

# EVALUATION BRIEFS

## INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION

# Supporting the Establishment of CBT Treatment Programmes in Prison Settings, in Line with International Standards (XAMW04)

**Region:** Tunisia

**Duration:** September 2021 to June 2024

**Donors:** US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

**Evaluation team:** Rani Khoury (Evaluation Expert) and Dr. Haifa Zalila (Substantive Expert)

**Full report:**  
[www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports\\_year\\_2024.html](http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2024.html)

## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa (ROMENA) and the UNODC Tunis Program Office implemented a 45-month project “Supporting the Establishment of CBT Treatment Program in Prison Setting, in Line with International Standards” with a value of \$1.99 million funded by the US Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL). The objective of the project was to establish an effective approach to reduce recidivism in Tunisia through the development of sustainable CBT programming and applying CBT in three pilot prisons including Borj Al Amri (male prison), Borj Al Roumi (male prison), and Manouba (female prison). The Final Evaluation assessed the performance of the project in terms of its relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion and leaving no one behind. The project was implemented in close partnership with the General Committee for Prisons and Rehabilitation (CGPR) and the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

## MAIN FINDINGS

The project was found to be relevant to the context of Tunisia and came as a direct response to a request made by the CGPR. An initial needs assessment coupled with a proactive approach in responding to arising priorities enhanced the project’s relevance during implementation. The project was also found to be coherent given its alignment with relevant international standards (i.e. the Mandela Rules and Bangkok Rules) and also with SDGs 3, 5, and 16. The project was aligned with the UNODC’s international and regional strategies especially with the focus area of strengthening crime/violence prevention. While the project’s efficiency was adversely impacted by a number of factors that stemmed from a difficult working environment, measures were taken by the project team to help mitigate the impact on efficiency. The project was found to have effectively contributed to developing CBT programming for prison settings in collaboration with national counterparts (GCPR/MoJ), through the development of a comprehensive CBT training program and procedural manual for prison settings in a participatory approach, and raising the awareness on CBT among relevant stakeholders. While there were challenges in implementing the capacity building component of the project according to plan, the project team’s strategic approach and adaptability in balancing between the difficult working environment and its challenges on the one hand, and maintaining the project’s contribution to its outcomes on the other hand facilitated the project’s implementation of most capacity building activities, with the exception of the planned ToT. Overall, trainees were mostly satisfied with the capacity building of the project, indicating how such training has facilitated their interaction with or care of detainees. Alongside the extensive capacity building effort, the project also provided a range of equipment to the three selected prisons to



Prison psychologists & physicians receiving advanced CBT training

enable an environment conducive to CBT for both prison staff and detainees. The project's introduction of a master class on CBT in Prison Settings in partnership with the Faculty of Medicine was a major effective and sustainable achievements of the project. But one area in which the project achieved limited progress was supporting the provision of after-release CBT sessions under the project's third outcome, mainly due to the institutional set up in Tunis which was not foreseen during the design of the project. To compensate for this, the project focused its efforts on alternative means to address CBT continuity for prisoners after their release, including holding several roundtable discussions with the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social affairs. The project was able to gain the trust and commitment of national stakeholders and enable their sense of ownership of the project and its results. While project focused on sustaining the developed CBT programming through a number of different measures, further UNODC assistance would still be needed to support counterparts in building on the achievements of this pilot initiative. The project's strong focus on streamlining and sensitizing gender issues across its different components, including awareness, capacity building, and equipment provision, ensured a holistic approach to promoting gender equality. Overall, the project was found to uphold the rights of detainees. Despite the absence of an explicit 'do no harm' strategy or approach by the project, various 'do no harm' considerations were incorporated in the implementation of the different project components

## LESSONS LEARNED

- A mismatch between an implementing partners assess/declared capacity and its actual capacity, may give rise to challenges during implementation
- An inclusive approach to implementation can go a long way to enable an effective contribution to project results.

## GOOD PRACTICES

- A strategic partnership and participatory approach characterized by transparency, perseverance, and responsiveness can contribute to overcoming contextual challenges to implementation and progress
- Partnering with academic institutions can greatly enhance the sustainability of project results
- A holistic approach to sensitizing and integrating gender matters into various components of a project enhances its contribution to gender equality
- Building the capacity of government counterparts in Results Based Management & Strategic planning can help facilitate coordination and implementation of a project and enhance ownership of the project and its results

## METHODOLOGY

A mixed methods approach was utilized in this evaluation to ensure an inclusive methodology as well as triangulated findings. In addition to the comprehensive desk review, the evaluation reached 41 project stakeholders and beneficiaries (of which 25 were females) through semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.



**UNODC**  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SECTION

<https://www.unodc.org/evaluation>  
[unodc-ies@un.org](mailto:unodc-ies@un.org)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Expand the CBT approach to other prisons in Tunisia through a second phase
2. Focus on the provision of CBT to detainees after their release, with the ultimate objective of integrating CBT into after-release rehabilitation programs.
3. Carry out ToTs for health staff to enable the creation of a pool of psychologist trainers/supervisors who can then (i) provide the basic CBT training in the National School for Prisons and Rehabilitation in Tunisia with the ultimate objective of institutionalizing it as part of the school's curricula and regular trainings, and (ii) act as supervisors and points of reference for other prison health staff who will be trained in the upcoming phase
4. Conduct a more comprehensive and systematic assessment of CSOs' administrative, financial, and technical capacity prior to selecting an implementing partner, and then allocate a suitable scope of work matching the assessed capacity.
5. Update the contents of the capacity building training material targeting health staff.
6. Integrate an explicit 'do no harm' analysis and approach.