

Evaluation of the UNFPA response to the Syria crisis

Evaluation Results
May 2019

UNFPA Evaluation Office

Geographic coverage



383

Country and programme documents reviewed

348

People interviewed: governments, donors, NGOs, UN agencies

397

Community members consulted via focus group discussions
80% women and girls

28

Online survey respondents

6

Field case study countries: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey

5

Country notes: Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Turkey

2

Case studies: Regional Response Hub and Cross-Border Interventions

Conclusions

Overall conclusions

Programming

Coordination and leadership

Systems and structures

Conclusion 1: Slow start, prioritized hardest-to-reach populations

- UNFPA's overall response was slow to start
- UNFPA did not immediately find its leadership role across GBV, SRHR, and youth and across all country contexts
- Once the response started, UNFPA prioritized hardest-to-reach populations
- UNFPA was more effective at provision of response services than prevention
- UNFPA has not taken advantage of its expertise in population data in terms of analysis and collation of results within a population profile

Overall conclusions

Conclusion 2: Key player in the delivery of quality SRH and GBV services

- UNFPA was and is a key player in the delivery of quality SRH and GBV services for women, girls and youth across all countries
- Evidence indicates that UNFPA-supported activities are positively received and are filling essential service gaps
- However, lack of systematically-collected data precludes reliable measurement of the effectiveness of the activities (such as incidence of child marriage, cases of GBV)

Overall conclusions

Conclusion 3: Continual adaptation to evolving needs

- Despite the challenges and complexity of the crisis, UNFPA interventions have been designed based on continual adaptation to evolving needs

Programming

Conclusion 4: Gender analysis and adherence to international humanitarian law not systematically documented, but anecdotal evidence regarding their implementation

- UNFPA has not systematically documented gender and inclusion analysis, and adherence to international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law
- Some anecdotal evidence of gender and inclusion analysis and respecting of international humanitarian principles
- This is inconsistent and indicates a missed opportunity for organizational learning and support to country offices

Programming

Conclusion 5: Inconsistencies in GBV programming

- The inconsistency of the inclusion of men and boys in GBV programming by UNFPA has impacted on how successfully UNFPA has leveraged its comparative advantage on GBV programming
- Inconsistencies are based on the different interpretations of organizational language
- Leads to different ways of understanding GBV programming and utilizing GBV programmatic components (such as Women and Girls Safe Spaces)
- External stakeholders see different approaches in terms of engagement of men and boys across different contexts rather than a consistent UNFPA position

Programming

Conclusion 6: Consistency of the focus on inclusion is limited

- Most notable in the area of disability
- Efforts are being made in all countries to improve this
- However, further factors of exclusion are only being sporadically addressed
- There is extremely limited programming or access to services for key populations

Programming

Conclusion 7: Connectedness between refugee response and longer-term development strong. However, not so for cross-border operations

- Connectedness between the refugee response and longer-term development via UNFPA programming has been strong and aligned with the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)
- However, connectedness between different refugee responses and the cross-border operations has been weak, undermining long-term development
- Within the Whole of Syria approach, connectedness between interagency hubs outside of Syria and the Syria country office has been inconsistent
- Although this issue affects all UN agencies to some degree, it is a missed opportunity

Programming

Conclusion 8: The whole of Syria GBV response is exceptionally good

- Demonstrated by the high-quality sub-cluster developed outputs such as Voices and the GBV dashboard
- The whole of Syria GBV response demonstrates a high return on investment via the regional response hub and other interagency hubs
- However, the credibility that products such as Voices have afforded GBV information have been insufficiently leveraged to embed GBV as a life-saving response

**Coordination
and
Leadership**

Conclusion 9: SRHR has received less attention and investment

- This is reflected in reduced Whole of Syria SRHR coordination, although not necessarily in terms of SRHR programming
- UNFPA GBV coordination and provider of last resort role has no formalized equivalent SRHR responsibility
- UNFPA does normally adopt an informal leadership role of SRHR through the establishment of Reproductive Health Working Groups

**Coordination
and
Leadership**

Conclusion 10: emerging leadership role for youth in humanitarian action not reflected in the UNFPA Syria response

- This role is assumed through leadership of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action, UNSCR 2250 and the UNFPA 2014-2017 Strategic Plan
- There is a disconnect between UNFPA global action and investment, and the country-level operational presence and focus

**Coordination
and
Leadership**

Conclusion 11: The regional response hub has seen a high return on investment

- The Syria Regional Response Hub has seen a high return on investment in relation to resource mobilization, representation, and coordination and data management for GBV
- However, regional internal stakeholder support has waned
- UNFPA has not reviewed the role and functions of the regional response hub in line with increased capacity of country offices

**Systems
and
structures**

Conclusion 12: General systems and structures of UNFPA have not fully supported effectiveness of responses

- An imbalance between regular resources and other resources has had a detrimental effect due to lack of flexibility that other resources impose on programming
- Fast-track procedures have been used inconsistently
- Surge and emergency commodities (reproductive health kits) have not always been aligned with the purpose of those mechanisms due to lack of flexibility in systems and processes

**Systems
and
structures**



Recommendations

Recommendations for
Syria Regional Response

Recommendations for
UNFPA globally

Recommendations for Syria Regional Response

Recommendation 1

Ensuring better monitoring of results

UNFPA should recognize the current limitations with monitoring, including the gap in data management within Syria regional response and utilize expertise of UNFPA in population dynamics demonstrated within development programming to contextualize results data



Directed to:

UNFPA regional offices (ASRO and EECARO) with support from Technical Division and Policy and Strategy Division

Recommendations for Syria Regional Response

Recommendation 2

Revisiting the role and functions of the regional response hub

UNFPA should review the functions of the Syria regional response hub in light of changing circumstances and agree upon the future role of the regional response hub



Directed to:

UNFPA Humanitarian Office

Recommendations for Syria Regional Response

Recommendation 3

Clarifying UNFPA corporate position on inclusion of men and boys in GBV response

UNFPA should clarify its position on GBV vis-à-vis inclusion of men and boys within the Syria regional response.



Directed to:

UNFPA Regional Offices (ASRO and EECARO) for clarifying to country offices

Recommendations for Syria Regional Response

Recommendation 4

Improving systems and procedures of UNFPA for an enhanced response

UNFPA should review the use of fast-track procedures, surge, and emergency commodities, and continue advocating with Member States and donors for an adequate level of regular resources, to increase the efficiency of the Syria regional response.



Directed to:

UNFPA Regional Offices (ASRO and EECARO) with support from UNFPA Headquarters senior management, the Division of Human Resources, and the Procurement and Supply Branch

Recommendations for Syria Regional Response

Recommendation 5

Stepping up youth programming and coordination

UNFPA should recognize the vacuum around youth leadership and step up youth programming and coordination across the Syria regional response.



Directed to:

UNFPA ASRO to lead with UNFPA EECARO, UNFPA country offices and the regional response hub with support from Technical Division and the Humanitarian Office

Recommendations for Syria Regional Response

Recommendation 6 Investing more in SRHR coordination

UNFPA should commit internally to resourcing and supporting SRHR coordination within the Syria regional response to the same level as GBV coordination



Directed to:

UNFPA regional offices (ASRO primarily, also EECARO)

Recommendations for Syria Regional Response

Recommendation 7

Documenting gender analysis and adherence to humanitarian principles and humanitarian law

UNFPA should increase documentation of gender analysis and adherence to international humanitarian principles, international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international refugee law in the Syria regional response



Directed to:

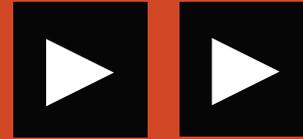
Syria Regional Response country offices (Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey); regional offices (ASRO and EECARO) for support

Recommendation 8

Use the Whole of Syria GBV sub cluster as a model for UNFPA coordination responsibilities

UNFPA should use the Whole of Syria GBV sub cluster as a blueprint for UNFPA coordination responsibilities globally

Recommendations for UNFPA globally



Directed to:

UNFPA Headquarters senior management and the Humanitarian Office (resourcing globally and roll-out globally)

Recommendation 9

Learning lessons from the case study on the regional response hub

UNFPA should use the Regional Response Hub Case Study Report, together with a further mapping/rapid appraisal of effectiveness of other agency hub mechanisms, to develop a blueprint for the establishment of other potential hubs in the future

Recommendations for UNFPA globally



Directed to:

UNFPA Humanitarian Office



Thank you