

INDEPENDENT IN-DEPTH EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

RESPONSE TO DRUGS AND RELATED ORGANIZED CRIME IN NIGERIA

Country: Nigeria.

Duration: 1 January 2013 to
December 2022.

Donors: European Union.

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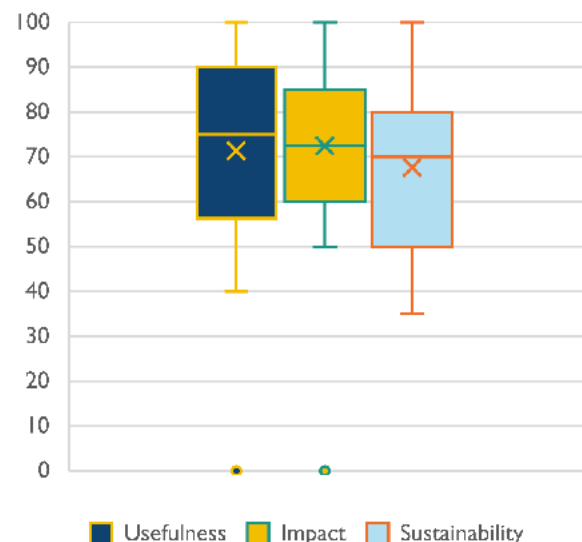
Full report: www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2022.html

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This European Union-funded UNODC project “Response to Drugs and Related Organized Crime in Nigeria” (NGAV16 (FED/2012/306-744)) supported the development of more result-oriented, integrated and balanced measures to address the complex and rapidly evolving challenges pertaining to drugs and organized crime in Nigeria with the overall objective of fostering better governance, security and public health in the country. It directed efforts towards the development of a more nuanced and evidence-based approach to the drug problem with particular attention to both supply and demand. The project had three interrelated interventions pertaining to (a) improving information and the evidence-base on drug use and crime, for policy and programming; (b) enhancing technical and operational capacity in front-line agencies and services leading to targeted interventions on drugs/organized crime-related activities in Nigeria, including improved internal scrutiny processes; and (c) improving facilities and capacity to offer and manage drug treatment/rehabilitation and prevention through the creation of a reliable network of quality drug treatment service providers available for people using drugs. The project integrated human rights and gender sensitivity in the design of services and targeted a wide spectrum of direct and indirect beneficiaries.

MAIN FINDINGS

Aligned to Nigeria’s drug control needs, the UNODC mandates, and to some extent the 2030 Agenda, the project played a critical role in supporting the Government of Nigeria to develop and operationalize a more comprehensive and balanced policy and normative framework on drugs and organized crime, and in enhancing inter-agency capacities and coordination and to some extent intersectoral cooperation at national and regional levels. The project delivered its outputs in an efficient manner, although initial administrative bottlenecks, the COVID-19 pandemic and the lack of a strong M&E system had some adverse effects on project delivery. However, the overall efficiency of the project was greatly enhanced by the expertise of UNODC in drug control and the strong and sustained financial support for the project from the European Union. The project successfully supported the construction of a credible and reliable evidence base on drugs in Nigeria, and significantly contributed to building an enabling environment for research and data collection on drug use. The project encouraged national stakeholders to adopt a more inclusive and balanced approach and practices to drug control and care. It notably paved the way for increased consideration of gender and human rights sensitivity through the unprecedented promotion of equal access to controlled medicines as well as efforts on ensuring greater access to health and to equal representation and fair trials for people facing drug-related offences. Despite the extent of transformative support provided by the project, its direct impact on Nigerian population and security has however so far been modest, which is not a reflection on the project, rather this has also largely to do with the size



Usefulness: mean=70.4, SD=26.1 (N=86)*
Impact: mean=72.4, SD=18.2 (N=82)
Sustainability: mean=67.6, SD=15.8 (N=82)

*N=number of respondents; SD=Standard deviation.

of the fast-evolving challenges confronting Nigeria and the incremental nature of the type of policy evolutions the project supports.

LESSONS LEARNED

The main lessons to emerge from the project pertain to (a) the need for planning to adequately consider procurement, contracting and hiring issues to avoid delays, especially when projects seek ambitious social changes; and (b) future projects and programmes would do well to estimate and account for attrition in building sustainable capacity of national counterparts.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-based and localized technical support Highly relevant to UNODC mandates and national needs Long-term vision and donor support Capacity development work and focus on sustainability Adaptability to national context (challenges and opportunities) and open to innovative initiatives as the project unfolds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear theory of change Weak monitoring and reporting of outcome results Inadequate needs assessment in participant selection
Opportunities	Threats/challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued national and regional focus on drugs and organized crime issues Cross-pollination of ideas and exploiting synergy among various stakeholders Expanding efforts from federal to subnational (state and local government) levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc joint programming with other United Nations agencies Uncertain future funding Ongoing security issues that limit the project's reach Incipient progress and limited scope and buy-in may not be sustained without continuous attention and support

GOOD PRACTICES

The best practices that emerged from the project consisted of (a) the significance of building local capacity to promote greater sustainability; (b) provision of pro-bono services for the most vulnerable people facing drug-related offences; (c) the development and use of the National Epidemiology Network on Drug Use (NENDU) platform to collect and process routine data on drug use in the country to monitor treatment in-take into rehabilitation centres for treatment and care; and (d) supporting national researchers and the use of research and credible evidence in project implementation.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team used a theory-based, utilization-focused and mixed-method approach. All tools were adapted to the remote data-collection constraints related to the global pandemic, while on the ground data collection was ensured by the combination of a team of international and national evaluation and substantive experts. In the inception phase, the evaluation team developed and validated a theory of change and an associated evaluation results matrix. All data were collected keeping this results matrix in mind and findings were triangulated using a mixed-method approach involving the desk review of 95 project documents, 85 in-depth interviews with core learning partners and project stakeholders, and an online survey of 89 key stakeholders as well as field visits to four designated health facilities to observe the project work in operation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The UNODC Country Office in Nigeria (CONIG) needs to seek external resources to sustain and build on the momentum gained so far.
- Further drug control interventions in Nigeria should be designed to focus on demand reduction components such as drug prevention treatment and care, the Unplugged programme as well as rehabilitation of drug users.
- CONIG should explore the possibility of tailoring interventions on the basis of risk assessment.
- A part-time human rights and inclusiveness focal point in the project team for future programming should be added to ensure mainstreaming and monitoring of human rights, gender and "leaving no one behind" aspects.
- CONIG should further support national structures such as the second National Drug Use Survey for improving their data collection capacity with a view to supporting more robust policy and programming.
- Future UNODC projects of this nature and size should endeavour to put in place M&E focal points, who should be tasked with the responsibility for ensuring strong M&E systems.
- CONIG should integrate special studies focused on key outcomes and impacts so as to document and learn about the changes occurring at different levels.
- CONIG needs to continue developing interventions aimed at advocating for increased national support, including funding, and ownership of drugs and crime-related interventions.