

EVALUATION BRIEF

IN-DEPTH EVALUATION

UNODC Programming in West and Central Asia

(Including the Country Programme for Afghanistan, the Country Programme for Pakistan, the Country Partnership Programme in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Programme for Central Asia and the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries)

Region: West and Central Asia

Duration: 2015-2021

Donors: Austria, Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States, NATO, OFID (OPEC Fund for International Development), UNAIDS, UN Women

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Full report: URL

https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2021.html

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Aiming to assist the Member States in their efforts to address the security, economic, governance, social/ health and development challenges in the region of West and Central Asia, UNODC has developed approaches at the country, regional and inter-regional levels. Currently, there are five programmes operating in Central and West Asia. One is a regional programme focused on regional initiatives – the Regional Programme for Afghanistan and Neighbouring Countries. In addition, UNODC has the Programme for Central Asia, which works in five countries in Central Asia. Working at the country level UNODC is represented by the Country Programme for Afghanistan, the Country Programme for Pakistan and the Country Partnership Programme in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

MAIN FINDINGS

There is particular relevance to stakeholders in programming across the region and programmes demonstrate flexibility in the face of changing needs and priorities. UNODC staff are valued partners of government counterparts and UNODC programmes are valued members of the UN family. There have been important results across all programmes and in all sub-programmes, specifically in terms of partnership development both within countries and across borders. There is currently a lack of strategic and operational

coherence between the Regional Programme and the Country Programmes. While programmes maintain acceptable rates of implementation, funding shortfalls impact on efficiency. Programmes are making significant contributions to Member State implementation of international Conventions and other instruments and impact potential is significant. Programme reporting would benefit from a greater emphasis on outcome level analysis and linkages to the SDGs and UNSCDFs. Programmes would benefit from a greater focus on capturing and tracking longer-term impact. There are many examples of national ownership of programme initiatives. Human rights, gender and the principle of leaving no one behind are prominent in programme design across the region.



Forensics Lab, Uzbekistan

LESSONS LEARNED

The programme steering committee model is a lesson learned and good practice, giving structure to the inputs of counterparts in programme design and implementation, and can be emulated in other regions. A greater emphasis should be placed on national expertise, particularly in delivery of training programmes. Funding models and approaches to donors require analysis to ensure fundraising is being done in the most effective way.

GOOD PRACTICE

The Strengthening Families Programme (SFP) and Families and Schools Together (FAST) programmes constitute good practice in evidence-based, early prevention programmes, dedicated to children, young adolescents and parents. All eight countries have piloted, and implemented to an extent, both the SFP and the FAST. The methods used in the SFP have been theoretically and empirically tested and are easily adapted to country contexts.

“The focus on quality of staff and expertise and related relationship building is highlighted as a good practice”, although at times negatively impacted by staff rotation/turnover. The developing use of evidence-based programming enables a more refined programming focus. The programme approach and related five-year programming framework constitute good practice.

METHODOLOGY

Through defined guidelines and frameworks, the evaluation took a mixed-methodology, theory-based and conflict sensitive approach, while giving consideration to the complexities of evaluation research during the Covid-19 pandemic/ health crisis. Significant emphasis was placed on the role of national evaluators, within a culturally sensitive approach. Implementing partners facilitated beneficiary interactions for the evaluation’s case studies.

Secondary data sources included a large number and wide variety of programme documentation. A total of 256 individuals provided primary data inputs to the evaluation, 180 through interviews and 76 through surveys and email questionnaires.



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INDEPENDENT EVALUATION SECTION

[https://www.unodc.org/evaluation/
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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *A Pause in Programme Design Activities* is recommended until the current lack of clarity in roles, responsibilities and programme structure is resolved.

2. *A Regional Planning Conference/ Retreat* is recommended during the design preparation pause, with the intent of addressing the regional programming structure and to provide clarity of direction for all management and staff in the region.

3. *Programme Structure Definitions:* Recommended that UNODC headquarters, together with field office representatives, establish for the organisation a full set of definitions and criteria for the geographical structures that frame and are responsible for delivering UNODC programming.

4. *Tracking Longer-term Successes:* Recommended that particular focus be given in the programme documents for the next 5-year phase to designs, monitoring approaches and reporting on each programme’s full history and on all of short, medium and longer-term objectives and results.

5. *Regional Fundraising Focus and Process:* Recommended that the programmes in the region look jointly at fundraising strategies and approaches with the intention of maximising opportunities while demonstrating a regional cohesion.

6. *Contributions to One UN Processes:* Recommended that the current visible engagement in One UN processes, including UNCTs, be further strengthened across the region through development of strategic frameworks for partnership with sister UN agencies.

7. *A More Strategic Implementation of Leave No One Behind Principles* is recommended to place a greater emphasis on implementing a framework of leaving no one behind.