

EVALUATION BRIEF

FINAL INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION

The Arab Initiative to Build National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking in the Arab Countries (XAMX59)

Region: Middle East & North Africa

Duration: 2012-2020.

Donors: The State of Qatar

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Full report:
https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2020.html

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The project "The Arab Initiative to Build National Capacities to Combat Human Trafficking in the Arab Countries" (XAMX59) was developed and implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Office for the Gulf Cooperation Council Region (OGCCR) in association with the Qatar Foundation for Combating Human Trafficking (QFCHT). The project was originally designed to last three years (from January 2012 to December 2014), but significant delays extended implementation until June 2020. The overall budget of the project is USD\$5.3 million, with \$700,000 in-kind contribution from the Government of Qatar through the QFCHT. The project partnered with the League of Arab States (LAS), the International Labour Organization (ILO), along with the main partner, QFCHT. The project's main objective was to build national capacities in the Arab region to effectively combat human trafficking.

MAIN FINDINGS

The project design was found to provide appropriate tools and employ suitable mechanisms to build capacities and induce policy change, but implementation could have benefited from a less ambitious and more detailed design. The project was found to be very relevant to the needs of Arab countries, and in line with UNODC's frameworks and strategies as well as with the SDGs. Throughout the course of implementation, the project team was able to navigate through severe challenges facing the efficiency of the project. A host of different internal and external factors limited the efficiency of the project during implementation, ultimately leading to severe delays, extending the 3-year project to a total of 9 years. The project was found to be partially effective in implementing its activities and contributing to its intended results. While challenges adversely influenced overall effectiveness, the partnerships forged by the project, both within the UNODC and with other organisations, contributed greatly to increasing its overall effectiveness. However, the evaluation found that much of the scope of the project was shared with another project on Strengthening the Framework of the Arab Region to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (XMEX19), implemented by the UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA), which made it difficult to attribute activities and results to each of these projects. Nevertheless, the project was found to have contributed to real actual changes in regional and national policies and capacities, and in the overall efforts to



combat human trafficking among different countries in the region. External research carried out by the evaluation team demonstrated how the different countries of the region have advanced in the field of combating human trafficking in international reports and indices. The project was found to produce sustainable results through its work on building capacities, contributing to policy change, developing manuals and tools, and establishing regional and national networks, all of which enhance the sustainability of results. But sustainability could have been further enhanced through a well-established exit plan. The project was also found to generally adhere to the principles of human rights, gender equality and leaving no one behind, since human trafficking is considered to be a major human rights violation impacting the most vulnerable groups, including women and girls.

LESSONS LEARNED

The main lesson learned is that it is difficult to compensate for not having one designated project manager, despite tremendous efforts done by the project team. A project manager increases the likelihood for project success through providing vision and direction, increasing efficiency, managing the scope and resources, dealing with arising risks, and effectively closing the project.

GOOD PRACTICES

The main best practice is the strong partnerships forged during the project, both among UNODC offices and between UNODC and other organisations, which were pivotal in implementing the activities as planned and realizing outputs. Partnerships are crucial for development projects.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed method approach of qualitative and quantitative methods was utilized to ensure an inclusive methodology as well as triangulation of results. Main findings were validated only after being triangulated with various data sources. A mixed sampling strategy was utilized for the selection of informants for the fieldwork. A purposive sampling strategy was used for informants of the in-depth semi structured interviews, while a stratified random sampling strategy was used for the selection of respondents to the online survey (beneficiaries), according to the target group.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Project Design:** Ensure that the design of future projects is more realistic and specific, taking into account restraints, including human, financial and time resources.
2. **M&E Frameworks:** Design and incorporate M&E frameworks in future programming to enhance project implementation.
3. **Follow-up Project:** Design and implement a follow-up project to continue momentum and build on achievements.
4. **Partnerships:** Capitalize on the successful partnerships forged in this project between UNODC offices and institutions.
5. **Project Management:** Ensure a complete management set up for future projects, including one designated project manager for the course of the implementation.
6. **Project Portfolio:** Ensure that portfolio projects are effectively and efficiently distributed to ensure complementation rather than duplication.
7. **Exit Strategy:** Ensure future projects incorporate an exit plan/ strategy during the design stage to maximise sustainability of results.
8. **Human Rights, Gender Equality and Leaving No One Behind:** Ensure that Human Rights, Gender Equality and Leaving No One Behind considerations are fully taken into account in future project activities.
9. **Mid-term Evaluation:** Plan for a midterm evaluation at the design stage to allow for an independent view on implementation and any change in project directions.