Evaluation of the UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action 2012-2019

Key highlights

Informal Board meeting, 15 May 2020

UNFPA Evaluation Office
Objectives and scope

Objectives

▪ Assess UNFPA’s humanitarian action in terms of **relevance**, **effectiveness**, **efficiency**, and **coverage**

▪ Assess how well UNFPA’s humanitarian action addresses the **humanitarian-development-peace nexus**

▪ Analyse how **humanitarian principles**, **humanitarian minimum standards**, **human rights** and **gender equality** are integrated in UNFPA’s humanitarian action

▪ Draw **lessons** from UNFPA’s past and present humanitarian work and propose **recommendations** for future humanitarian programming

Scope

▪ All UNFPA humanitarian interventions

▪ Global geographic coverage with focus on priority countries since 2014

▪ Period 2012-2019
Evaluation Quick Facts

586 people (60% women) consulted through in-depth interviews and community level focus group discussions.

- Global and regional interviews with key stakeholders
- 500+ documents reviewed
- Extended desk review, including remote interviews in 11 countries
- 4 country case studies
- 2 Thematic Papers on human resources and humanitarian commodities
- Analysis of financial and programme monitoring data

Quick Facts
Conclusions
Conclusion 1

- Significant trend of progress in performance of humanitarian action between 2012 and 2019

- As a result, UNFPA and its mandate have gained increased visibility within the humanitarian sphere
Unfpa has progressively mainstreamed humanitarian assistance in all its strategies and programmes.

However, this evolution has not been uniform and the overall institutional approach remains predominantly development-orientated.
Conclusion 3

- UNFPA 2012 Humanitarian Strategy was found relevant and useful

- However, changes in the humanitarian context call for updating it
Conclusion 4

- UNFPA has put in place several useful monitoring systems

- However, lack of coherent and comprehensive monitoring data prevents accurate measurement of effectiveness of UNFPA humanitarian action
Conclusion 5

- Good examples of processes for needs assessment, geographical targeting, working with women and youth civil society, etc.

- However, no systematic approach to these processes, and staff lack access to adequate corporate guidance.
Conclusion 6

- UNFPA has been increasingly successful at mobilizing other humanitarian resources at country level
Conclusion 7

- UNFPA has good practices of delivery of emergency kits

- However, it is generally perceived as being slow in its humanitarian response
Conclusion 8

- There are highly knowledgeable humanitarian experts at UNFPA…

- … but they are too few in numbers in view of UNFPA’s humanitarian accountabilities
Conclusion 9

- Inclusion analysis is integrated in humanitarian programming

- However, this analysis is not fully aligned with the principle of leaving no one behind
Conclusion 10

- UNFPA has improved accountability to affected populations (AAP) and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) frameworks.

- However, as the implementation of mechanisms for AAP and PSEA are still ongoing, this has not yet translated fully into increased capacities everywhere at the country level.
Conclusion 11

- UNFPA close relationships with government partners represent a clear comparative advantage for humanitarian action

- However, working closely with governments in some contexts presents a risk to humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence
Conclusion 12

- UNFPA is committed to prioritizing the localization agenda as introduced in the Grand Bargain commitments

- However, UNFPA has yet to develop a global strategy to ensure localization of aid
Conclusion 13

- The leadership and coordination role of UNFPA across IASC and mandated areas has significantly improved in recent years.

- However, UNFPA faces challenges to fully deliver on commitments.
Recommendations
Recommendation 1

Develop a strategic framework for humanitarian action

**Priority:** High  **Target:** Humanitarian Office/Senior Management

This should account for:

- Changes in the humanitarian context since the previous UNFPA humanitarian strategy in 2012
- A stronger UNFPA role within the humanitarian system
- Working across the triple nexus
- Need to integrate humanitarian response in the UNFPA Strategic Plan
- Need for resource mobilization
**Recommendation 2**

Review existing datasets and monitoring systems to identify current gaps and bottlenecks and use this to develop a comprehensive data management system.

**Priority:** High  
**Target:** Policy and Strategy Division and Humanitarian Office

- Integrate this into the new Enterprise Resources Platform
- Focus on both data management at indicator level and data collection systems
Recommendation 3

The UNFPA knowledge management approach should include a work plan to ensure ongoing embedding of corporate guidance on humanitarian processes at field level

**Priority**: Low  **Target**: Policy and Strategy Division and Humanitarian Office

- Link to the new Enterprise Resources Platform and the policies and procedures repository in use.
- Identify and address bottlenecks, gaps or access issues with respect to humanitarian knowledge/practice
Recommendation 4

UNFPA should review the corporate approach on preparedness for supplies, including, where necessary, regional stockpiling and national pre-positioning.

**Priority:** High  
**Target:** Humanitarian Office, Procurement Services Branch, Division of Management Services, Senior management, Commodity Security Branch

- Develop organization-wide preparedness policy, involving regional stockpiling and national pre-positioning.
- Consider speed as a factor as critical - in humanitarian response - as cost and quality.
- Review human resources for humanitarian logistics and monitor commodity delivery times and availability in line with supply chain management best practices.
Recommendation 5

UNFPA should develop a comprehensive plan for increasing humanitarian expertise.

**Priority:** High  
**Target:** Humanitarian Office, Division of Human Resources

- This should include a five-year humanitarian human resources strategy for increasing general humanitarian expertise

- The strategy should cover new and existing personnel and systematically utilize deployed humanitarian personnel for skills transfer

- Provide appropriate resources to the UNFPA Division of Human Resources
Recommendation 6

UNFPA should develop an inclusion strategy that is based on leaving no one behind and incorporates reaching the furthest behind first

**Priority:** Low  **Target:** Humanitarian Office, Policy and Strategy Division

- This should be developed from current global guidance on inclusion
- The strategy should provide pragmatic and practical guidance on ensuring inclusion within humanitarian settings
- It should specifically cover geographically hard-to-reach groups, women and girls, adolescents and youth, persons with disabilities and key populations
Recommendation 7

UNFPA should undertake a mapping of existing AAP initiatives at country level with a view to incorporating good or promising practice guidance.

Priority: Low

Target: Humanitarian Office, regional offices

- Develop humanitarian-specific pragmatic guidance on how best to establish sustainable feedback channels accessible by all vulnerable persons.

- Guidance should take into account unique challenges of displaced, conflict, hard-to-reach populations and systematic mechanisms for incorporating feedback into the programming cycle.
Recommendation 8

UNFPA should conduct a survey of knowledge and capacity for PSEA at country level to establish the current bottlenecks between global level and country level

**Priority:** High  **Target:** Humanitarian Office, regional offices, PSEA Coordinator

- Use this as a basis to identify where UNFPA remains at highest risk regarding sexual exploitation and abuse

- Develop a resourced work plan to systematically reduce this risk at the field level
Recommendation 9

UNFPA should develop a resource plan for ensuring that GBV sub-clusters are resourced equivalently to other clusters with well-capacitated coordinators and technical support.

**Priority:** Medium  **Target:** Humanitarian Office

- Ensure that UNFPA GBV minimum standards are adhered to
- Appoint a sub-cluster coordinator and address key coordination challenges
Recommendation 10

UNFPA should develop a plan to systematize establishment and functioning of RH working groups

**Priority:** Medium  **Target:** Humanitarian Office

This should include

- Support for a mechanism to monitor functioning RH working groups led by UNFPA;
- Assessment of the impact of absence of RH working groups within response systems;
- Systematically monitoring achievements and added value of RH working groups
Recommendation 11

UNFPA should address the gap between global-level leadership in the areas of youth and humanitarian response and peace, and country-level tangible action.

**Priority:** Medium  
**Target:** Humanitarian Office

This should include:

- A survey of crises where UNFPA leads a functioning coordination mechanism for young people in action;
- Determining resources required to translate UNFPA global commitment into country-level action;
- A review of potential partners;
- A position statement for youth and peace outlining commitments to country-level action.
Recommendation 12

Review the activities referenced within the 2018 letter of understanding with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as a foundation for increasing the UNFPA data footprint within humanitarian action

**Priority**: Medium  
**Target**: Humanitarian Office, Population and Development Branch

This should incorporate:

- A vision statement
- A three- to five-year plan on humanitarian population, health and gender data at global, field and country levels
- Resource requirements
- A work plan
For more information, reach out to UNFPA Evaluation Office

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