

EVALUATION BRIEFS

FINAL INDEPENDENT IN-DEPTH EVALUATION

DISMANTLING THE CRIMINAL NETWORKS OPERATING IN NORTH AFRICA AND INVOLVED IN MIGRANT SMUGGLING AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING (XAMAB3)

Region: North Africa (Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt and Libya)

Duration: April 2018-July 2023

Donors: European Union (EU)

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Full report: URL:

https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2023.html

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The four-year project was launched in August 2019 by UNODC, Regional Office (RO) for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA) and funded by the European Union (EU) with the aim of combating both TiP and SoM; enhancing skills and knowledge on special investigation techniques, allowing relevant authorities to dismantle criminal networks more effectively, as well as strengthening practical expertise and skills to identify, investigate, and refer victims of human trafficking and smuggled migrants among migrant communities. XAMAB3 had a budget of 15 million euros across four countries: Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt

MAIN FINDINGS

Relevance: The project addressed national priorities in Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco, and addressed urgent needs in Libya despite the lack of Constitution and law on human trafficking. The project design encountered difficulties such as the lack of evidence from needs assessment and limited stakeholder participation. The project was ambitious considering its allocated budget and the management complexities. Government stakeholders expressed doubts about the value of a regional design, preferring national projects.

Efficiency: National counterparts recognized the technical expertise and effective communication with UNODC staff, emphasizing the value of field offices. However, the project's compartmentalized approach hindered knowledge sharing among outcomes, leading to a lack of collaboration. The project's budget allocation was primarily based on outcomes, which limited management effectiveness and hindered the ability to compare implementation efficiency across countries.

Coherence: In Egypt, joint activities with the ILO and IOM resulted in shared expertise and resources. In Libya, Tunisia, and Morocco, no formal partnerships were established although the project team ensured synergies. The Steering Committee was not operationalized in all countries except Tunisia, which limited participation and monitoring by national counterparts and undermined project ownership. Improving coordination among different criminal justice institutions was not an explicit outcome although the multi-sectorial approach in trainings helped to enhance coordination.

Effectiveness: The training and equipment facilitated the operational work although they had higher expectations regarding the timeliness of delivery. The four countries agreed that there is room for improvement (longer, more continuous, specialised and more practical trainings). There is no sufficient evidence that demonstrate that trainings' knowledge and skills were operationalized to combat TIP and SOM. Most of the trainings mainly focused on the difference between TiP and SoM whereas the concept of smuggling was addressed in a limited extent. The project has made good progress in contributing to the composition of pools of specialists in targeted areas. The regional dimension was limited to bilateral exchanges which were mostly beneficial to Libya. The project failed to consider the predominant nature of migration flows, occurring between Sub-Saharan Africa and North African countries.

Impact: The project was an opportunity to assess and understand the context, limitations and needs of the countries. The capitalization of the lessons learned will pave the way for future interventions. Addressing the need for victim-centred approach and the importance of identifying and referral is a step towards a more comprehensive approach to combating human trafficking. Multisectoral trainings contributed to reinforce the national referral mechanisms and made it more

inclusive. The project also contributed to enhance the strategic positioning of UNODC at the national level. **Sustainability:** ToT was recognized as beneficial for contributing to building national capacities, despite its limited scope. There is insufficient evidence to suggest that the project adequately planned for cascading the trainings or providing long-term support. Stakeholders valued the procurement of equipment, intelligence, and forensic software. However, challenges arose regarding license durations and equipment maintenance. Drafting of TIP legislation in Libya was a notable achievement. The project also reinforced the role of National Coordination TIP bodies. **HRG+** The capacity building interventions gave limited attention given to capacity gaps in human rights and a gender-sensitive perspective. The HRBA was incorporated into the project's design and implementation, particularly in Libya. Efforts were made to encourage the participation of female professionals and gender dimensions of criminal justice response were also integrated in trainings. However, the project did not sufficiently explore seeking human rights expertise or building partnerships with human rights organizations, except in Libya. The project emphasized the "leaving no one behind" and victim-centred approach in Focus Areas II and IV. However, it was challenging to substantiate these principles in Focus Area III. There was no evidence of specific disability mainstreaming measures.

LESSONS LEARNED

Key lesson learned include the importance of 1) The inclusion of a comprehensive needs assessment due to contextual differences among countries, 2) Engaging with national institutions in the project design to foster national ownership. 3) Developing and maintaining governance mechanisms at national levels to engage different stakeholders. 4) Streamlining the administration and human resources structure with clear lines of communication, authority and decision making, to facilitate efficient implementation of complex projects.

GOOD PRACTICES

Key good practices include the 1) The use of the ToT modality to disseminate knowledge and skills to targeted professionals. 2) Inter-agency cooperation in Egypt, where UNODC effectively collaborated with ILO. 3) The training of female officers from CID and DCIM on human rights to address the specific gender needs of female victims 4) The use of simulation exercises.



METHODOLOGY

A mixed methods approach was adopted to gather qualitative and quantitative data through document review, semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and an online survey. Data and information were triangulated across sources (primary and secondary) and the different methods used. Field visits took place in May 2023 in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt and in Libya, stakeholders were consulted online. 536 documents were reviewed, while 148 people participated in the evaluation through semi-structured interviews, focus groups and the survey representing UNODC ROMENA, Government, civil society and donors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct a prior needs assessment and ensure participation of national institutional stakeholders in the design.
2. Develop a comprehensive ToC at regional/national level.
3. Streamline the administration and human resources' structure for more efficient implementation at country level.
4. Strengthen results-based management to reinforce M&E and reporting.
5. Develop and maintain inclusive governance mechanisms to promote ownership.
6. Continue supporting the institutionalization of technical curricula and training tools.
7. Enhance the regional dimension in the design process.
8. Integrate trainings on TIP and SOM and provide advanced knowledge on both crimes.
9. Ensure that trainings address gender and HR dimension, emphasizing the victim-centred and child rights approach.



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