

# INDEPENDENT EVALUATION RESULTS OF UNODC WORK IN WEST AND CENTRAL ASIA: SUCCESSFUL SIDE EVENT AT CND

13 April 2021 – IES held an on-line side event on “Independent evaluation results of UNODC’s work in West and Central Asia: Fostering support to health and social development for all” at the 64th Session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna. The side event was organized in collaboration with the Regional Section for Europe, West and Central Asia; Regional Programme (RP) for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries; Programme for Central Asia; Country Partnership Programme in the Islamic Republic of Iran; Country Programme (CP) for Afghanistan; Country Programme (CP) for Pakistan, and the Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section (PTRS) at UNODC.

The side event, moderated by Katherine Aston, Deputy Chief, IES, focussed on evaluation results related to UNODC programming on drugs and health in West and Central Asia. Dr. Katharina Kayser, Chief, IES, highlighted the importance but also challenges in conducting the strategic and complex evaluation during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring a participatory approach, leaving no one behind.

Dr. Kayser further emphasized that the evaluation had been “a unique and valuable opportunity to provide information, learning and accountability at a strategic level”, referring to the increasing role of independent strategic evaluation in UN reforms and vis-à-vis the targets of the SDGs, being fully in line with interests by Member States.

## PANELLISTS

- \* Dr. Katharina Kayser, Chief, Independent Evaluation Section, UNODC
- \* Mr. Jim Newkirk, Lead Evaluator
- \* Mr. Jeremy Milsom, Country Representative, UNODC Country Office Pakistan (COPAK)
- \* Ms. Roya Soltanian, Technical Lead, Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries
- \* Ms. Deborah Alimi, Drugs and Health Expert (Evaluation Team Member)

Mr. Jeremy Milsom, Country Representative, UNODC Country Office Pakistan, presented some background information on UNODC’s work in West and Central Asia, highlighting that “the rollout of the Strengthening Families Programme (SFP 10-14) in West and Central Asia is a strong example of the efficacy of the UNODC three-tier approach of country, regional and global programming.”

Mr. Milsom’s intervention was followed by Ms. Roya Soltanian, Technical Lead, Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries, giving an overview of the Strengthening Families Programme (SFP 10-14) implementation in the region, further referring to strong support by UNODC PTRS in Vienna in the process. Ms. Soltanian further showed a short video on work under the SFP 10-14, with a training event for facilitators in supporting families and youth on how to avoid risky behaviours, including drug use.

## IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION



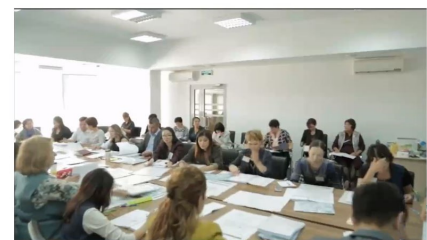
UN Photo/Mark Garten

“We must ensure the SDGs help transform the lives of people around the world. Words must be turned into impactful action. This will not happen without accountability, evaluation and learning.”

UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed

Mr. Jim Newkirk, Lead Evaluator noted the evaluation's conclusions on the need for a stronger focus on coherence between global, country and regional programming and on longer-term outcomes. He emphasized that “the programmes are achieving a range of important, visible results but more work is needed in telling the story of the impact of the programmes.” Moreover, Mr. Newkirk provided some statistics of the evaluation, covering 8 countries (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan), 5 UNODC Programmes and 4 Sub-Programmes.

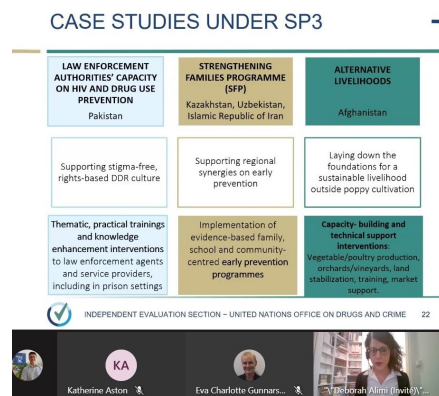
## VIDEO PRESENTATION OF SFP



Ms. Deborah Alimi, Drugs and Health Expert (Evaluation Team Member) shared key findings of the three evaluation case studies: Law Enforcement Authorities' Capacity on HIV and Drug Use Prevention in Pakistan; SFP 10-14 in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran; as well as Alternative Livelihoods in Afghanistan.

Ms. Alimi gave an overview of the case study approach and how the voices of final beneficiaries were included in the process. After a brief introduction on the three cases, she provided an overview of the key findings for each of them, as well as key lessons learned for future work. She emphasized that “fostering a demand reduction and prevention culture required continued and culturally-sensitive dialogues across sectors, professional horizons, and generations.” She also pointed out the importance of ownership, long-term commitment and policy coherence to ensure socio-economic opportunities created outside the illicit economy are maintained in a more sustainable way.

The presentation concluded with Programme Management interventions on the evaluation results and follow-up action. Mr. Kaveh Moradi, Deputy Representative, UNODC Country Office in the Islamic Republic of Iran, stated



“satisfaction with the results and recommendations of the in-depth independent evaluation of UNODC Iran Country Partnership Programme 2015-2021. The close cooperation of UNODC Iran and the Government of Iran in the introduction and implementation of the Strengthening Families Programme and Strong Families Programme in several settings across the country was highlighted as a successful part of Programme implementation in Iran.”

#### INTERVENERS

- \* Mr. Kaveh Moradi, Deputy Representative, UNODC Country Office in the Islamic Republic of Iran (COIRA)
- \* Mr. Borikhan Shaumarov, Project Officer, UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia (ROCA)
- \* Mr. Wadih Maloouf, Project Coordinator Prevention, UNODC Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation Section, (PTRS)
- \* Ms. Anubha Sood, acting Country Representative, UNODC Country Office for Afghanistan (COAFG)

Mr. Borikhan Shaumarov, Project Officer, UNODC Regional Office for Central Asia, provided a statement from an SFP participant to show the importance of the programme. The participant stated “I would like my friends and neighbours to participate in such family programmes, because I learned many useful techniques in this programme. For example, to listen to my child with care, to set family rules and to support my child in difficult situations”.

Mr. Wadih Maalouf, Project Coordinator Prevention, UNODC PTRS, further emphasized that “the family skills programming, exemplified by Strengthening the Families Programme, is a strong example of the feasibility and efficacy of the UNODC three-tier approach of country, regional and global programming: Country programmes supporting piloting nationally; regional programmes helping the rollout while facilitating and promoting knowledge exchange; and, the global prevention programme of PTRS technically guiding and supporting and advocating for the value of such family skills programming beyond just drug prevention, reinforcing UNODC’s position on respective UNCTs in support of SDGs including through prevention of violence (violence against children), crime and mental health.”

The last intervener, Ms. Anubha Sood, acting Country Representative, UNODC Country Office for Afghanistan, pointed out that “The Country Programme for Afghanistan has adopted an integrated programme approach that aims at delivering outcomes and outputs through sub-programmes rather than through standalone projects and initiatives. The program includes a specific focus on partnership, with civil society, international partners, the UN family and specifically partnership and strong links with the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighboring Countries and its links to UNODC’s Global Programme.” She further added, that the UNODC experience shows that success in alternative development does not come quickly, as it is dependent on long-term investments that enhance human development, gender equality, security, the rule of law, institutional presence and sustainability.

Finally, Dr. Kayser thanked the 50 side event participants as well as UNODC Programme Management for their full engagement throughout the process, reiterating that the evaluation had ensured timely and solid results for input into the next phase of programming.

**Further information:** CND side event flyer; IES website