

Organizational unit: UNFPA Costa Rica Country Office **Year of report:** 2016

Title of evaluation report: Evaluación Final del Programa de País de Costa Rica 2013-2017

Overall quality of report: Good **Date of assessment:** 16 December 2016

Overall comments: This is an evaluation of the country programme for a middle-income (pink) developing country where the focus of UNFPA activity has shifted to providing advice on key issues. The evaluation shows that this has been successful, but notes that the logic model for the programme can be improved and should be in the next cycle. The report is clearly structured and well-written, including all content required by the assessment criteria. The objectives, scope, and methodological approach are explained in detail, with data collection methods used and findings/analysis presented appropriate to the evaluation questions. The evaluation is based on careful document review and interviews with all of the concerned stakeholders, including focus groups with beneficiaries.

Assessment Levels

Very Good	strong, above average, best practice	Good	satisfactory, respectable	Fair	with some weaknesses, still acceptable	Unsatisfactory	weak, does not meet minimal quality standards
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Quality Assessment Criteria	Insert <i>assessment level</i> followed by main <i>comments</i> . (use 'shading' function to give cells corresponding colour)	
1. Structure and Clarity of Reporting	Yes No Partial	Assessment Level: Very good
<i>To ensure the report is comprehensive and user-friendly</i>		
1. Is the report easy to read and understand (i.e. written in an accessible language appropriate for the intended audience) with minimal grammatical, spelling or punctuation errors?	Yes	Comment: The evaluation has the appropriate structure and is written in good Spanish. At 215 pages, the report is consistent with other reports in the field and an appropriate length. The structure is logical, and the annexes contain all required content. It includes the necessary annexes. A standalone executive summary is included in the report which presents the purpose, objectives, methodology, and main conclusions/recommendations. At six pages in length, the executive summary is a page longer than the required range.
2. Is the report of a reasonable length? (maximum pages for the main report, excluding annexes: 60 for institutional evaluations; 70 for CPEs; 80 for thematic evaluations)	Yes	
3. Is the report structured in a logical way? Is there a clear distinction made between analysis/findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned (where applicable)?	Yes	
4. Do the annexes contain – at a minimum – the ToRs; a bibliography; a list of interviewees; the evaluation matrix; methodological tools used (e.g. interview guides; focus group notes, outline of surveys) as well as information on the stakeholder consultation process?	Yes	
<i>Executive summary</i>		
5. Is an executive summary included in the report, written as a stand-alone section and presenting the main results of the evaluation?	Yes	
6. Is there a clear structure of the executive summary, (i.e. i) Purpose, including intended audience(s); ii) Objectives and brief description of intervention; iii) Methodology; iv) Main conclusions; v) Recommendations)?	Yes	
7. Is the executive summary reasonably concise (e.g. with a maximum length of 5 pages)?	Yes	

2. Design and Methodology		Yes No Partial	Assessment Level:	Very good
<i>To ensure that the evaluation is put within its context</i>			<p>Comment: The report describes clearly that the evaluation is intended for both accountability and learning purposes (p.19), with the intended audience is defined as the Country Office, UNFPA Evaluation Office and other stakeholders.. It revises the logical framework in the context of several strategy changes at global and national level and uses this for the evaluation. The development and institutional context is described in detail at the local/national and international level (p. 24-30). The evaluation report describes briefly the logical framework's reconstruction (p. 37). It involves extensive review of documentation. It interviews all of the direct stakeholders as a 100% sample.</p> <p>The evaluation approach is described, with evaluation questions and methods of data collection indicated clearly (EQ 1-EQ 8, p. 20). Methods of data collection include stakeholder interviews, focus groups, an online survey (with two questionnaire types), and a comprehensive document review of relevant documentation (p. 20). The survey was split into two types of questionnaire: a comprehensive survey directed at implementing partners, and a shorter version directed at program beneficiaries (p. 21).</p> <p>The interviews were targeted at a representative sample of involved stakeholders: governmental institutions (central and provincial), civil society organizations, UNFPA Country Office, and independent partners (p.22). Focus groups were conducted with beneficiaries, including youth and adolescents, teenagers involve in violence sensitization projects, and women who were involved in a female condom pilot project. The survey was only used the results for triangulation. There was involvement of the Reference Group for the evaluation. Given the nature of the evaluation questions, these methods are appropriate. Stakeholder involvement is clearly presented throughout discussion of methodology and findings. The methodology enables the collection of disaggregated data where necessary.</p>	
1. Does the evaluation describe the target audience for the evaluation?		Yes		
2. Is the development and institutional context of the evaluation clearly described and constraints explained?		Yes		
3. Does the evaluation report describe the reconstruction of the intervention logic and/or theory of change, and assess the adequacy of these?		Yes		
<i>To ensure a rigorous design and methodology</i>				
4. Is the evaluation framework clearly described in the text and in the evaluation matrix? Does the evaluation matrix establish the evaluation questions, assumptions, indicators, data sources and methods for data collection?		Yes		
5. Are the tools for data collection described and their choice justified?		Yes		
6. Is there a comprehensive stakeholder map? Is the stakeholder consultation process clearly described (in particular, does it include the consultation of key stakeholders on draft recommendations)?		Yes		
7. Are the methods for analysis clearly described for all types of data?		Yes		
8. Are methodological limitations acknowledged and their effect on the evaluation described? (Does the report discuss how any bias has been overcome?)		Yes		
9. Is the sampling strategy described?		Yes		
10. Does the methodology enable the collection and analysis of disaggregated data?		Yes		
11. Is the design and methodology appropriate for assessing the cross-cutting issues (equity and vulnerability, gender equality and human rights)?		Yes		
3. Reliability of Data		Yes No Partial	Assessment Level:	Fair
<i>To ensure quality of data and robust data collection processes</i>			<p>Comment: There was a careful effort at triangulation. The data sources used were both qualitative (from interviews) and quantitative, although the quantitative data tended to come from national surveys and other documents. Interview data were clearly used for the findings, but which data from whom is not clear in most cases. Data is disaggregated when referring to national patterns.</p> <p>Limitations of the data reliability are discussed in detail; e.g. the report indicates that the results framework does not adequately capture the strategic results at all appropriate levels – with discussion explaining that indicators offer a partial (though useful) picture of UNFPA activities (p. 23). A similar note on limitations was made with reference to the parallel models of implementation active at the country level, with comments on transition being discussed (p.24) and referenced as they related to findings (p. 43).</p>	
1. Did the evaluation triangulate data collected as appropriate?		Yes		
2. Did the evaluation clearly identify and make use of reliable qualitative and quantitative data sources?		Partial		
3. Did the evaluation make explicit any possible limitations (bias, data gaps etc.) in primary and secondary data sources and if relevant, explained what was done to minimize such issues?		Yes		
4. Is there evidence that data has been collected with a sensitivity to issues of discrimination and other ethical considerations?		Yes		

4. Analysis and Findings	Yes No Partial	Assessment Level:	Good
<i>To ensure sound analysis and credible findings</i>		<p>Comment: The evaluation report interprets findings in a systematic manner, presenting clearly the logic of analysis with reference to the guiding questions of the evaluation/topic areas. Evidence can be traced through the analysis into findings due to the clear structuring/quality of writing of the report. Cause and effect links between the intervention and possible outcomes were described: e.g. advocacy efforts to incorporate female condoms in the domestic supply yielded results, though results linked to advocacy can be hard to validate causality (p.52). The report also discusses positive achievements that have not yet had intended results, due to outside factors: e.g. the report describes the design and validation of a system of indicators for sexual and reproductive health which is linked to international commitment, with its effect held-back by the pending updates to be made to the system by CISSR (p. 50). Discussion is also presented on areas where progress was not made: e.g. the intervention yielded no results on oral emergency contraceptives, with an explanation of context and underlying reasons provided (p. 54). Analysis is disaggregated to illustrate outcomes (e.g. gender). There was a general rather than specific analysis of cross-cutting issues. Findings and analysis are presented against Evaluation Questions.</p>	
1. Are the findings substantiated by evidence?	Yes		
2. Is the basis for interpretations carefully described?	Yes		
3. Is the analysis presented against the evaluation questions?	Yes		
4. Is the analysis transparent about the sources and quality of data?	Yes		
5. Are cause and effect links between an intervention and its end results explained and any unintended outcomes highlighted?	Yes		
6. Does the analysis show different outcomes for different target groups, as relevant?	Partial		
7. Is the analysis presented against contextual factors?	Yes		
8. Does the analysis elaborate on cross-cutting issues such as equity and vulnerability, gender equality and human rights?	Yes		
5. Conclusions	Yes No Partial	Assessment Level:	Very good
<i>To assess the validity of conclusions</i>		<p>Comment: The conclusions are set out with references to the relevant area of findings, and to the recommendation that flows from it. They are presented succinctly, but in most cases additional explanation is provided. The conclusions appear to convey an unbiased assessment of the intervention that flows logically from the findings.</p>	
1. Do the conclusions flow clearly from the findings?	Yes		
2. Do the conclusions go beyond the findings and provide a thorough understanding of the underlying issues of the programme/initiative/system being evaluated?	Yes		
3. Do the conclusions appear to convey the evaluators' unbiased judgement?	Yes		
6. Recommendations	Yes No Partial	Assessment Level:	Good
<i>To ensure the usefulness and clarity of recommendations</i>		<p>Comment: Recommendations flow from conclusions and are presented in a clear manner to the intended audience. All recommendations are presented as the same priority level. The number of recommendations (6) is manageable and operationally feasible. The report ties the recommendations to the conclusions explicitly in the conclusions section also. It is assumed that they were discussed with the Reference Group. All six are high priority and the time frame for implementation is not always clear.</p>	
1. Do recommendations flow logically from conclusions?	Yes		
2. Are the recommendations clearly written, targeted at the intended users and action-oriented (with information on their human, financial and technical implications)?	Yes		
3. Do recommendations appear balanced and impartial?	Yes		
4. Is a timeframe for implementation proposed?	Partial		
5. Are the recommendations prioritised and clearly presented to facilitate appropriate management response and follow up on each specific recommendation?	Yes		

7. Gender	0 1 2 3 (**)	Assessment Level:	Good
<i>To assess the integration of Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW) (*)</i>		Comment: GEEW is integrated into the evaluation scope, with topic areas (e.g. violence against women) highlighted extensively in the discussion on conclusions. Indicators related to cross-cutting areas, including gender and human rights were added to the evaluation matrix, allowing for disaggregation of findings related to gender.	
1. Is GEEW integrated in the evaluation scope of analysis and indicators designed in a way that ensures GEEW-related data to be collected?	3		
2. Do evaluation criteria and evaluation questions specifically address how GEEW has been integrated into design, planning, implementation of the intervention and the results achieved?	2		
3. Have gender-responsive evaluation methodology, methods and tools, and data analysis techniques been selected?	2		
4. Do the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations reflect a gender analysis?	2		
<p>(*) This assessment criteria is fully based on the UN-SWAP Scoring Tool, see Annex 7. Each sub-criteria shall be equally weighted (in correlation with the calculation in the tool and totalling the scores 11-12 = very good, 8-10 = good, 4-7 = Fair, 0-3=unsatisfactory).</p> <p>(**) Scoring uses a four point scale (0-3).</p> <p>0 = Not at all integrated. Applies when none of the elements under a criterion are met. 1 = Partially integrated. Applies when some minimal elements are met but further progress is needed and remedial action to meet the standard is required. 2 = Satisfactorily integrated. Applies when a satisfactory level has been reached and many of the elements are met but still improvement could be done. 3 = Fully integrated. Applies when all of the elements under a criterion are met, used and fully integrated in the evaluation and no remedial action is required.</p>			
Overall Evaluation Quality Assessment			
	Assessment Levels (*)		
Quality assessment criteria (scoring points*)	Very good	Good	Fair
			Unsatisfactory
1. Structure and clarity of reporting, including executive summary (7)	7		
2. Design and methodology (13)	13		
3. Reliability of data (11)			11
4. Analysis and findings (40)		40	
5. Conclusions (11)	11		
6. Recommendations (11)		11	
7. Integration of gender (7)		7	
Total scoring points	31	58	11
Overall assessment level of evaluation report		Good	
	Very good very confident to use	Good confident to use	Fair use with caution
			Unsatisfactory not confident to use

- (*) (a) Insert scoring points associated with criteria in corresponding column (e.g. - if 'Analysis and findings' has been assessed as 'Good', enter 40 into 'Good' column.
(b) Assessment level with highest 'total scoring points' determines 'Overall assessment level of evaluation report'. Write corresponding assessment level in cell (e.g. 'Fair').
(c) Use 'shading' function to give cells corresponding colour.

If the overall assessment is 'Fair', please explain

• How it can be used?

• What aspects to be cautious about?

Where relevant, please explain the overall assessment Very good, Good or Unsatisfactory

The evaluation was thorough and on most criteria were very good, although issues of timing in recommendations and some issues of data in the analysis kept it from being very good.

Consideration of significant constraints

The quality of this evaluation report has been hampered by exceptionally difficult circumstances:

Yes

No

If yes, please explain: