

There has been a steady evolution in focus on adolescents and youth over the three strategic planning periods covered by the evaluation. From 2014, with the adoption of the current strategic plan, UNFPA has further deepened its focus on, and support to, adolescents and youth.

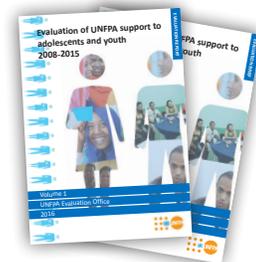
This increasing strategic focus was accompanied by increased investment in financial and human resources for both mainstreamed and targeted programming.

The evaluation recommends that UNFPA:

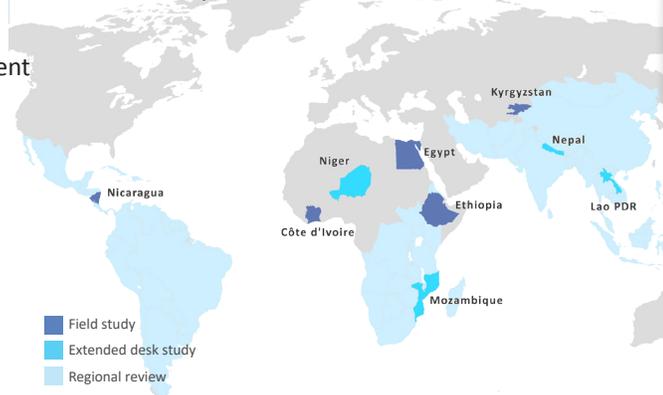
- Further consolidate and build on strong progress in adolescents and youth programming through a unified framework for adolescents and youth;
- Continue to provide strong leadership on adolescents and youth issues within the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- Review resource-allocation for adolescents and youth, maximize efficiency and ensure that staff implementing adolescents and youth interventions have the necessary skill set to do so;



- Improve efforts to target the most vulnerable and marginalised among adolescents and youth by strengthening analysis and use of data;
- Consistently use a human rights-based approach in adolescents and youth programming;
- Improve the quality and sustainability of sexual and reproductive health services, education and information for adolescents and youth by ensuring systematic linkages across UNFPA-supported interventions in these areas;
- Strengthen meaningful engagement of adolescents and youth at all levels of programming (national, regional and global);
- Strengthen research, monitoring, reporting and evaluation to generate evidence for organizational learning and programming, and accountability for adolescents and youth support.



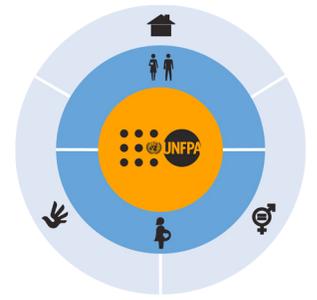
Read the reports



■ Field study
■ Extended desk study
■ Regional review



Architecture supporting the operationalisation of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017



by Hicham Daoudi

In May 2017, the Evaluation Office completed the evaluation of the architecture supporting the operationalisation of the **UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2014-2017**. This is the **first institutional evaluation** carried out by the Evaluation Office.

The primary purpose of the evaluation was to feed into the preparation of the new UNFPA strategic plan with independent evaluative evidence and lessons learned, on the architecture supporting operationalisation of the plan. This evaluation is one among several sources of information that will contribute to the development of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

The data collection methods used for the evaluation included: country and regional studies, analysis of administrative data, interviews with key informants, stakeholder surveys and document review.

The evaluation concluded that the classification of countries based on country needs and ability to finance had been useful for resource allocation and contributed to ensuring resources were focused on countries with greatest needs. However, perception of restricted modes of engagement in countries that fell within the pink, yellow and orange quadrant meant that programming strategies have not always been flexible enough to promote national ownership and programme responsiveness.

The substantial efforts made to support alignment with the strategic plan were impeded by lack of corporate preparedness and, given this, an unrealistic timeframe to address alignment in all its dimensions. Moreover, the introduction of the strategic plan was not accompanied by a comprehensive change management process across the whole organization. Such a process would have led to better integration of alignment guidance with existing processes, policies and strategies (e.g., The Policies and Procedures Manual).

Although there has been progress in strengthening the architecture for operationalising the strategic plan, it is not yet aligned to the requirements of the new global normative development framework within which UNFPA operates. Specifically, the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** calls for an approach to programming building on the interrelated efforts to deliver on the interdependent Sustainable Development Goals.

The evaluation recommends that UNFPA:

- Disconnect the existing modes of engagement from country classification, apart from service delivery, which should only be undertaken in red countries and in humanitarian contexts;
- Re-conceptualise the modes of engagement and clarify their relationship to capacity development;
- Enhance accountability for results, as well as learning at country level, through strengthening the country level capacity for monitoring and evaluation, and promoting national capacity to undertake country level evaluations;
- Develop and implement a comprehensive change management process to enable the organization at all levels to implement the upcoming and subsequent strategic plans to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Make the architecture supporting the operationalisation of the strategic plan an effective communication tool;

- Develop an integrated package of guidance for operationalising the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 prior to its implementation, by updating existing guidance and preparing new guidance as necessary;
- Utilise the country programme document process to ensure alignment of new country programmes to the strategic plan, and support country offices that have already begun a country programme document cycle to align incrementally according to their context.

The evaluation results were presented to the Executive Board during the **third workshop on the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021**.



[Read the report](#)



	Red	Orange	Yellow	Pink
Non-humanitarian contexts	All modes of engagement possible including service delivery	All modes of engagement possible with the exception of service delivery		
Humanitarian contexts				

Knowledge sharing

Evidence based policy dialogue and national evaluation capacity development in middle income countries



by Sergio Lenci

Over the last decade, a large number of initiatives on “intercultural maternal health” targeting indigenous autonomous provinces have been launched in Panama. In addition, in 2016 the Government of Panama adopted a National Plan to Reduce Maternal Mortality, focusing on the country as a whole. Within this context, the Ministry of Health has been facing challenges to fully exercise its role as governing body. This is due to the absence of an effective monitoring and evaluation system that allows for the systematic tracking of the amount of funds invested, as well as where and how they have been spent. As expressed by authorities of the Ministry of Health, at the moment, the specific outcomes resulting from these interventions remain unclear, as do the determinants of progress and setbacks. In fact, maternal mortality rates have fluctuated in the three indigenous autonomous provinces of Panama, while the national average seems relatively stable.

Within this context and as part of a wider cooperation strategy, the Ministry of Health requested UNFPA support to design and conduct an evaluation of the intercultural health policy and to set up a monitoring system for the National Plan to reduce Maternal Mortality. In response to the request, UNFPA LACRO and Panama Country Office are working together with technicians at the Ministry to:

1. Map out all the initiatives implemented between 2008 and 2016 to reduce Maternal Mortality, including those targeting indigenous people and labelled as “intercultural health initiatives”.

“Observatorio de Derechos reproductivos de las Mujeres Indígenas: Ngäbe Buglé, 2014 - 2015” Farinoni, Noemí

INSPIRATION CORNER

Advocacy and Policy Change Evaluation *Theory and Practice*

by Annette L. Gardner and Claire Brindis

1st edition

April 2017



STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

ISBN-13: 978-0804792561

2. Develop and install an online database of initiatives from 2008 onwards that can be regularly updated.

3. Delimit the scope of the Intercultural Health Policy Evaluation and develop the terms of reference for the evaluation, including a proposed methodological approach.

4. Design and operationalize a monitoring system for the National Plan to Reduce Maternal Mortality.

Step 1 and 2 have already been completed with financial and technical support of UNFPA and we are now entering a new phase of negotiation with the Ministry of Health to draft and sign a Project Document for the implementation of steps 3 and 4, which will be co-financed by the Government of Panama.

In practice, UNFPA would be responsible for, inter alia, a) setting up an evaluation reference group composed of national and local actors, to ensure ownership and transparency of the evaluation process; b) developing the first draft of the evaluation terms of reference to be discussed and ultimately approved by the reference group; c) identifying, selecting and recruiting suitable national and international consultants as appropriate and administering their contract; d) quality assuring the evaluation design report; e) organizing and providing logistical support to field missions; f) quality assuring the final evaluation report and facilitating the dissemination of results; g) ensuring efficient and transparent administration of the funds allocated to the evaluation.

The successful implementation of this project will contribute to an informed political and technical dialogue on intercultural maternal health and will ultimately help to bridge the gap in the maternal



mortality ratio between the national average and the indigenous provinces. In so doing, it will also generate positive externalities for national evaluation capacities and represent an innovative way of leveraging domestic resources.

UNEG Evaluation Week



UNEG held its annual **evaluation week** from 15-19 May 2017 in Vienna. The 2017 evaluation week kicked off with a two-day evaluation practice exchange (EPE). The EPE was centered on the theme “**Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world**”.

The Evaluation Office, together with the evaluation offices of UNICEF, UNDP, and OHCHR, engaged in a panel discussion focused on: “**No one left behind: evaluating vulnerable and marginalized groups**”.

Drawing on two recently completed global thematic evaluations (**family planning and adolescents and youth**), the Evaluation Office offered reflections on the definition of vulnerability, shared findings from the evaluations on VMGs, and examined the participation of VMGs within the two evaluations. Though progress has been made, the systematic participation of VMGs continues to remain a challenge, requiring a radical rethink in, inter alia, methods used and timelines proposed.

e-Learning: Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations

in partnership by



in collaboration with



Based on the UNEG Guidance on *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*, this e-learning course offers an overview of evaluation practice in various contexts, and features concrete guidance, tips and insights from experienced practitioners.

The course is composed of 10 units (unit 6 presented by **Alexandra Chambel** from UNFPA Evaluation Office) and it includes lectures,

requested readings, additional reading materials, and tests. After successfully completing all units, participants will receive a certificate of completion.

Access to the course



Evaluation Reports and studies

Lessons learned from UNFPA Country Programme Evaluations 2014-2015

by Natalie Raaber



Bringing together the findings of **26 country programme evaluations** conducted between 2014 and 2015 and quality-assessed as “good” or higher, this exercise, the second undertaken by the Evaluation Office, represents a continued effort by the Evaluation Office to periodically undertake syntheses.

Lessons learned highlight the collaborative nature of UNFPA work and the organization’s important contributions to sexual and reproductive health, adolescents and youth, gender equality and population and development. To facilitate use for programming, lessons learned are organized by UNFPA 2014-2017 Strategic Plan outcome areas. In



addition to outcome areas, the synthesis captures lessons in other areas of work seen as particularly important for organizational learning, strategic development, and alignment to UNFPA strategic plans and the ICPD, including lessons on UNFPA engagement in humanitarian settings and targeting those in marginalized and vulnerable situations.

Read the report



RECENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATIONS

- Burundi (2010-2014/17)
- Costa Rica (2013-2017)
- Dominican Republic (2012-2016)
- Kyrgyzstan (2012-2016/17)
- Moldova (2013-2017)
- Papua New Guinea (2012-2015/17)

ALL THE REPORTS



Evaluation Database

Formative evaluation: opportunities and challenges

by Jordi del Bas



The **formative evaluation of the UNFPA Innovation Initiative**, including the Innovation Fund, is the first formative evaluation conducted by the Evaluation Office at UNFPA. Formative evaluations are conducted either during programme development or at early stages of implementation, and focus on understanding how the intervention works. The results of formative evaluations are generally utilized to revise or modify programme design with a view to improving performance. This was precisely the case for the Innovation Initiative.

The evaluation, which is at the final reporting stages, has combined an independent assessment with a participatory exercise that featured an intense degree of engagement and real-time interaction throughout the decision-making on the next phase of the Innovation Initiative.

The evaluation team, for example, provided input into the thinking around the Innovation Business Case and on elements of the theory of change for the next phase of the Initiative. Regular interaction between the evaluation team and decision-makers prompted an on-going dialogue based on evidence and findings of the evaluation. This dialogue has favoured the assimilation and in-depth understanding of the findings (and, subsequently, the conclusions and recommendations). The formative evaluation has offered an excellent opportunity for organizational learning and design improvements based on insights and joint reflections between the Innovation Initiative and the evaluation team. This formative process has not only ensured the usefulness of the findings to input into the re-design of the Initiative but also

prompted an owned, critical reflection on areas to improve.

Given that decision-making processes occur over a continuum, the exercise risks evolving into technical assistance on the implementation of the recommendations – the primary challenge and risk of the formative approach.

Clear cut-off dates for the provision of input and concrete timelines are crucial in formative evaluations and help mitigate this risk.

Overall, the formative perspective has proved effective in ensuring the relevance and use of the findings as input to the re-design of the Initiative. It is also a suitable approach when seeking to generate insights for and support a practical transfer of knowledge between decision-makers and evaluation teams.

Ongoing evaluations

► The inception report as well as the India case study report of the **evaluation of UNFPA support to the prevention, response to and elimination of GBV and harmful practices** are available on the Evaluation Office website. The data collection phase includes five additional field case studies (three country and two regional) and eight extended desk reviews.

► The inception report of the **formative evaluation of the UNFPA innovation initiative** is also available on the website. A final report is expected in June 2017.



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