

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION

TURKEY

2011 – 2015

CONTEXT

This report presents the results of the final evaluation of the UNFPA 5th country programme of assistance to the Government of Turkey, covering the period 2011-2015.

The country programme had a total budget of 4.5 million USD and covered three components: (a) reproductive health and rights (allocated with 2.0 million USD); (b) population and development (allocated with 0.4 million USD); and (c) gender equality (allocated with 1.6 million USD). An amount of 0.5 million USD was allocated for programme coordination and assistance. In addition UNFPA had committed to mobilize 2.6 million USD from other sources to complement the programme activities.

In addition to its development programme of assistance, the UNFPA Turkey country office has also implemented a humanitarian programme in response to the needs of Syrian refugees fleeing civil war in their country since April 2011.



OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The objectives of the evaluation were: (1) to provide the UNFPA CO in Turkey, national programme stakeholders, the UNFPA EECARO, UNFPA headquarters as well as the wider audience with an independent assessment of the relevance and performance of the UNFPA 5th country programme; (2) to provide an analysis of how UNFPA has positioned itself within the development community and national partners with a view to adding value to the country development results; (3) to draw key lessons from past and current cooperation and provide a set of clear and forward-looking options leading to strategic and actionable recommendations for the next programming cycle.

The evaluation covered all activities planned and/or implemented during the period 2011-2014, under both the development programme of assistance (including soft aid activities) and the humanitarian programme launched in response to the Syrian refugee crisis.

In addition to the assessment of the intended effects of the country programme, the evaluation also aimed at identifying potential unintended effects.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was structured around two categories of evaluation criteria: (i) the criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability for the assessment of UNFPA interventions in the three programmatic areas

of the country programme; and (ii) the criteria of coordination and added value for the analysis of the strategic positioning of UNFPA in Turkey.

The data collection tools used by the evaluation team consisted in: (i) a detailed review of all the documentation available regarding the country programme and relevant national public policies; (ii) semi-structured interviews with key informants and (iii) focus group discussions with final beneficiaries, including Syrian refugees.

Site visits were selected based on a purposive sampling, with a view to reflecting the UNFPA portfolio of interventions in Turkey. Aside from Ankara and Istanbul, the evaluation team visited the provinces of Sanliurfa and Gaziantep to interview the stakeholders providing humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees. In the Gaziantep province, the evaluation team also visited the Nizip refugee camp, which allowed for a focus group discussion with Syrian refugee women.

The evaluation team ensured the triangulation of the data and information used for the evaluation through systematic cross-checking of data and information sources on the one hand, and data collection tools, on the other hand. Specific attention has been paid to the formulation of evidence-based findings by rigorously relating all findings to the supporting facts and data displayed in annexes.

Methodological constraints and limitations included: (i) the insufficient information provided by annual work plans regarding programme interventions (specially those relating to “soft aid activities” such as advocacy and policy dialogue); (ii) a limited access to final beneficiaries within the time period allocated to the field phase of the evaluation and (iii) language constraints. These constraints and limitations were respectively mitigated through: (i) reviewing additional documentation (country office annual reviews, standard progress reports, financial and operational information from Atlas); (ii) resorting to interviews and focus

group discussions with key informants closely related to final beneficiaries of UNFPA supported interventions and (iii) working with interpreters providing translation from (and to) Turkish and Arabic whenever required.

MAIN FINDINGS

The country programme was well adapted to the needs of the population, in particular to those of vulnerable groups, including Syrian refugees. However, prioritization of the most vulnerable in planned interventions did not systematically translate into specific targeting of these groups at implementation stage.

In the area of reproductive health and rights, UNFPA supported interventions have contributed to improved access and utilization of maternal health and family planning services, including for Syrian refugees. UNFPA was particularly successful in responding to the specific reproductive health needs of seasonal migrant agricultural workers. In the absence of a clear exit strategy, sustainability of the results achieved remains an issue.

In the area of population and development, UNFPA has contributed to an increased availability of demographic and socio-economic data, both at central and local levels. UNFPA supported interventions have contributed to raising the capacity of national stakeholders to address issues related to the ICPD and the MDGs. Sustainability of results still highly depends on support from UNFPA, although positive signs were noted, such as a strong ownership from some target groups as well as the establishment of effective partnerships with universities, public institutions and NGOs.

In the area of gender equality, UNFPA has successfully expanded the stakeholder base for the fight against gender-based violence, through an extension of its training activities to a variety of groups including police forces, gendarmerie, religious leaders and the youth. In the 5th country programme, the emphasis has been placed on

the response to gender-based violence, while prevention and protection services for women still need to be further developed.

UNFPA has achieved a high level of disbursement of its financial resources and has been able to trigger various forms of additional resources from its partners, in particular for the funding of humanitarian interventions. However, given the rising numbers of Syrian refugees, resources have become insufficient to cover expressed needs.

UNFPA actively contributes to the good coordination of the United Nations system in Turkey through its participation to several thematic and working groups. Examples of synergies among UN organizations can be found in the work of the gender thematic group, which UNFPA has led from 2004 to 2013, as illustrated by the joint programme on *Women Friendly Cities*.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The UNFPA 5th country programme for Turkey was found highly adapted to national needs in terms of reproductive health, gender equality and population and development. Overall, UNFPA was able to adapt its country programme to the evolving needs of the country and, in particular, needs emerging from the Syrian crisis. However, the prioritization of the most vulnerable and high risk groups was not strong enough as the basis for strategic planning. Data and analysis was lacking on some groups leaving uncertainties over how to reach vulnerable populations with regard to strengthening reproductive health and rights and gender equality.

The UNFPA country office effectively activated its emergency response mechanisms in the Syrian crisis with UNFPA global and regional support as per the Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) standards. UNFPA has contributed to the increased availability of gender-based violence prevention, and mother-child health and sexual and reproductive health care for Syrian refugees. UNFPA human and technical resources

are of high quality and expertise and strong team work among programmatic areas has served to cover escalating needs. However, due to the continuous increases in refugee numbers, the corresponding requirements for advocacy, technical assistance, information and response to the humanitarian situation could over-extenuate staff and funding resources may not be sufficient.

Stakeholders, whether in the public sector, NGOs or universities, all demonstrate strong interest in contributing to and actively taking part in UNFPA supported interventions. However, UNFPA partners' ownership and commitment is variable and follow-up to sustain programme outcomes is uneven. Factors promoting sustainability include commitment to outcomes, capacity of stakeholders, strength of follow-up, and level of investment by partners.

UNFPA demonstrates a significant added value to all of its partners and is considered a main source of expertise with regard to reproductive health and rights, population and development and gender equality. Most stakeholders stress the importance of UNFPA advocacy work and participation, especially through drawing in political, institutional and religious leaders. However, the impact of UNFPA advocacy and influence is limited regarding sensitive sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality issues in the conservative environment of Turkey.

Interventions related to youth, although mainly consisting of pilot interventions with limited coverage, have been implemented effectively and efficiently with the potential to influence a broad range of high risk groups capitalizing on the expanding volunteer networks. However, the results of UNFPA supported interventions on youth knowledge, attitudes and practices are largely anecdotal and more evidence is needed as to the outcomes. Furthermore, the understanding of youth sexual and reproductive needs and how to effectively reach them with reproductive health information is still limited.

MAIN RECOMMENDATIONS

UNFPA should focus more strategically in this country programme and in planning the 6th country programme on identifying, prioritizing and targeting the most vulnerable, marginalized and high risk people and groups. The strategy should emphasize prevention of sexual and reproductive health issues and gender-based violence and should clearly target the most vulnerable and marginalized with strategies to reach them. Integration of the programmatic areas and mainstreaming gender and youth should underpin the strategy.

In view of the pressing reproductive health and gender equality needs of the refugees, UNFPA should expand its humanitarian team and create strategies, preferably jointly with other UN agencies, to raise additional resources in order to cover capacity development and service needs, expand operations as required, and to address emerging critical issues.

UNFPA should ensure sustainability of results in the identification, formulation and planning of interventions, including foreseeing potential difficulties, challenges and mitigation measures. As an integral part of the country programme design and implementation, an exit strategy should be developed during the inception phase.

UNFPA should increase its advocacy effort and capacity building role in reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence prevention and protection through the UN thematic groups on gender-based violence and youth and coordinating mechanisms at regional level, promoting pro-active joint planning and follow-up. Advocacy should be stronger for resource sharing with donors, partners and UN agencies working on similar issues.

UNFPA should champion the issue of investing in youth development and the need for incorporating youth rights and needs into national policies and programmes.

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Full document can be obtained from UNFPA web-site at:

<http://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/turkey-country-programme-evaluation>