



Annex 5

Results achieved through South-South and triangular cooperation

Annual report of the Executive Director of UNFPA
2019 annual session of the Executive Board



I. Overview

South-South and triangular cooperation is a process whereby two or more developing countries pursue their individual and/or shared national capacity development objectives through exchanges of knowledge, skills, resources and technical expertise.

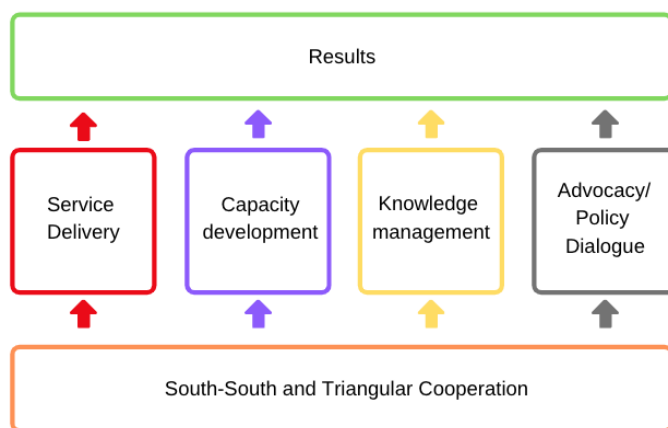
South-South and triangular cooperation is being applied to advance the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. South-South and triangular cooperation is positioned as a key mode of “Partnership for the Goals” (SDG 17), which accelerates the achievement of results under all other Sustainable Development Goals.

To tap into the catalytic potential of South-South and triangular cooperation, UNFPA prioritized its application in its strategic plan 2018-2021 to:

- Achieve and scale-up results effectively and efficiently;
- Mainstream the use of South-South and triangular cooperation institutionally and with partners;
- Harness its power in an age where there is increasing commitment and interest from the Global South to share solutions and contribute to global development.

UNFPA introduced partnerships, including South-South and Triangular Cooperation, as a cross-cutting programme strategy in the strategic plan 2018-2021 to achieve results across all areas of programming. (Figure 1)

Figure 1. South-South cooperation as a cross-cutting programme strategy to implement the results of UNFPA strategic plan, 2018-21



The mode of support that UNFPA provides to countries involved in a South-South and triangular cooperation initiative varies. UNFPA may facilitate partnerships between countries as a neutral broker, provide direct technical or programmatic support, or connect South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives to funding mechanisms, acting as a key implementing partner for the project along with government and/or non-governmental entities from the countries involved.

The shift in institutional prioritization generated greater impetus to invest in, implement, and capture more South-South initiatives globally, and mainstream this strategy into country programmes.

Figure 2. South-South Cooperation initiatives that countries have provided or received in 2018, as a result of UNFPA support

		
61 per cent of reporting countries either provided or received at least one South-South cooperation initiative	152 South-South cooperation initiatives were provided by 64 countries	147 South-South cooperation initiatives were received by 62 countries

The highest number of reported South-South cooperation initiatives supported by UNFPA in 2018 occurred in the continent of Africa. 32 per cent of the cases of providing and 44 per cent of the cases of receiving South-South cooperation were reported in East and Southern Africa. A further 27 per cent of the cases of providing and 31 per cent of the cases of receiving South-South cooperation were reported in West and Central Africa.¹

II. Results achieved with the support of South-South and triangular cooperation

The selection of cases below illustrates the unique added value of South-South and triangular cooperation to delivering results for the health and rights of women and young people.

Improved maternal health services



Increased capacity to treat complex obstetric fistula in Côte d'Ivoire, as a result of experience exchange with veteran Malian experts

Over 300 women in Côte d'Ivoire with obstetric fistula received surgical treatment in 2018, including 26 complex cases that had been pending due to a gap in capacity for treatment. As a result of an on-site capacity building initiative with veteran experts from Mali, women with complex cases received expert surgery in their home country, and over 90 Ivoirien health providers' capacity in the treatment of obstetric fistula was strengthened.

Partners included: Ministry of Health of Mali, Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene of Côte d'Ivoire, Korea International Cooperation Agency, UNFPA



Cuban technical assistance and training enhanced capacity of midwifery workforce in Tete province, Mozambique

¹ This data only captures those cases that were reported as "South-South cooperation" in 2018 by UNFPA country offices, and may not reflect a complete picture of South-South and triangular cooperation activities. Additionally, the West and Central Africa and East and Southern Africa regions hold the highest number of UNFPA priority countries.

The governments of Cuba and Mozambique undertook a 2017-2020 collaboration, to improve the quality of midwifery training and the high unmet need for Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care in Tete Province. The specialized midwifery skills of a team of experts from Cuba was harnessed to provide technical assistance and build the long-term capacity of the Tete Training Institute in Mozambique. In addition, three Mozambican nurses were sent for a training of trainers in Cuba to increase capacity for subsequent local trainings.

Partners included: Cuban Ministry of Health, Cuban Embassy in Mozambique, Government of Mozambique, Tete Training Institute, Government of Belgium, World Health Organization, and UNFPA.



Cuban nurses providing technical support to Tete Training Institute, Mozambique @UNFPA Mozambique



Iran-Afghanistan midwifery project supported training and repatriation of 40 skilled refugee women from Afghanistan, and established Afghan-friendly maternity ward in Iran

This collaboration supported 40 Afghan refugee women in Iran to qualify as diploma-level midwives at the Iran University of Medical Sciences. The project implemented a tailor-made midwifery curriculum, and enhanced the prospects for repatriation of skilled midwives to their home country in 2019, ultimately investing in strengthening the midwifery workforce in Afghanistan. The project also developed an Afghan-friendly maternity ward at a Tehran hospital, enhancing maternal healthcare options for Afghani women in Iran.

Partners included: Iran University of Medical Sciences, Afghan Midwives Association, Ministry of Public Health in Afghanistan, Ministry of Health and Medical Education in Iran, UNFPA

Addressed gender-based violence



Collaboration with Romanian center of excellence led to multi-sectoral measures on gender-based violence in 10 Eastern European and Central Asian countries

To address the need for a robust coordinated approach to gender-based violence, UNFPA partnered with the East European Institute for Reproductive Health in Romania between 2016 and 2018, engaging 10 countries in a range of advocacy and policy dialogue, knowledge exchange, partnership strengthening and capacity development initiatives. This led to multiple results by 2018 that brought country approaches to gender-based violence in line with global standards. For example, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Serbia, Tajikistan and Ukraine adapted and contextualized the UN Gender-Based Violence Essential Services Package and UNFPA Standard Operating Procedures for key sectors on how to respond to gender-based violence.

Partner countries included: Romania, Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, and Ukraine.



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Population and development



Population and Development South-South Center of Excellence in Beijing enhanced capacity of population experts from over 20 countries through first-time training

The Population and Development South-South Center of Excellence in Beijing (China Population and Development Research Center) hosted its first training workshop on "Population Data Collection, Analysis and Utilization", with Digital China Health and UNFPA in 2018. This landmark partnership brought together 19 population experts from over 17 countries in China and Africa, enhanced their capacity to collect and harness data, and provided population projection software and skills, for use in their home countries.

Partner countries included: China, Burundi, Cambodia, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Gambia, Kenya, Maldives, Mauritania, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sri Lanka and Tanzania



Regional experience-exchange initiative supported Iraq to prepare for first-time electronic census in 2020

The government of Iraq shifted to electronic data collection for the 2020 round of census, including for the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and identified the need for exchange with experienced neighboring countries. UNFPA and the UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia supported this effort by organizing a consultative workshop on planning electronic population and housing censuses in Lebanon in 2018, which brought together approximately 15 census and Geographic Information System experts from Egypt, Jordan and Iraq to discuss challenges and enablers around technology, expertise and infrastructure requirements. New planning elements raised at the workshop were endorsed by the Iraqi government for implementation for the 2020 census, and workshop recommendations led to follow-on geographic information system assessment and capacity building initiatives in the region.

Partners countries included: Egypt, Jordan, Iraq

Improved family planning services



Learning and advocacy initiative with Muslim religious leaders from over 20 countries, led to declarations in support of family planning

Between 2013 and 2018 an innovative learning and advocacy programme with religious leaders from over 20 countries used the Indonesian experience of implementing family planning programmes within a Muslim setting to train over 200 Muslim religious leaders. The training resulted in a fatwa in the Philippines and a declaration in Guinea by religious leaders in support of family planning. In 2018, national level advocacy in Indonesia resulted in the inclusion of the South-South Cooperation in the medium term national development programme, and allocation of resources to carry out future programmes and Comprehensive Rights-Based Family Planning Training.

Partners include: The National Population and Family Planning Board (BKKBN) in Indonesia, Indonesian Muslim Organisations: Nahdatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, UNFPA



Self-administered contraceptives available in 30 pilot health facilities in seven regions of rural Mauritania, as a result of experience sharing with Benin

Mauritania needed to supplement its range of injectable contraceptives with a product that is easy to distribute and use in rural areas with low health coverage. As a result of an experience-sharing mission with the Reproductive Health National Programme in Benin, coupled with national level advocacy, women across 30 pilot health facilities in 7 regions in Mauritania gained access to ‘Sayana Press’, a long-acting, easy to store contraceptive that can be administered by community health workers and by women themselves, with minimal training. The expanded contraceptive choice empowers family planning clients in hard-to-reach areas, offering a long-lasting alternative to the traditional stock.

Partners included: Reproductive Health National Programme in Benin, Ministry of Health in Mauritania, Ouagadougou Partnership, Mauritanian Association for Family Promotion, UNFPA

For additional cases, including the details of those featured above, refer to the [‘South-South Cooperation in action, sexual and reproductive health’](#) publication by UNFPA and the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation.

III. Scaling-up South-South and triangular cooperation

The strategic plan, 2018-2021 ushered in a new era for South-South and triangular cooperation at UNFPA. In 2018, UNFPA laid the foundation to achieve the strategic plan results through South-South and triangular cooperation by:

- 1) Identifying South-South and triangular cooperation as a key programming modality to achieve the strategic plan results in light of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system;
- 2) Implementation of the [UNFPA South-South and triangular cooperation Strategy](#), including issuing an operational guidance for all staff;
- 3) Establishing the Inter-Country Cooperation Office in the Policy and Strategy Division, charged with promoting and supporting South-South and triangular cooperation as a programming modality;
- 4) Strengthening capacity of UNFPA staff on planning, implementing and reporting on South-South and triangular cooperation, through dedicated training in 3 UNFPA regions - Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Arab States and West and Central Africa;
- 5) Gathering and promoting documented experience through a good practice competition, resulting in a publication in partnership with the United Nations Office for South South Cooperation entitled, [‘South-South Cooperation in Action, Sexual and Reproductive Health’](#).
- 6) Establishing and strengthening strategic partnerships within the UN system, and with intergovernmental and international organizations, to scale-up and expand the reach of South-South and triangular cooperation. Highlights include:
 - a) Building on the strategic partnership with the United Nation Office for South-South Cooperation to promote United Nations coordination and cooperation. UNFPA positioned health as a visible priority issue at the Global South-South Development Expo 2018, with panel events on ‘Youth for Health’ and advancing health through South-South cooperation, in partnership with the Pan-American Health Organization.
 - b) Enhancing the visibility and positioning of South-South and triangular cooperation through high-level discussions in regional and international fora. For example, UNFPA co-organized the 2018 Inter-Ministerial Conference on South-South and triangular cooperation, with Partners for Population and Development

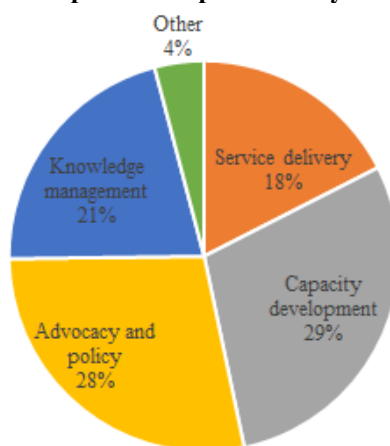
(PPD) in Bali, where participating Member States agreed to the Bali Call to Action to advance the International Conference on Population and Development agenda through South-South cooperation.

- 7) Mobilising resources for South-South and triangular cooperation initiatives through UNFPA partnerships with Southern funding mechanisms:
 - a) The China South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund committed \$2 million to ‘Improving Women’s Health in Sierra-Leone: Reaching Vulnerable Women with High-Risk Pregnancies and Prevention and Treatment of Cervical Cancer’.
 - b) São Tomé and Príncipe became the first country to secure access to and funds from the India-UN Fund with the support of UNFPA, mobilizing \$550,000 to ‘Support to the Acceleration of Repositioning Family Planning in São Tomé and Príncipe’.

Resources for South-South cooperation

In 2018, about 30 per cent of UNFPA resources for South-South cooperation were spent on capacity development and policy and advocacy strategies. Figure 3 provides an overview of the distribution of 2018 UNFPA expenditure across the other programme strategies of the strategic plan, 2018-2021, displaying that country offices harnessed South-South Cooperation in versatile ways towards programme results.

Figure 3: South-South cooperation expenditure by UNFPA programme strategies



IV. Challenges

UNFPA faced some challenges in operationalizing South-South and triangular cooperation in 2018.

- 1) South-South cooperation initiatives often entail forging new partnerships, pose language and translation requirements, and costs of travel and specialized expertise can be high. Scaling-up requires targeted investments and capacity development of community of partners (United Nations, governmental and non-governmental entities).
- 2) Data availability on South-South and triangular cooperation, disaggregated by theme and capturing end line results, is also a challenge. UNFPA is strengthening this area at the institutional level through its monitoring and evaluation systems.
- 3) South-South and triangular cooperation skills and capacity of staff across UNFPA country offices are not yet consistent, emphasizing the need to continue to build capacity of UNFPA as an agile and committed facilitator of South-South and triangular partnerships.

V. Lessons learned

UNFPA learned several lessons in applying South-South and triangular cooperation in UNFPA programming.

- 1) In order to maximize gain from diverse interactions towards results, there is a need to strengthen systematic follow-up mechanisms.
- 2) There is a need for more self-sustaining Southern centers of excellence, to increase the availability and sharing of development solutions between contributing countries.
- 3) State of the art knowledge sharing is critical to promote and advance South-South and triangular cooperation.
- 4) South-South cooperation is an effective modality to engage and serve hard-to-reach populations, including refugee and displaced populations, especially in humanitarian settings or other locations with limited capacity.
- 5) As the world approaches the 2020 round of census, the countries with greater technical capacity in demography and experience with census technology are sharing expertise with other countries.

VI. Moving forward

The year 2019 marks the 25th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development, the 50th anniversary of the founding of UNFPA, and the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action (BAPA+40) for promoting and implementing technical cooperation among developing countries. This provides a landmark opportunity for UNFPA and partners to scale-up South-South and triangular cooperation to achieve the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

UNFPA will further institutionalize and promote South-South and triangular cooperation by:

- 1) Increasing investments in knowledge-sharing and communications on South-South cooperation with the United Nations system, partners, and the general public;
- 2) Improving the capacity of staff and partners on South-South and triangular cooperation;
- 3) Strengthening and expanding strategic partnerships, including with Partners in Population and Development, and strengthening and establishing South-South Centers of Excellence at the country level with national institutions.

In 2019, UNFPA will conduct a thematic evaluation on South-South cooperation to learn and improve the South-South and triangular cooperation within the organization.
