

Formative evaluation of the organizational resilience of UNFPA in light of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic



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The COVID-19 pandemic, with over 646 million cases and 6.6 million deaths, disproportionately affected women and girls. The pandemic disrupted access to life-saving health services, deepened gender inequalities and increased gender-based violence and other harmful practices. As a response to the pandemic, UNFPA quickly adjusted its operations to the global crisis.

The UNFPA Independent Evaluation Office commissioned an evaluation of organizational resilience of UNFPA in light of its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to gain insights and lessons that can bolster the resilience of UNFPA against future global crises.

QUICK FACTS

403 (63% women) people consulted in country, regional and global interviews and community level focus group discussions



800+ documents reviewed



Analysis of financial and programme monitoring data

13 global
33 regional
255 national
interviews with key stakeholders

Extended desk review, including remote interviews in 9 countries



6 country case studies

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- COVID-19 served as an important test of the resilience of UNFPA, amplifying its programmatic strengths but exposing its weaknesses
- In the pandemic response, UNFPA leveraged its flexibility and the commitment and resourcefulness of its personnel to innovate across all levels
- UNFPA made important contributions to mitigating the effects of COVID-19 on maternal health, family planning and gender-based violence but these efforts were not commensurate with its corporate ambition
- While the pandemic revealed shortcomings in business continuity management, there has been some learning from the experiences and lessons of the pandemic
- UNFPA worked to safeguard personnel and partner health, welfare, and security during the crisis. Nonetheless, disparities between staff and non-staff personnel regarding safeguarding and welfare were identified
- There has been limited post-crisis internal analysis and learning.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Increase efforts to strengthen resilience of UNFPA in key mandate areas such as family planning, ending harmful practices and data
- 2 Sustain and build on work to operationalize the Humanitarian-Development-Peace continuum approach
- 3 Better embed business continuity management across all UNFPA business units
- 4 Foster a workplace culture where all personnel are supported and valued
- 5 Improve supply chain resilience
- 6 Strengthen planning, monitoring, and reporting on results in response to serious disruptions
- 7 Systematize knowledge management and learning.