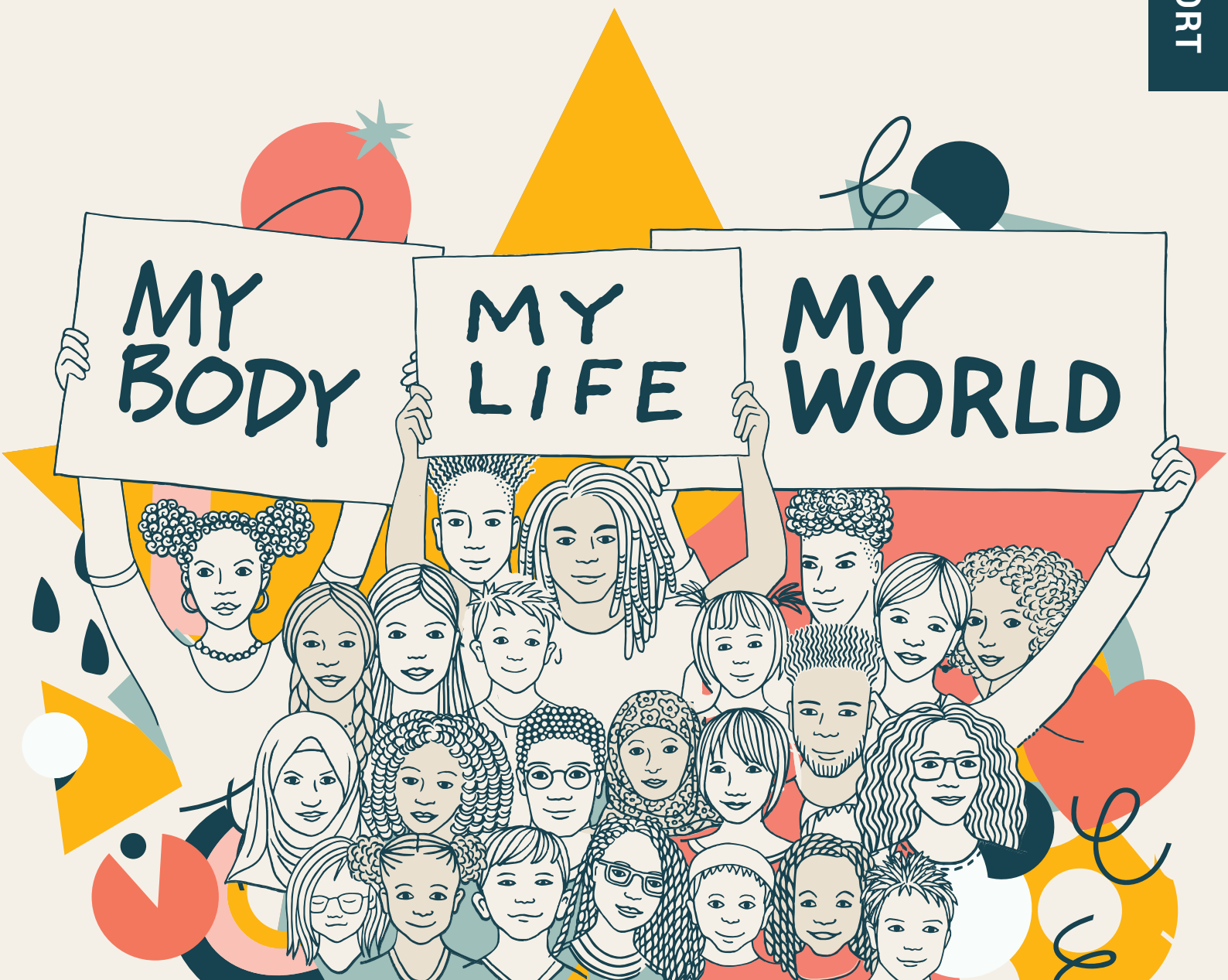


Formative evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth



UNFPA Evaluation Office

2023

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Foreword

An evaluation of youth programming in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2016 called for a more coherent and multisectoral approach to working with adolescents and youth. That recommendation led to the development and 2019 launch of the global UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth titled *My Body, My Life, My World*. This formative evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth serves to further enhance the Strategy's implementation by assessing what has worked and what has not, and by looking towards the future of work with young people.

Findings from this evaluation highlight the effective leadership of UNFPA in the global adolescents and youth agenda and acknowledge the enhanced and holistic approach taken by the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth. The evaluation notes the significant achievements of UNFPA in all dimensions of the Strategy, namely capitalizing on its comparative advantage in sexual and reproductive health and rights, comprehensive sexuality education and youth participation. UNFPA is also leveraging its expertise in emerging areas of youth programming, such as economic empowerment, mental health and climate resilience. The evaluation observes that UNFPA is in a unique position to influence the global adolescents and youth agenda by using its population dynamics work to respond to demographic trends and population challenges.

The evaluation highlights several challenges that hinder effective and transformative outcomes for adolescent and youth work, including limited resources and capacities, and the corporate structure and positioning of this stream within UNFPA. The need for integration across thematic areas of work is emphasized to optimize resources and capacities, and ensure intersectional linkages are made. The evaluation also identifies opportunities for UNFPA to strengthen its humanitarian response by integrating programming for adolescents and youth and leveraging the work on youth, peace and security and climate resilience to build new pathways in the humanitarian–development–peace nexus space.

The evaluation took an innovative approach to engage young people in meaningful ways. Young people were engaged as advisors, decision-makers and contributors as well as key sources of evidence and insight. The evaluation established a Youth Steering Committee and recruited young evaluators to work with senior evaluators in each country case study. Young professionals at UNFPA were also invited to join the evaluation reference group. These measures promoted intergenerational learning and exchange and elevated the voice and agency of young people. The UNFPA Evaluation Office intends to continue implementing these inclusive intergenerational partnerships in future exercises and hopes that other evaluation offices across the United Nations system will replicate them.

In a world of 8 billion, including a significant youth population, evidence-based solutions are critical to enhancing support for adolescents and youth in all their diversity. I am confident that the insights and recommendations from the evaluation will support UNFPA to advance the adolescents and youth agenda, and with that accelerate towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and advance the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action as we commemorate its 30th anniversary in 2024.

Marco Segone

Director, UNFPA Evaluation Office

Preface

The UNFPA Evaluation Office, in partnership with EvalYouth, the global network of young evaluators, made a call for interested and experienced young professionals across the globe to actively engage as members of an innovative Youth Steering Committee to co-lead a United Nations evaluation. Six were selected.

We are young professionals from Ghana, Kenya, Peru, the Netherlands, Tunisia and Türkiye, all selected to represent the voices of youth in the global exercise. As members of the Youth Steering Committee, we are pleased to have contributed to enhancing the youth perspective and youth voice in this global evaluation, a first for several of us. We value the experience of working in a multicultural environment towards Sustainable Development Goals. This effort has helped to build a safe and interactive community with senior evaluators for skills development and learning. We see it as a contribution to the commitment of UNFPA – in the framework of the #Eval4Action initiative – to actively engage young evaluators in the evaluation process.

This initiative was the first of its kind in an evaluation conducted by a United Nations agency. The key deliverables were to provide overall guidance and direction, including substantive feedback on the evaluation process and products, from the perspective of young people through the assessment of the evaluation methodology and approach, input on data collection tools and review of the evaluation report. The committee was able to interact with the evaluation managers and external evaluation team in a myriad of ways, including regular virtual meetings, vibrant email exchanges and an active WhatsApp group. Our recommendation, as elaborated in the report, is for this initiative to be replicated in other evaluations and to be scaled up to have even more voices represented in evaluations across the globe. With the recent establishment of the United Nations Youth Office, progressive steps must be taken to advance youth participation in evaluations as well as broader development processes.

In conclusion, we would like to thank Marco Segone, Director, UNFPA Evaluation Office, for taking a chance on young people. Our heartfelt gratitude to Karen Cadondon and Valarie Carou-Jones for their support during this engagement. This work would not have been possible without the leadership of the EvalYouth country-led groups, and we thank you for your advocacy efforts.

We are humbled to have paved the way so others may follow and we will continue our efforts to make the voices of youth across the globe heard and valued.

Members of the Youth Steering Committee

Erva Nur Cinar (Türkiye), Gabriela De Jesus Cipriano Flores (Peru), Lina Al-Hassany (Netherlands), Mohammed Suhuyini Zakaria (Ghana), Sana Ben Salem (Tunisia), Wanjiku Gathoni Munyiri (Kenya)

Acknowledgements

This evaluation would not have been possible without the contributions and commitment of many and I am deeply appreciative of those who bestowed their time and knowledge throughout this evaluation process. Firstly, I would like to thank UNFPA colleagues at the headquarters, regional and country levels for their engagement and support in this exercise. I would like to extend my gratitude to the Technical Division, in particular, the adolescents and youth team in the Sexual and Reproductive Health Branch. A special thanks to Dr Julitta Onabanjo, Willibald Zeck, Danielle Engel, Satvika Chalasani, Cecile Mazzacurati, Jose Roberto Luna and João Scarpelini who generously shared their time, knowledge and expertise.

I am also deeply grateful to colleagues in the regional and country offices who participated in the country case studies for their tremendous contributions. This included colleagues in the UNFPA country offices of Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mozambique, Niger, Philippines, Türkiye, Ukraine and Zimbabwe. I also would like to extend my gratitude to the members of the Evaluation Reference Group for their sustained engagement and support in each phase of the evaluation. Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the invaluable insights provided by key stakeholders in this evaluation, including development partners, government partners, and representatives of the United Nations agencies and civil society, in particular, youth-led and youth-focused organizations. The collective inputs from all were vital to this evaluation, ultimately helping to strengthen the reliability and usefulness of this report.

Valeria Carou-Jones

Evaluation Adviser, UNFPA Evaluation Office

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Acronyms

APRO	Asia and the Pacific Regional Office	LNOB	Leave no one behind
ASRHR	Adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights	MSC	Most Significant Change
ASRO	Arab States Regional Office	PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
AYFHS	Adolescent and youth-friendly health services	RFB	Reaching the Furthest Behind
CSE	Comprehensive sexuality education	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
EECARO	Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office	SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
ESARO	East and Southern Africa Regional Office	SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
FGD	Focus group discussion	SSC	South-South cooperation
FGM	Female genital mutilation	STI	Sexually transmitted infections
GBV	Gender-based violence	UN	United Nations
GPECM	Global Programme to End Child Marriage	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GPS	Global Programming System	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
HIV	Human immuno-deficiency virus	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
HRBA	Human rights-based approach	UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
IANYD	Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee	UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Fund
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development	UNV	United Nations Volunteer
KII	Key informant interview	WCARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office
LACRO	Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office	YFHS	Youth-friendly health services
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, plus	YPS	Youth, peace and security
		YSC	Youth Steering Committee

Executive summary

UNFPA SUPPORT TO ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, has been committed to advancing the sexual and reproductive health and rights of adolescents and youth since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. The mandate of UNFPA for its support to adolescents and youth is anchored in its strategic plans and adolescents and youth frameworks. The most recent UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth – *My Body, My Life, My World* – was launched in 2019 and presents a comprehensive multisectoral approach that cuts across all thematic areas of the organization. It emphasizes three dimensions of UNFPA work with young people:

- “My Body” focuses on giving adolescents and youth access, capacity and the enabling policy and societal context to exercise their rights to make informed choices over their own bodies.
- “My Life” supports adolescents and youth to exercise their rights to make informed choices for a healthy life and successfully transition to adulthood through interventions such as comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), life skills, and girls-centred programmes, among others.
- “My World” interventions aim to help adolescents and youth exercise their right to participate in sustainable development, humanitarian and climate action and sustaining peace.

Together these areas of intervention contribute to the three transformative results of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION

This evaluation assesses the implementation of the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth since its introduction in 2019, to provide evidence-based learning. The evaluation has the following aims: assess the conceptual framework of the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth, capture good practices and generate knowledge from UNFPA experience on what worked and did not work in its implementation, provide actionable inputs for future implementation, and integrate practical and innovative ways of engaging young people in the exercise. The evaluation covers all thematic aspects of UNFPA adolescent and youth programming that is being implemented at all levels of the organization within the framework of the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth. The evaluation is intended to primarily be used by UNFPA headquarters, regional offices, and country offices and also by young people, States, international non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations, in particular youth-led and youth-focused organizations and networks.

METHODOLOGY

The evaluation is a formative and utility-focused evaluation that applies two conceptual approaches: Appreciative Inquiry and Most Significant Change. A guiding framework was designed specifically for the evaluation to help contextualize the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth and capture how UNFPA supports work on adolescents and youth across the organization. A mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods was used that allowed the team to gather data from a wide range of primary and secondary data sources. In total, 419 stakeholders were interviewed, 832 young people participated in focus group discussions, 70 UNFPA staff participated in an online survey, and 14 country offices

took part in in-depth case studies for the evaluation. The methodology featured young people in three roles: members of a Youth Steering Committee, young evaluators, and young professionals at UNFPA who were consulted around data analysis. The evaluation analysed the data at global, regional, and country levels and applied triangulation techniques that included comparing results from different data sources for specific lines of inquiry. It then validated this data by presenting preliminary findings to country offices at the conclusion of each case study, conducting two data analysis workshops with the Evaluation Office, and sharing the draft report with the Evaluation Reference Group for their feedback and validation. The evaluation also integrated ethical considerations including consent forms and applying a gender equality and human rights lens throughout the evaluation processes and phases. The main limitation of the evaluation was the restriction in data collection due to COVID-19, which was mitigated by hiring young national evaluators that would undertake in-person data collection and analysis in tandem with a remote senior evaluator from the core evaluation team.

MAIN FINDINGS

Conceptualization of the Strategy

The UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth responds to the intersectional needs of young people through multisectoral programming, leveraging the UNFPA comparative advantage to realize its three transformative results. It provides a holistic framework that speaks to diverse contexts, helping frame adolescents and youth work within the country. Still, challenges remain in the adaptation of the Strategy to address all of the identified needs of adolescents and youth in some settings. The human rights-based approach, a gender equality perspective, and the principles of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind are well articulated in *My Body, My Life, My World*. Its operationalization in adolescent and youth programming, however, has been interpreted differently across regions and countries, sometimes limiting the application of the principles of the Strategy within local programming.

Strengths and challenges in implementation

UNFPA is clearly positioned as a leader to spearhead efforts under the “My Body” pillar of the Strategy, leveraging its long-standing expertise in comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and youth. Specific intervention areas such as GBV prevention, HIV prevention and family planning services for young people are well developed, while other areas such as menstrual health and self-care are still nascent. The integration of youth-responsive comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services within primary health care remains limited. Sporadic youth-friendly services are in most cases not scaled up, and UNFPA has yet to engage with key intervention areas such as mental health that emerged strongly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNFPA has also made important contributions to the “My Life” component of the Strategy, particularly, in out-of-school comprehensive sexual education, asset-building programmes for adolescent girls, interventions for ending child marriage, and the engagement of men and boys by promoting positive masculinities. Still, there are challenges around comprehensive sexual education opposition, the scaling up and country ownership of interventions, as well as impact measurement and reporting of results.

For the “My World” component of the Strategy, UNFPA has been effective in promoting youth engagement at the global level and has positive examples at the country level of UNFPA support to young leaders as advocates of the UNFPA mandate and in their national institutions, as well as reinforcing the capacity of youth-led movements. There has not been unified guidance (until recently) on this area of work, resulting in a limited shared understanding of how meaningful participation takes shape within different contexts.

In the integration of adolescents and youth into its humanitarian portfolio, UNFPA has taken a leadership role with the development of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action. The roll-out of support mechanisms and adaptation of guidelines show great potential for transforming the programming at the local level; however, the programming principles of the Compact have only started to trickle down to country-level leadership and coordination in humanitarian contexts. Further, the integration of adolescents and youth into humanitarian response is mixed.

With regards to tracking the results of adolescent and youth interventions, output indicators are comprehensively in place; however, measuring results at the outcome level is much less advanced. There are significant challenges in measuring impact and quantifying how adolescent and youth programming contributes to the three transformative results.

Leadership in the adolescent and youth agenda

At the global level, UNFPA leadership in the adolescents and youth space has evolved over the years with UNFPA filling a gap and becoming the *de facto* leading youth United Nations agency. However, coordination differs widely across different programmatic areas, and its leadership tends to occur in a fragmented manner across different topics. At the regional and country level, UNFPA leadership on adolescent and youth issues does not always translate into a transformational agenda or strategic positioning of adolescents and youth as an issue within the United Nations system, or internally as a priority issue for the organization.

Human and financial resources

There is limited clarity on the total investment of UNFPA in support to adolescents and youth owing to its diverse funding base and limitations to the capacity to fully track these investments. There is a sense that the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth has helped to galvanize funding for adolescents and youth support against a coherent framework. Yet the prioritization of financial and human resources in the area of adolescents and youth varies significantly across regional and country offices.

At the global, regional and country levels, UNFPA has a diverse range of staff dedicated to work on adolescents and youth. The current staffing numbers combined with the varied capacities of staff, however, hamper the organization's delivery of the comprehensive programming envisioned in UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth and, ultimately, its efforts to advance the global adolescents and youth agenda.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. The UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth is relevant to UNFPA programming and articulates changes that are needed to fully realize the three transformative results. The integrated and multisectoral nature of the Strategy has the potential to fundamentally change the way UNFPA addresses adolescent and youth issues but it has yet to be fully operationalized.

Conclusion 2. UNFPA support to adolescents and youth has positively contributed to each of the Strategy's dimensions (body, life, world), particularly in the areas where UNFPA has traditionally led. The Strategy also offers an opportunity to amplify support within UNFPA mandate areas by including youth economic empowerment or youth participation in climate action.

Conclusion 3. UNFPA has been responsive to humanitarian settings and emerging crises, including through strong and effective leadership in the development of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action. However, the roll-out of the Compact has only recently started to reach the country level. There are financial and capacity challenges to integrate adolescents and youth into the humanitarian response as well as limited assessments and data collection on the needs of youth to understand their vulnerabilities in humanitarian settings. Untapped avenues remain for UNFPA to expand its work around youth, peace and security; youth and climate resilience; and the humanitarian–development–peace continuum, in line with its mandate.

Conclusion 4. The tenets of a human rights-based approach are evident in adolescent and youth programming, where it strongly emphasizes non-discrimination and participation measures. While this promotes the spirit of leaving no one behind, a deeper examination of underlying factors of discrimination, inequality and exclusion would enable UNFPA to better target those left furthest behind first.

Conclusion 5. UNFPA has assumed multiple leadership roles in the broader adolescents and youth agenda, becoming the de facto leading United Nations agency on youth. However, such leadership comes with costs as well as risks. Further institutional clarity is needed regarding which thematic areas UNFPA should lead on and which areas it should play a supporting role, and where it can leverage partnerships to galvanize additional funding and technical support.

Conclusion 6. Despite the clear case being made by UNFPA for investing in young people, there is limited measurement beyond the output level or the impact on individuals. In addition, there are opportunities for UNFPA to strengthen and leverage its population data and dynamics capabilities to enhance its policy advocacy for adolescents and youth, including through investment cases.

Conclusion 7. The positioning of the adolescent and youth team within UNFPA, together with its limited staffing and capacities, poses challenges to the effective and efficient delivery of the adolescent and youth agenda.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are linked to the evaluation's findings and conclusions and take into account consultations held with the Evaluation Reference Group as well as senior management.

Recommendation 1. Enhance the operationalization of the integrated and multisectoral nature of the Strategy by ensuring the efficient roll-out, implementation and use of its operational guidance and by expanding corporate learning, experience sharing and cross-fertilization.

Recommendation 2. Further, enhance each of the three dimensions of the Strategy based on the evidence provided in this evaluation.

Recommendation 2a. "My Body": Revitalize efforts to support the delivery of youth-responsive SRHR and HIV services that are appropriate, accessible and adequate for young people.

Recommendation 2b. "My Life": Continue to support the adaptation of CSE to specific country and regional contexts to remain relevant to adolescent and youth stakeholders, including youth themselves, while maintaining a focus on international standards

Recommendation 2c. "My World": Ensure a common, uniform understanding of meaningful participation of young people, and enhance synergies among the three dimensions of the Strategy.

Recommendation 3. Fully integrate adolescents and youth within the UNFPA humanitarian response and leverage YPS and climate resilience.

Recommendation 4. Ensure all adolescent and youth interventions are grounded in human rights-based and gender-transformative approaches to ensure inclusion across all groups of adolescents and youth and address the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination.

Recommendation 5. Identify the UNFPA corporate priorities and approaches for leadership, coordination and partnership within programming on adolescents and youth.

Recommendation 6. Leverage population data analytics in the adolescents and youth area to enhance policy advocacy capabilities, including through strong investment cases.

Recommendation 7. Review the UNFPA corporate structure and the adolescents and youth staff capacities to ensure adequate capability to implement the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth.

Recommendation 8. Within the framework of the recently launched “People Strategy”, develop a specific human resources workplan for the meaningful participation of young professionals in UNFPA, focused on enhancing recruitment and strengthening the career development of young professionals as well as creating an enabling environment for intergenerational leadership, learning and contribution.

Recommendation 9. Increasingly engage young people in UNFPA evaluations and continue to advocate with partners for the meaningful engagement of young people in evaluation. (While this evaluation did not assess the UNFPA contribution to the meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation, the Youth Steering Committee independently decided to develop recommendation 9 based on their experience with this evaluation. This recommendation is developed from a summary of recommendations made by Youth Steering Committee members and young evaluators.)

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In Zambezia, Mozambique, mentors from the adolescent sexual and reproductive health programme, Rapariga Biz, support girls to make informed choices about their health, life and future.





INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) recognizes programming for adolescents and youth as a core pillar within the UNFPA mandate. Young people make up an estimated 1.8 billion people (one-quarter of the global population).^{1,2} For purposes of this evaluation, adolescents are defined as 10–19 years old; youth are defined as 15–24 years old; and “young people” encompasses both categories, including people aged 10–24 years old. They face numerous challenges but also have much to contribute to their own societies and humanity as a whole, both in the present and in the future. UNFPA acknowledges the centrality of young people to its work and mandates through its strategic plans³ and youth strategies. In particular, UNFPA prioritizes adolescents and youth in the 2019 UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth titled *My Body, My Life, My World: Rights and choices for all adolescents and youth: a UNFPA global strategy*.^{4,5}

Against this background, UNFPA commissioned an external, independent evaluation of UNFPA work on adolescents and youth. The purpose was a formative, forward-looking, utility-focused evaluation to assess the initial implementation of the 2019 UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth, to provide lessons learned and evaluative evidence on programming to date relative to the Strategy. This evaluation was conducted in 2016 and examined adolescents and youth programming between 2015 and 2021.

This evaluation has several objectives:

- **To assess the conceptual framework** of the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth (also known as *My Body, My Life, My World*) including its linkages to the broader United Nations Youth Strategy (also known as Youth2030).⁶ This includes assessing how relevant and realistic it is to meet the needs of young people across different contexts; the coherence of the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth with UNFPA overall strategic direction, as outlined in the UNFPA Strategic Plans for 2018–2021 and 2022–2025^{7,8} and the coherence of the UNFPA Strategy on

1 UNFPA. *My Body, My Life, My World: Rights and choices for all adolescents and youth: a UNFPA global Strategy*. 2019. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/FinalVersion-Strategy-Web.pdf.

2 There is no universally agreed international definition of youth. For purposes of this evaluation, adolescents are defined as 10–19 years old; youth are defined as 15–24 years old; and “young people” encompasses both categories, including people aged 10–24 years old.

3 UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2014–2017. Available at www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/Strategic%20Plan%2C%202014-2017.pdf; UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. Available at: www.unfpa.org/modules/custom/unfpa_global_strategic_plan/docs/18-044_UNFPA-SP2018-EN_2018-03-12-1244.pdf; UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/board-documents/main-document/ENG_DP.FPA_2021.8_-_UNFPA_strategic_plan_2022-2025_-_FINAL_-_14Jul21.pdf.

4 UNFPA. *My Body, My Life, My World: Rights and choices for all adolescents and youth: a UNFPA global Strategy 2019*. www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/FinalVersion-Strategy-Web.pdf.

5 Note that more information on this can be found in Section 2.3.

6 United Nations. *Youth2030: Working with and for young people: the United Nations Youth Strategy*. 2018. Available at: www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/18-00080_UN-Youth-Strategy_Web.pdf.

7 UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. Available at: www.unfpa.org/modules/custom/unfpa_global_strategic_plan/docs/18-044_UNFPA-SP2018-EN_2018-03-12-1244.pdf.

8 UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025: Acceleration, Transformation, Reaching the furthest behind. Available at: www.unfpa.org/strategic-plan-2022.

Adolescents and Youth with other frameworks, in particular Youth2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).⁹

- **To facilitate learning, capture good practices and generate knowledge** from UNFPA experience on what worked and did not work in the implementation of its previous strategy on adolescents and youth (2012).
- **To provide actionable inputs** for the implementation of the present UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth, the UNFPA Strategic Plan, and UNFPA adolescents and youth programming at large
- To integrate practical and innovative ways of **engaging young people in this exercise** as co-creators, contributors, key stakeholders as well as sources of evidence and insight.¹⁰

The **scope** of the evaluation was global. It examined adolescents and youth programming between 2015 and 2021 and covered all aspects of UNFPA adolescents and youth programming. Intended **primary users** of the evaluation include UNFPA headquarters, regional offices and country offices. Important **secondary users** include young people, United Nations Member States, international non-governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations, in particular youth-led and youth-focused organizations and networks.

1.2 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

1.2.1 The challenges

Young people face challenges across multiple and intersecting areas of their lives including education, health, access to economic opportunities and participation in civic affairs. Even as young people have become more connected technologically, digital divides still exist relative to economic status, sex, ethnicity and race, education level and geographic location.¹¹ Access to technology, including social media, has increased access to social, educational and employment opportunities; at the same time, it has also reinforced inequalities. In low and middle income countries a significant proportion of young people are poor, have had little exposure to education and training and often lack access to productive employment. Many are married and have children at young age and/or live in marginalized rural or urban slums or live in areas affected by armed conflict or natural disasters. These young people are marginalized from local and national development gains and are particularly vulnerable to economic shocks, social instability and conflicts. They are frequently left behind or excluded from development programmes and activities.

Globally, an estimated 180 to 200 million persons with disabilities are between the ages of 10 and 24. Most of them, around 80 per cent, live in developing countries.¹² Young people with disabilities in humanitarian settings experience exclusion more acutely, and this has an impact on their health, education, economic and other development indicators.

Approximately 408 million youth aged 15–29 years (23 per cent of the global youth population) are affected by violence or armed conflict. At the end of 2019, an estimated 9.7 million young people were living in internal displacement because of conflicts, violence or disasters, of which 3.1 million were under the age of 18.¹³

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in increased challenges for adolescents and youth across the board. The COVID-19 response disrupted education as well as the delivery of routine health services and information to young people, sharply limiting access to sexual and reproductive health services and cutting off young people's access to health services. The loss of employment and livelihoods due to the pandemic has worsened gender and power inequalities, and increased

9 www.un.org/youthenvoy/youth-un/; <http://agendaforhumanity.org/>; <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

10 See the annex volume for a detailed overview of how youth were meaningfully engaged within this evaluation.

11 World Health Organization. *Youth-centred digital health interventions: A framework for planning, developing and implementing solutions with and for young people*. 2021. Available at: www.who.int/publications-detail-redirect/9789240011717.

12 UNFPA. *Young persons with disabilities: Global study on ending gender-based violence and realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights*. 2018. Available at: www.unfpa.org/publications/young-persons-disabilities.

13 Inter-Agency Standing Committee. *IASC Guidelines on Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises*. 2021. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/iasc-guidelines-working-and-young-people-humanitarian-and-protracted-crises-16-february>.

risks of human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV) infection and adolescent pregnancy in young women and girls.¹⁴ Due to disruptions in prevention programmes related to COVID-19, some 2 million FGM cases could occur over the next decade that would otherwise have been averted.¹⁵ Likewise, due to disruptions in planned efforts to end child marriage, 13 million more child marriages are expected to occur by 2030, than was projected before the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁶ Furthermore, owing to lockdown measures during the pandemic, young people had limited access to positive coping mechanisms, which has heightened and further exacerbated existing risk of mental health problems and crises. COVID-19 has exacerbated overall education access challenges and widened the gap for more marginalized youth and has also heavily impacted youth employment.¹⁷

1.2.2 The opportunities

For every dollar invested in adolescent health, there is an estimated ten-fold health, social and economic return and the investment has a “triple dividend”.¹⁸ These investments have a direct impact on having a healthier, more productive cohort of young people, and therefore, as they age, a healthier global population generally. In addition, there are clear intergenerational benefits of investing in adolescents. Young women who delay childbirth into later years will generally have higher levels of education, greater choice and agency within relationships, and healthier children and families.¹⁹

Many of the countries with the largest number of youth today are among the poorest in the world, but they are also on the cusp of the demographic transition that can yield a demographic dividend.^{20,21} Whether this large population of adolescents has a positive or negative effect on a country’s social and economic development depends on how well and how quickly governments respond to their needs and enable them to engage fully and meaningfully in civic and economic affairs. With supportive macroeconomic policies and strategic investments in education and health as well as the promotion of gender equality, investment in adolescents can help to create a demographic dividend. Investing in young people’s education and health improves not only their immediate well-being, but also their employability, productivity and earnings. The dividend comes as resources are freed for economic development, and for greater per capita spending on higher quality health and education services. A virtuous cycle begins when capabilities and opportunities continuously expand.²²

1.2.3 United Nations system-wide framing

The United Nations has been progressively working to understand, engage with and advance adolescents and youth needs and rights. In the lead-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,²³ the Decade of Action²⁴ and the United Nations reform process provided opportunities for further action. The Secretary-General has personally taken the call for greater youth engagement seriously and led reform processes to ensure youth are formally represented in the United Nations system.

14 The African Women’s Development and Communication Network and Sida. *Qualitative Study on the Impact of COVID-19 on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of Women and Girls in Africa*. 2022. Available at: https://femnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Book_COVID-19_ENGLISH_.pdf.

15 UNFPA. *Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Family Planning and Ending Gender-based Violence, Female Genital Mutilation, and Child Marriage. Interim Technical Note*. 2020. Available at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/COVID-19_impact_brief_for_UNFPA_24_April_2020_1.pdf.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 *Internal UNFPA Adolescents and Youth Presentation*. 2021.

19 Ibid.

20 UNFPA. *The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future*. 2014. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-SWOP14-Report_FINAL-web.pdf.

21 The demographic dividend can be realised by various actions and supported by UNFPA adolescent and youth programming and recommendations for policy makers.

22 UNFPA. *The Power of 1.8 Billion: Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future*. 2014. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-SWOP14-Report_FINAL-web.pdf.

23 United Nations Department of Social and Economic Affairs. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. 2015. Available at: <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

24 www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/decade-of-action/.

In 1995, the World Programme of Action for Youth was one of the first global calls to programme with and for youth as partners. Its implementation was on the agenda of many United Nations agencies. UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and others worked together through the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth and Development (IANYD).²⁵ This informal inter-agency coordination mechanism was formally structured in 2010 with the establishment of IANYD as the main coordination mechanism within the United Nations system for matters related to youth.

In 2012, the Secretary-General outlined a five-year action agenda²⁶ defining main priorities to be addressed by the United Nations. One of the top priorities identified was "working with and for women and young people." The five-year action agenda called for development and implementation of a System-wide Action Plan on Youth²⁷ (Youth-SWAP) to enhance coherence and synergy of the United Nations system-wide activities in key areas related to youth development as well as to build a concrete plan of action for the coming years.

In 2013, the Secretary-General appointed the first-ever Envoy on Youth to serve as a global advocate for addressing the needs and rights of young people, as well as for bringing the United Nations closer to them.

In December 2015, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted its first-ever resolution on youth, peace and security (YPS) (UNSCR 2250),²⁸ following several years of advocacy around the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Goal 16 of the SDGs, which call for the promotion of and support to peaceful, just and inclusive societies.²⁹ The resolution recognizes the role of youth in preventing and resolving conflict and building sustainable peace, and advocates for meaningful youth engagement and participation in formal and informal peace processes.

In 2018, the United Nations launched Youth2030. This system-wide United Nations Youth Strategy provides an umbrella framework for five priorities to ensure that the work on youth issues is pursued in a coordinated, coherent and holistic manner by the United Nations.³⁰ It builds on previous trends of putting youth at the centre of United Nations action promoting peace, stability and inclusive human development across its Member States.

In 2021, the Secretary-General introduced a vision for future global cooperation in the *Our Common Agenda* report.³¹ Once again, youth was high on the global agenda. Among other things, the Secretary-General proposed the establishment of a new United Nations Youth Office to integrate and expand on the work of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, and to advance engagement and advocacy for youth development across the United Nations focus areas of peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.³² After the proposal was endorsed by Member States, General Assembly resolution (A/RES/76/306) established the United Nations Youth Office in September 2022, with an Assistant Secretary-General position associated with it. This was an important milestone in elevating the youth agenda within the United Nations system.

Young people and youth-led organizations have been actively engaged in advancing the youth agenda in the United Nations through several participation mechanisms, including the Major Group on Children and Youth (MGCY),³³ YOUNGO (the youth constituency of the United Nations Foundation-United Nations Climate Change Conference process), the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security. They engage through key events such as the annual Economic and Social

25 Background of IANYD and the overall work on youth in the United Nations: United Nations Inter-agency Network on Youth Development. *Uniting For Development*. 2013. Available at: www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/un-ianydy.pdf.

26 United Nations Secretary-General. *The Secretary-General's Five Year Action Plan*. 2012. Available at: www.un.org/sg/en/priorities/index.shtml.

27 United Nations. *United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Youth*. 2018. Available at: www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/02/Youth-SWAP.pdf.

28 www.youth4peace.info/UNSCR2250/Introduction.

29 This resolution refers to UNFPA.

30 United Nations Youth. *Youth2030: Working With and For Young People: United Nations Youth Strategy*. Undated. Available at: www.unyouth2030.com/_files/ugd/b1d674_9f63445fc59a41b6bb50cbd4f800922b.pdf.

31 United Nations. *Our Common Agenda: Report of the Secretary-General*. 2021. Available at: www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf.

32 <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3987020?ln=en>.

33 The Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY) is one of the nine self-organized Major Groups established by the Agenda 21, adopted at the Earth Summit in 1992, which recognized that achieving sustainable development would require the active participation of all sectors of society and all types of people. Agenda 21 formalized nine sectors of society as the main channels through which broader participation would be facilitated in United Nations activities related to sustainable development. After Rio+20 (2012) and with the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, MGCY has expanded the scope of its work, and became an important platform to facilitate the engagement of young people in various United Nations processes. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/aboutmajorgroups.html>.

Council Youth Forum as well as youth advisory groups affiliated with individual agencies at country, regional and global levels and high-level advisory groups such as the Secretary-General's Youth Climate Advisory Group.

1.2.4 UNFPA framing

Since the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, UNFPA has committed to advancing adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health and rights at the global, regional and country levels. UNFPA recognizes that achieving sustainable development, peace and prosperity depends on securing and promoting the human rights and welfare of adolescents and youth, in all their diversity. UNFPA is dedicated to working with and for adolescents and youth to realize their universal rights and choices related to sexual and reproductive health and well-being.

The UNFPA mandate for the advancement of adolescents and youth is anchored in UNFPA strategic plans and adolescent and youth frameworks. This includes:

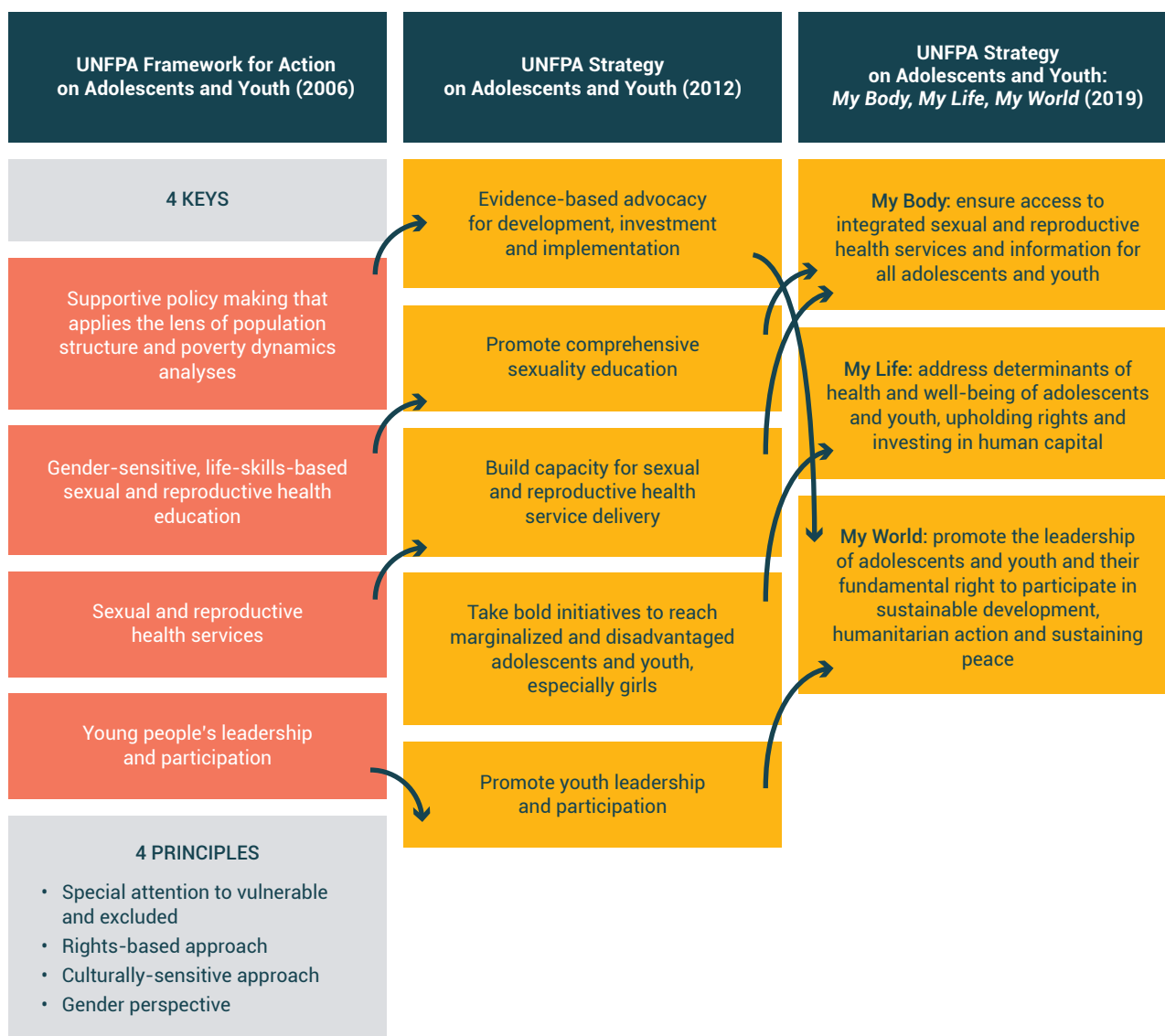
- UNFPA Framework for Action on Adolescents and Youth: Opening Doors with Young People: 4 Keys (2006)
- UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth: Towards Realizing the Full Potential of Adolescents and Youth³⁴ (2012)
- UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth: *My Body, My Life, My World*: Rights and choices for all adolescents and youth (2019)
- UNFPA Strategic Plans for 2014–2017 and 2018–2021 and 2022–2025.

Over the past decade, UNFPA youth strategies have focused on delivering quality sexual and reproductive health information, education and services. This work is further supported by efforts to create an enabling legal and policy environment through advocacy and capacity building in countries of government and national stakeholders to create conditions in which adolescents and youth can access sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) information and services they need. Promoting leadership and participation has remained central to achieving improved health and well-being outcomes as young people learn to engage, and to expect engagement, in policies and programmes that affect them.

Across the strategic areas of intervention, UNFPA employs a human rights-based approach and gender-transformative approaches. UNFPA seeks to reach the most marginalized and vulnerable young people – an effort that is increasingly focused on adolescent girls and young women, and other adolescents and youth that suffer greater disadvantages such ethnic, religious or sexual minorities and youth with disabilities. As shown in Figure 1, the UNFPA adolescent and youth strategies since 2006 have remained focused on the core mandate of advancing sexual and reproductive health (SRH) for adolescents and youth while recognizing the value and importance of meaningfully engaging young people as the primary actor or rights holder. Ways of working are evolving, although the thematic and programmatic priorities of UNFPA have not significantly changed since 2006. The current strategy pivots the approach by putting adolescents and youth at the centre of an implementation process that is holistic and multisectoral to meet the intersectional needs of adolescents and youth, with specific emphasis on leaving no one behind.

³⁴ UNFPA. *UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth*. 2013. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/UNFPA%20Adolescents%20and%20Youth%20Strategy.pdf.

FIGURE 1: Evolution of UNFPA priorities in programming for adolescents and youth




The current UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth, *My Body, My Life, My World*, builds on the previous youth strategy of 2012–2016. It adds even greater emphasis and urgency: working with adolescents and youth is no longer optional. It makes the case for the rights, development and demographic imperative of realizing universal access to rights and choices for adolescents and youth. It rests on evidence, and gender and rights principles, yet goes farther in calling attention to power dynamics as they affect young people’s access to SRHR. Adolescents and youth remain at the centre of the UNFPA strategic “bullseye” (together with women). The concepts of leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind are also central. New in this Strategy is the life course approach and the emphasis on making *My Body, My Life, My World* applicable in all settings.

The three dimensions of *My Body, My Life, My World*

The UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth aligns with the universal and people-centred transformative results in the UNFPA strategic plans through 2030. In the framework, each dimension has a focus.

- The “My Body” dimension focuses on giving adolescents and youth the access, capacity and the enabling policy and societal context to exercise their rights to make informed choices over their own bodies. Key interventions promoted include youth-friendly services that are responsive to the needs of adolescents and youth, a health workforce able to deliver high quality services for adolescents and youth, and the policies and programmes that prioritize adolescents and youth needs.
- The “My Life” dimension supports adolescents and youth to exercise their rights to make informed choices for a healthy life and successfully transition to adulthood through interventions such as comprehensive sexuality education and life skills, girls-centred programmes, community engagement, data and policy to build capacities and capabilities of adolescents and youth.
- The “My World” dimension supports interventions aim to help adolescents and youth exercise their right to participate in sustainable development, humanitarian and climate action and sustaining peace. This is done through supporting meaningful participation of adolescents and youth in decision-making, support for youth-led organizations, initiatives and movements, youth-led advocacy and investment in adolescents and youth more generally.

Together these areas of intervention contribute to the three transformative result outcomes of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025. One of this strategic plan's six outputs focuses on adolescents and youth: “By 2025, strengthened skills and opportunities for adolescents and youth to ensure bodily autonomy, leadership and participation and to build human capital.” Adolescents and youth are also mainstreamed in the other five outputs.

A photograph showing two women wearing dark blue hijabs and face coverings, sitting at a desk in a computer training center. They are focused on their work, with their hands on the keyboards. The room has large windows with patterned curtains, and the lighting is bright and natural. The women are positioned in the foreground and middle ground, with the woman in the foreground being more prominent.

© UNFPA Bangladesh/Prince Naymuzzaman.

Established in 2021, a computer skills training center for adolescent girls in Jamalpur District, Bangladesh, helps to bridge the gender digital divide.

2

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluation is a formative³⁵ (forward-looking), utility-focused evaluation with objectives structured around an assessment of the conceptual framework of the Strategy to facilitate learning and provide practical and actionable inputs to future UNFPA adolescents and youth programming. The evaluation team applied two overall conceptual approaches: Appreciative Inquiry and Most Significant Change. A mixed-methods approach to data collection allowed the team to gather and analyse a breadth and depth of qualitative and quantitative data from a range of primary and secondary data sources to address the evaluation questions.

Appreciative Inquiry: The evaluation team designed the approach around the principles of Appreciative Inquiry. This was done instead of a theory-based approach, starting from the targets set by UNFPA and holding programming accountable to those targets. The Appreciative Inquiry approach looks at both intended and unintended positive and negative effects of UNFPA programming and seeks to understand the enabling and constraining factors to ensure good learning and a positive way forward. For details on the application of the approach, please consult Annex I.

Most Significant Change: A form of participatory evaluation known as Most Significant Change (MSC) was a secondary overarching conceptual approach integrated into the design of the evaluation.³⁶ The evaluation team applied this participatory approach to explore how UNFPA contributed to changes at the local level, whether positive or negative and in what situations and contexts did those changes occur. In this exercise, MSC was integrated into the focus group discussions (FGD) with open-ended questions³⁷ to young people under the framing of Evaluation Question 5 on effectiveness, with regard to the biggest impact UNFPA programming has had on their lives.

35 Formative evaluation is understood here as an exercise that is typically conducted during the course of a programme or strategy to determine which aspects of an intervention work well or not (and why) to improve its current and future implementation. This is in contrary to a summative evaluation that is an exercise typically conducted at the conclusion of a programme or strategy to assess how well an intervention performs (e.g. effectiveness, efficiency etc) to inform future design and implementation.

36 Most Significant Change (MSC) approach is a form of participatory evaluation. It is participatory because many project stakeholders are involved both in deciding the sorts of change to be recorded and in analysing the data. MSC contributes to evaluation because it provides data on impact and outcomes which can be used to help assess the performance of the programme as a whole. Essentially, the process involves the collection of significant change (SC) stories emanating from the field level, and the systematic selection of the most important of these by panels of designated stakeholders or staff. The designated staff and stakeholders are initially involved by 'searching' for the intervention's outcomes and/or impact. Once changes have been captured, various people sit down together, read the stories aloud and have regular and often in-depth discussions about the value of the reported changes.

37 The FGD data collection tool for this exercise asked the following questions: What are the best things about this [project / centre]. What has it helped most with? Answers to these questions are mostly highlighted throughout the report in boxes entitled "What Young People Say".

2.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The criteria used in this evaluation cover the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness efficiency, sustainability and the additional criteria of coordination.³⁸ The criteria were translated into eight evaluation questions and 26 related evaluation sub-questions. These questions form the basis of the evaluation matrix which also establishes the related assumptions, indicators, data sources and methods for data collection. For the full evaluation matrix, including all sub-questions, see Annex II.

TABLE 1: Evaluation questions

Evaluation questions	Evaluation criteria
1. To what extent has the conceptualization of the current Strategy (<i>My Body, My Life, My World</i>) been based on identified needs and comparative advantage?	Relevance
2. To what extent has UNFPA aligned with the broader environment of working with young people within the United Nations system and beyond?	Coherence
3. To what extent is UNFPA strategic guidance – including the overarching Strategy and other global, regional and country-level frameworks – aligned to a genuine human rights-based approach (HRBA); including reaching the furthest behind first, addressing issues of marginalization and putting young people first?	Relevance
4. To what extent has UNFPA been able to adapt youth programming to COVID-19 over the past year, and to other humanitarian settings?	Relevance/Responsiveness
5. To what extent has UNFPA supported adolescents and youth at the country, global and regional levels across the different areas of support?	Effectiveness
6. To what extent has UNFPA measured results across individual, community and societal impacts?	Effectiveness
7. To what extent has UNFPA coordinated with and provided leadership to broader efforts to work for and with young people within the United Nations system and beyond?	Effectiveness Coordination
8. To what extent has UNFPA allocated adequate financial, human, technical, and other resources to achieve the results as articulated within <i>My Body, My Life, My World</i> ?	Efficiency Sustainability

³⁸ While coordination is not a defined criterion according to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee, it is commonly used in evaluations where coordination and leadership responsibilities; initially within humanitarian programming where coordination leadership is a clearly required competency (see ALNAP – Evaluation of Humanitarian Action Guide: www.alnap.org/help-library/evaluation-of-humanitarian-action-guide) but increasingly within development programmes as well. As the area of adolescents and youth is a specific or discrete thematic sector but rather a cross-cutting issue, and therefore coordination leadership is a clear requirement for effectiveness and as such has been included as a stand-alone criterion.

2.3 GUIDING FRAMEWORK

The guiding framework is not a programmatic theory of change; rather, it was developed specifically for this evaluation to be used as a design tool and to help conceptualize the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth (*My Body, My Life, My World*). The guiding framework as presented below attempts to capture all of the ways in which UNFPA supports adolescents and youth across all thematic areas in varied contexts and different levels. For a more detailed discussion on the guiding framework, please refer to Annex I in Volume 2 of the report.

2.4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Data collection methods and tools: Data collection methods and tools have been designed to complement one another and provide the most suitable mix of data sources to triangulate findings against each evaluation sub-question.

The evaluation was structured around a series of in-depth country case studies chosen specifically to highlight different youth programmes in very diverse contexts. This was supplemented by broader data collection at the global, regional and country levels, through a comprehensive document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and a survey.³⁹

Box 1. Meaningful youth engagement within this evaluation

One of the objectives of the evaluation was the meaningful engagement of young people within the evaluation process. While many evaluations, within and outside of UNFPA, attempt to engage young people in evaluation processes, it is important to note that within this evaluation the meaningful engagement of young people is not just a way of doing things, it is an objective within its own right. In many instances young people are engaged in limited or tokenistic ways, being consulted within focus group discussions; or perhaps being used for data collection, for example, but not in the design, analysis or strategic steering of the evaluative exercise. This evaluation went further than this and bridged the gap by involving youth meaningfully in each phase of the evaluative exercise. Youth were engaged as members of a Youth Steering Committee, young evaluators and UNFPA young professionals.

Engagement of youth: The methodology for meaningful youth engagement within this evaluation featured young people in three roles: members of a Youth Steering Committee, young evaluators, and young professionals at UNFPA who were consulted around data analysis.

- A Youth Steering Committee (YSC) comprised of six young professionals was established for this evaluation. YSC members came from Ghana, Kenya, Peru, the Netherlands, Tunisia and Türkiye. The YSC worked alongside the Evaluation Office as co-creators in this evaluation from the design phase to dissemination phase of the evaluation. In their capacity, the YSC helped to ensure that young people have a voice in each stage of the evaluation to reflect the priorities, values and identities of young people.
- Fourteen young evaluators were locally-recruited and contracted to work across the 14 country case studies. A core evaluation team member was paired to work alongside the young evaluator. The young evaluators participated in an initial training with the core evaluation team member in order to understand the background to the evaluation and participated in comprehensive training on all the data collection tools. (Note: One member of the core evaluation team is a young evaluator and conducted the pilot country case study alongside a senior evaluator.) The core evaluation team members kept in close contact with the young evaluators throughout the data collection period, and the young evaluators were closely involved in the country-level data analysis and sense-making process.
- The young professionals network at UNFPA, otherwise known as “Tangerines”, were consulted during the data collection phase of this evaluation.

39 Due to the COVID-19 situation, a hybrid approach was implemented for the data collection in this evaluation. Core evaluation team members worked remotely together with an in-country national youth consultant. See section 3.6 below for more information.

Document and literature review: The evaluation team performed a comprehensive review of documents related to UNFPA support to adolescents and youth, including adolescents and youth programmes and project documents and data, as well as other relevant external documentation. The identification of documents reviewed was an iterative process, including both those identified within the inception phase during a document mapping exercise (at global, regional and country levels), and additional documentation highlighted as relevant by stakeholders during the data collection phase.⁴⁰

Semi-structured key informant interviews: Semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted based on an initial stakeholder mapping⁴¹ and further in-depth consultation with UNFPA colleagues at the country level and at global level. Interviews were all conducted consistently across the team – both the core evaluation team members and the national young evaluators – based on the overarching KII questionnaire developed as the KII data collection tool within the inception phase. Interviews were conducted with UNFPA colleagues and other external key stakeholders, including UNFPA implementing partners, other United Nations agencies, other NGOs and civil society organizations working with youth, donors, government counterparts and academic institutions.⁴²

Focus group discussions with young people (for country case studies only): For the 14 country case studies, consultations with young people themselves (adolescents and youth) were considered a critical element of data collection, to the extent that the security and COVID-19 situations within countries permitted. COVID-19 limited travel by core evaluation team members; therefore, most FGDs were conducted by national young evaluators.⁴³ However, national evaluators were trained on conducting FGDs and interviews, and in almost all countries, were able to conduct on-site interviews and FGDs with beneficiaries.

Online survey: An online survey was sent to UNFPA staff regarding focal points for adolescents and youth programming within their offices. Data collected through the survey was used to triangulate and supplement data collected through other sources. The survey was based on a sequential and exploratory design: the questions were finalized based on emerging trends and gaps in data to date. A total of 70 staff responded (43 female, 26 male and 1 other, with 94 per cent of respondents from staff in country offices, and 6 per cent from staff in regional offices).⁴⁴

Country case studies: Country case studies were selected through a process of purposive sampling, which is a specific type of qualitative and non-probability sampling method selected in response to the formative purpose of the evaluation.

The sampling process included development of two data sets on UNFPA initiatives and activities for adolescents and youth. Sampling criteria were applied for country selection of case studies as follows:

- Humanitarian, development and peacebuilding areas in the same country
- Funding for adolescents and youth programming above average for the region (noting that regional differences mean that there is not an absolute figure, and this criterion is simply those countries that ranked in the top half of list with regard to funding)
- Multiple/diverse adolescents and youth interventions implemented in 2019⁴⁵
- Regional coverage across all six UNFPA regions: Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (APRO), Arab States Regional Office (ASRO), Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (EECARO), East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) and the West and Central Africa Regional Office (WCARO).

In addition to the above criteria, the UNFPA adolescents and youth team at UNFPA headquarters in New York provided suggestions as to countries with strong youth programmes that would provide good learning for this evaluation. In total, 14 country case studies were undertaken during the evaluation.

40 See Annex IV for bibliography.

41 For an overview of the stakeholder mapping, please refer to Annex IX- Inception Report.

42 See Annex III for a full list of key informants.

43 One core team member was able to travel to Colombia, aligned with other work being conducted; one core team member was in Brazil and another was in Zimbabwe, both were country case studies.

44 Please see Annex VII for a summary overview of the survey results. The survey was sent to all UNFPA staff working with adolescents and youth at country and regional levels – a total of 198 people. The completion rate of those who completed the survey has been of 71 per cent, and the other 29 per cent of respondents partially completed the survey.

45 While this evaluation spans the years 2015-2022 the evaluation team could not review all data from all years as there are thousands of lines of data. Therefore, 2019 as a mid-point was chosen for review.

TABLE 2: Country case studies

APRO	ASRO	EECARO	ESARO	LACRO	WCARO
Bangladesh	Jordan	Kyrgyzstan	Mozambique	Brazil	Benin
Philippines		Türkiye	Zimbabwe	Colombia	Ghana
		Ukraine ⁴⁶		Mexico	Niger

The results of the 14 country case studies have been recorded, coded and analysed in evidence databases for each country.

Evidence databases: Throughout the evaluation, collected data was recorded systematically in an evidence database based on the evaluation matrix.⁴⁷ This rigorous approach to data recording and data analysis allowed the strength of each finding to be robustly determined to complement (not replace) overall qualitative analysis. Not all pieces of evidence are equal in terms of quality or credibility; the evidence databases serve as an extra validation and verification step, rather than the foundation for determining findings. At a data analysis workshop, the evaluation team used the summarized analysis of the country, and regional and global case studies to propose global synthesis findings for each evaluation question. The team then systematically reviewed those findings back against the evidence database for validation and to ensure that they were grounded in evidence, and revised where necessary.

Data analysis and triangulation: The evaluation team utilized the following methods to analyse the quantitative and qualitative data collected:

- **Descriptive analysis** was used to understand the contexts within which UNFPA support to adolescents and youth programming takes place. For each country case study, document review and key informant interviews provided data for a specific contextual analysis which was written up as informal case study notes. The case studies provided the necessary understanding of the context within which UNFPA implements adolescents and youth programming.
- **Content analysis** constituted the core of the qualitative analysis. The evaluation team analysed and coded documents, interview transcripts and observations from the field to identify common trends, themes and patterns for each of the key evaluation questions and criteria. This was completed at two clear levels. Each core evaluation team member worked together with a young evaluator. The task was to identify both country-level themes and patterns, which were then developed into country-level findings. The core evaluation team member extracted themes and trends from these country-level findings that might be pertinent to a global level analysis. The evaluation team leader used content analysis to analyse and code documents and interview transcripts at the regional and global levels to produce regional and global level case studies, which mirrored the country case study notes. At the synthesis level, the evaluation team consolidated the extracted themes and trends from the data sets (14 country case studies, and the regional and global case studies) and validated this against survey results to ensure a full triangulation of all data.
- **Contribution analysis** was used to understand logic relations of why the observed results have occurred, and the role played by UNFPA along with other external factors. The evaluation team employed contribution analysis at both country and global levels. Contribution analysis also featured heavily in a final analysis meeting discussion with the UNFPA global adolescents and youth team.
- **Comparative analysis** was used to examine findings across different initiatives, countries, themes, or other criteria and to identify good practices, innovative approaches, and lessons learned. This was used during the analysis phase to extract good practices and lessons learned to inform the overall final synthesis report.

The evaluation team ensured triangulation of evidence for findings across data collection methods to corroborate and increase the quality and credibility of the evaluation findings and conclusions. First, the team utilized the evidence

⁴⁶ This evaluation was undertaken before the Ukraine war.

⁴⁷ See the Inception Report for template for evidence database.

databases to triangulate and validate the findings, and to reaffirm themes at a higher/global level. Second, the team presented preliminary findings with the country office at the conclusion of each case study. Third, two data analysis workshops were conducted with the Evaluation Office to analyse the results from the various data collection methods and data sources. Lastly, the draft report was shared with the evaluation reference group for their feedback and validation.

2.5 DATA SOURCES

The evaluation team interviewed a total of 419 stakeholders⁴⁸ and engaged 832 young people within FGD.

FIGURE 2: Young people engaged through FGDs, by gender and country

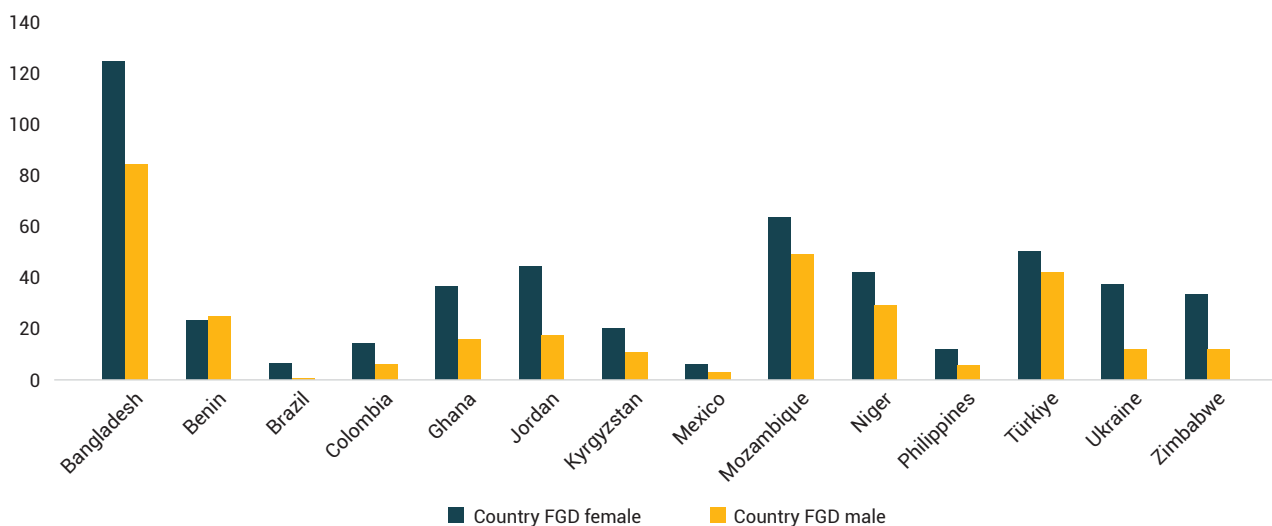
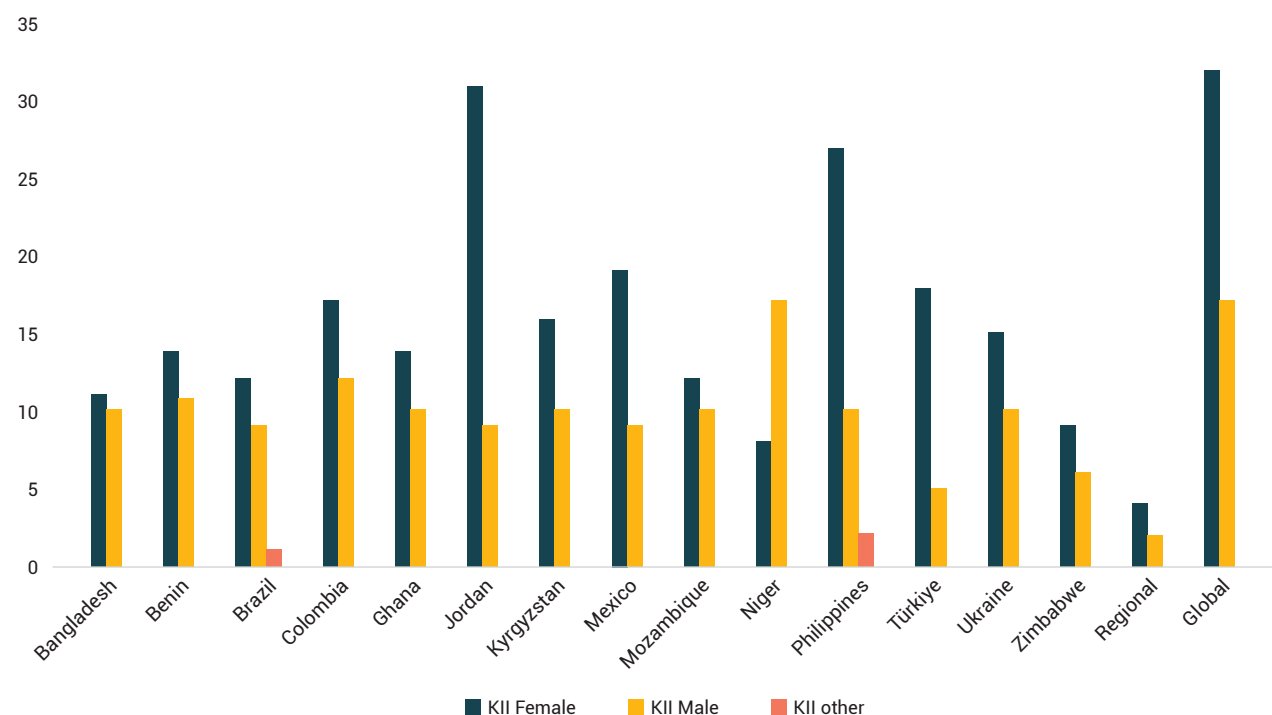
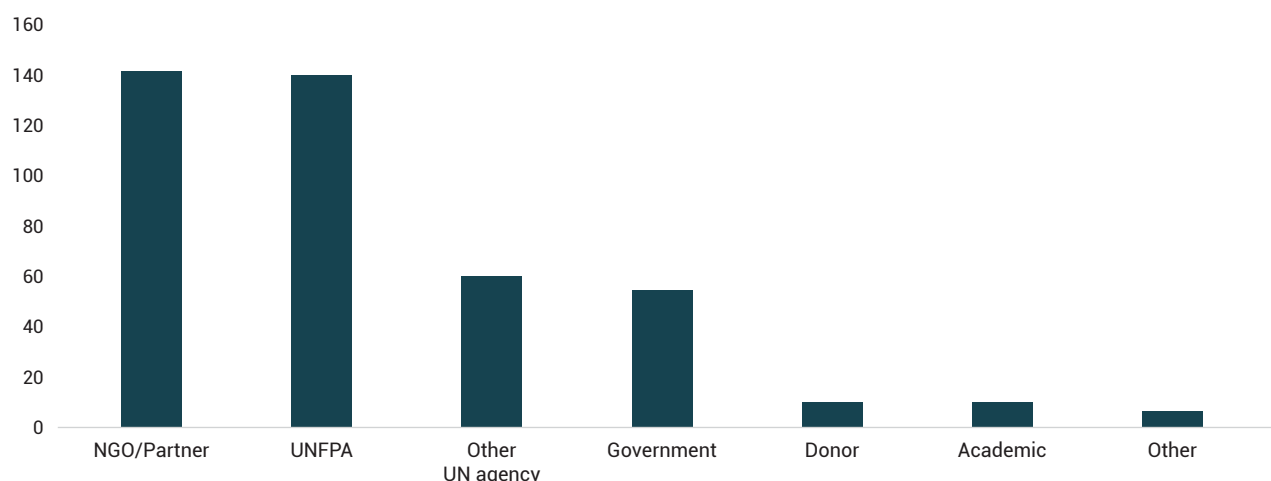


FIGURE 3a: Key informant interviews



48 See Annex III for a full list of key stakeholders.

FIGURE 3b: Key informant interviews, by type



2.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This evaluation integrated gender equality and human rights, aligned with the United Nations Evaluation Group's guidance,⁴⁹ throughout the evaluation and in multiple ways. In particular, the evaluation team addressed these dimensions in: the evaluability assessment during the inception phase; the stakeholder analysis and mapping; as the evaluation criteria and questions; the evaluation team composition as well as in the evaluation methodology. A full overview of how human rights and gender were incorporated into this evaluation can be found in the annexes.

2.7 LIMITATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

During the inception phase, the evaluation team identified a number of limitations to the evaluation. Throughout the data collection phase, further impacts (both negative and positive) occurred with regard to limitations and the effect of mitigation measures, as highlighted below.

TABLE 3: Limitations and actual mitigation measures

Limitation	Mitigation measure: proposed (for inception-identified limitations) and actual
Restrictions in data collection due to COVID-19	There were no unexpected issues with regard to COVID-19 during the data collection or analysis period of the evaluation
Incomplete atlas data on UNFPA support adolescents and youth owing to missing tags	This limited the sampling strategy only but did not limit the rest of the data collection. The sampling strategy ensured a number of different contexts were included in the evaluation to capture and reflect the full extent of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth
Unavailability of outcome-level results data	This evaluation is framed as a formative, learning evaluation with an evaluation matrix designed to seek evidence of how UNFPA is currently implementing the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth <i>My Body, My Life, My World</i> . The evaluation team also sought evidence as to effectiveness of programming, which required results data at activity level, output level and outcome level. The team worked with country offices to gather all data possible and seek to extrapolate useful findings from the available data

49 UNEG. Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance (UNEG/G(2011)2).

© UNFPA Colombia.

Young women participate in the comprehensive sexuality education programme by the Tírala Plena initiative in Atlántico, Colombia.



3

FINDINGS

3.1 RELEVANCE AND ALIGNMENT

Evaluation question 1: To what extent has the conceptualization of the current UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth been based on identified needs and comparative advantage?⁵⁰

Finding 1: *My Body, My Life, My World* is evidence-based and responds to the intersectional needs of young people through holistic, multisectoral programming, while leveraging UNFPA comparative advantage to undertake this programming and, ultimately, realize its three transformative results.

The evaluation team found that the UNFPA approach to adolescents and youth is fundamentally grounded in a comprehensive and evidence-based strategy of providing support to this demographic population group both in terms of rights-based programming and accelerating achievement of the ICPD Programme of Action. The Strategy directly responds to the most pressing needs of youth as documented in research and literature and captured by UNFPA through studies, evidence syntheses and situation analyses.⁵¹ The Strategy seeks to address the intersectional needs of young people as they themselves have reported, and as represented in information captured locally by UNFPA field offices.⁵²

My Body, My Life, My World directly responds to the previous evaluation of UNFPA programming for adolescents and youth,⁵³ which called for “a coherent and synergistic approach that incorporates all UNFPA targeted and mainstreamed programming for adolescents and youth within an overarching theory of change” that more prominently features adolescent girls. The recommendation highlighted the need for UNFPA to strengthen the priority and visibility of adolescents and youth within the organization. The evaluation team found this clearly reflected in the 2019 Strategy.

Alignment with UNFPA Strategic Plan

My Body, My Life, My World was designed to cut across all outcomes of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. Specifically, the “My Body” dimension aligns with Outcome 1 on integrated sexual and reproductive services and reproductive rights; the “My Life” dimension aligns with Outcome 2 on adolescent and youth empowerment and rights, and Outcome 3 on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and the “My World” dimension addresses Outcome 2 and Outcome 4 on population dynamics and sustainable development.

50 Assumptions: 1.1 The current Strategy is based on evidence i.e. identified needs of youth orientated around the life course. 1.2 The current Strategy is aligned with UNFPA mandate areas, strengths, and comparative advantage. The centrality of SRHR (“My Body”) and its foundational role in achieving “My Life” and “My World” is clearly articulated. 1.3 The Strategy is relevant and useful at the country level.

51 There is an increasing volume of robust and credible research that suggests targeting adolescents and youth in health, education, economic empowerment, and in civic participation, ensures that young people become essential actors in development, peacebuilding and humanitarian response, and this is beneficial both to them as individuals and to their communities. This is a common theme across a number of documents (see Annex IV for the bibliography of global literature reviewed) and is also articulated in the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth, *My Body, My Life, My World*.

52 All country case studies, global and regional respondents.

53 UNFPA. *Evaluation of UNFPA Support to Adolescents and Youth (2008-2015)*. 2016. Available at: www.unfpa.org/evaluation-unfpa-support-adolescents-and-youth-2008-2015.

The UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 sets forth a strategic shift in organizational focus to align with achievement of the three transformative results. Adolescents and youth is one of the six interconnected output areas that contribute to realization of these outcomes. The fundamental importance of reaching adolescents and youth in order to realize the three transformative results is increasingly recognized both within and external to UNFPA. This output is the mainstay of UNFPA leadership within the area of adolescents and youth.⁵⁴ The other five outputs also address adolescents and youth, mainstreamed under several indicators that target adolescents and youth,⁵⁵ including several mentions under the humanitarian action output. The strategic plan articulates the need for young people – in particular, adolescent girls and young women – to realize their rights to make informed choices about their own bodies, their lives and the world they live in. In many ways, *My Body, My Life, My World* fortifies the theory of change of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025. Even so, the evaluation team noted that the importance of adolescent- and youth-specific programming to achieve the three transformative results, particularly in countries experiencing the demographic dividend, has not been made explicit. Under the umbrella of the next strategic plan, this concern might be resolved to a certain extent by the use of more consistent messaging on how adolescents and youth are central to achieving the transformative goals.⁵⁶

Relevance and usefulness at country level

My Body, My Life, My World successfully makes the case for recognizing and programming for the intersectional needs of adolescents and youth, while harnessing the strengths and comparative advantage of UNFPA to undertake this work. However, the evaluation team noted that greater clarity would be helpful regarding which programmatic aspects are most important for achieving the three transformative results. There is no clear hierarchy of priorities from the global level as to which areas of UNFPA adolescents and youth work to prioritize, leaving country and regional offices to decide locally where their focus should be. This may be due to efforts to be flexible to country and regional context. How well the priorities are put into practice depends on local interests, capacities and legacy programmes in which they may already be invested. For example, interventions such as youth-responsive services, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and youth engagement are facilitators to achieving reductions in early and unintended pregnancy – yet country offices struggle to shift programmatic focus to new or different evidence-based strategies that may offer greater results. This is particularly challenging for country offices with limited adolescent and youth programme funding. The context-specific focus also affects strategic prioritization by UNFPA in partnering, coordination and leadership. With prioritization determinations left to countries and regions, UNFPA finds itself partnering and leading in a diversity of thematic areas. These areas range from the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and youth peace and security (YPS), to youth economic empowerment and SRHR, and the emerging area of “climate change and SRHR”. UNFPA formed and chairs a global working group in the latter area. Respondents to this evaluation expressed a strong sense that priorities within adolescents and youth programming have followed individual strengths and interests of staff in advancing specific topics within UNFPA, more than a coherent and strategic approach to prioritization.⁵⁷

Narrative frame for a holistic, multisectoral approach

My Body, My Life, My World provided an opportunity for UNFPA to develop a narrative frame for UNFPA work on adolescents and youth. The evaluation team recognized that the strategy is a key entry point for tackling root causes of youth and adolescent vulnerabilities, but how UNFPA programming should respond to these vulnerabilities is less clear.⁵⁸ Even before the launch of *My Body, My Life, My World*, UNFPA programming had already ventured into areas such as youth economic empowerment and climate change in response to youth-articulated needs and priorities, but it lacked an institutional reference to support this work. For example, while youth economic empowerment is not a traditional UNFPA mandate area, many consider it a necessary component of successful youth programming for adolescents and youth SRHR and beyond. Towards this end, UNFPA supports human capital building broadly through CSE, sexual and reproductive health services, and agency, empowerment and participation interventions that help adolescents and youth acquire skills towards economic empowerment. The Strategy makes room for the inclusion of new thematic areas. However, within

54 Global case study.

55 Outputs of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025: Policy and accountability; quality of care and services; gender and social norms; population change and data; humanitarian action; and adolescents and youth.

56 Multiple global level respondents.

57 Ibid.

58 UNFPA has developed modules for operational guidance for the strategy but at the time of data collection for this evaluation these modules were not yet rolled out.

UNFPA more broadly, the evaluation team noted a lack of a clear corporate positioning on the limits and possibilities of the “My Life” and “My World” dimensions. This hinders its full potential. Even so, the Strategy offers UNFPA an opportunity to contextualize some of its youth intervention areas, especially in the “My Life” and “My World” dimensions, to make them even more relevant for young people. The Strategy offers the potential to strengthen UNFPA collaboration with key United Nations entities who work in these programmatic areas.

Finding 2: The Strategy provides a holistic framework that speaks to the diverse contexts, helping frame adolescents and youth work within country programmes and providing a clear narrative to articulate UNFPA's comparative advantage. Still, challenges remain in the adaptation of the Strategy to address all the identified needs of adolescents and youth in some settings.

At the regional level, *My Body, My Life, My World* provides a broad, holistic vision in which regional offices can frame their work on adolescents and youth. A gap remains, however, in coordinating strategic and programmatic guidance across UNFPA thematic teams such as SRH, gender and population and development. Issues of adolescents and youth intersect in the thematic teams' areas of work. This is particularly significant in regions with younger demographic profiles. Some regional offices (LACRO and EECARO), expressed a desire for the strategy to speak more directly to the unique challenges in their regions, such as how to operationalize specific laws and policies, or overcome barriers to change legislation that impedes progress on child marriage.⁵⁹

At the country level, country case studies provided some clear lessons regarding how programming for adolescents and youth is mainstreamed across UNFPA mandate areas within country programmes. The evaluation also noted evidence that UNFPA has expanded its youth programming beyond its traditional mandate areas to include more innovative approaches at the intersection of SRHR and economic empowerment/employability. Many instances were reported of how *My Body, My Life, My World* helps countries frame and adapt adolescents and youth programming to accentuate the comparative advantage of UNFPA. The UNFPA country office in the Philippines provides a good example of this in practice. Youth participation is a core component of *My Body, My Life, My World*, which allows UNFPA to flex this as a new strength and advocate for meaningful youth participation. UNFPA Philippines not only practices meaningful youth participation in their programmes, but also influences their government partners and other United Nations agencies in the country to meaningfully involve young people in programming and decision-making.⁶⁰

The evaluation process revealed that some countries face challenges in adapting *My Body, My Life, My World* to address the identified needs of young people in their national contexts. In some instances, the Strategy is too high-level to inform country strategies for critical and urgent problems facing adolescents and youth, such as psychosocial support for young people affected by violence or crisis as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶¹ There is also less clarity on how *My Body, My Life, My World* facilitates mainstreaming adolescents and youth programming across the UNFPA three transformative results or how the strategy should be operationalized with other frameworks and guidance used by country offices (e.g. the demographic dividend, population-based approaches, etc.). More comprehensive operational guidance is required on how to approach integrated and cross-sectoral programming within existing programming.^{62,63}

In some instances, contextualization of the Strategy was challenging due to political or cultural sensitivities of the country. In community-based societies, one challenging aspect of the Strategy was the focus on the individual, that is to say “My” Body, “My” Life, “My” World. The evaluation findings, however, identified examples where UNFPA has been able to adapt the Strategy to be more culturally sensitive; this includes reframing some of the terminology.⁶⁴ For example, programmes would refer to “family planning” as “preventing unwanted pregnancy” or “reproductive health

59 Case studies, regional interviews and documentary review.

60 Philippines country case study.

61 Regional respondents; Mozambique, Ukraine and Colombia country case studies.

62 Country case studies.

63 UNFPA has developed modules for operational guidance for the Strategy but at the time of data collection for this evaluation these modules were not yet rolled out.

64 Kyrgyzstan and Ghana country case studies.

methods". As another example, "comprehensive sexuality education" would be referred to as "life skills, healthy lifestyle or sexuality education".⁶⁵

3.2 COHERENCE

Evaluation question 2: To what extent has UNFPA aligned with the broader environment of working with young people within the United Nations system and beyond?⁶⁶

Finding 3: UNFPA adolescents and youth programming is well aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals and Youth2030, the United Nations Youth Strategy. At the country level, UNFPA adolescent and youth programming is leveraged to strengthen national agendas and commitments around the SDGs and broaden the discourse around the needs, outcomes and rights of adolescents and youth.

Global level and the SDGs

The UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth *My Body, My Life, My World* is well aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals,⁶⁷ and under this framework, UNFPA continues to provide leadership at the global level to advance adolescents and youth SRHR in global agendas. Most significantly, UNFPA has provided leadership in the area of adolescent and youth rights to access comprehensive sexuality education, and youth-responsive services. UNFPA was instrumental in advocating for the inclusion of adolescent and youth indicators and age-disaggregated requirements into the SDG indicator framework, with 18 youth-specific indicators (or sub-indicators) currently included. Some of the efforts that have been championed and largely mainstreamed as best practice by UNFPA (with United Nations partners and others) include: raising the global recognition on the importance of child marriage, ensuring pregnant learners can remain in school, and removing legal and policy barriers to access for adolescents and youth to contraceptives to reduce early and unintended pregnancy.

Global-level respondents and documentary review conducted in this evaluation demonstrate a clear and purposeful alignment between *My Body, My Life, My World* and the broader United Nations Youth Strategy (Youth2030).⁶⁸ UNFPA developed its Strategy in parallel to Youth2030. UNFPA staff participated in the Youth2030 technical drafting group.⁶⁹ UNFPA was the first United Nations agency to explicitly align its adolescent and youth programming to the priorities of Youth2030; this was marked by the launch of *My Body, My Life, My World* in 2019. UNFPA continues to participate in the Youth2030 joint working group chaired by the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and is the co-lead of Pillar 5 on peace and resilience. Notably, in 2021, a progress report titled *Youth2030: A Global Progress Report 2022*⁷⁰ ranked UNFPA as one of the top three performers among all United Nations entities implementing Youth2030, acknowledging the institutional efforts by UNFPA to align and contribute to the Strategy's operationalization.⁷¹ In addition, UNFPA co-led with UNICEF an inter-agency meta-synthesis of evaluation reports to extract lessons learned to inform the current and future implementation of Youth2030.⁷²

65 Country case studies and documentary review.

66 Assumptions: 2.1 UNFPA strategic direction and support to adolescents and youth is aligned with the SDGs at global, regional, and country levels. 2.2 UNFPA strategic direction and support to adolescents and youth is aligned with Youth 2030 at global, regional, and country levels. 2.3 UNFPA strategic direction and support to adolescents and youth is aligned with the IASC Guidelines for working with and for young people in humanitarian contexts at global, regional, and country levels (where applicable). 2.4 UNFPA strategic direction and support to adolescents and youth is aligned with national frameworks at country level. How has this benefited the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth and how could this alignment be strengthened?

67 UNFPA. *My Body, My Life, My World: Rights and Choices for all Adolescents and Youth: a UNFPA global strategy*. 2018. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/FinalVersion-Strategy-Web.pdf.

68 Global level other United Nations respondents and documentary review.

69 Global and regional United Nations and civil society organization partner respondents.

70 United Nations Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. *Youth2030: A Global Progress Report*. 2022. Available at: www.unyouth2030.com/_files/ugd/b1d674_13a797e3dff746f488ce4ec5fbad57bd.pdf.

71 Ibid.

72 UNFPA. *What works to amplify the rights and voices of youth? Meta-synthesis of lessons learned from youth evaluations (2015-2020) to support the implementation of the United Nations Youth Strategy*. 2021. Available at: www.unfpa.org/what-works-amplify-rights-and-voices-youth-meta-synthesis-lessons-learned-youth-evaluations-2015.

Alignment to regional frameworks

At the regional level, *My Body, My Life, My World* is well aligned with regional frameworks around adolescents and youth. It aligns with the African Union regional framework. The *African Union Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend Through Investments in Youth* recognizes the intersectional needs of adolescents and youth^{73,74} In the Latin America region, the Strategy aligns with the Montevideo Consensus⁷⁵ on Population and Development in the UNFPA publication *165 million reasons: A call for investments in adolescents and youth in Latin America and the Caribbean*.⁷⁶ This resource reflects a spirit of meeting the intersectional needs of young people through holistic, multisectoral interventions.⁷⁷ In East and Southern Africa, it aligns with the *Ministerial Commitment on comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and young people in Eastern and Southern Africa*. This commitment was signed by Ministers of Health and Education from 20 countries within the region and supported by UNFPA, other United Nations entities, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and civil society partners.⁷⁸ The framework of the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth provides all UNFPA regional offices with a clear vision of the policy environment for adolescents and youth and has helped them strengthen enabling regional and national policy frameworks.

Alignment to national frameworks

At the country level, UNFPA work is aligned to *My Body, My Life, My World* while simultaneously aligning with national frameworks. A key strategy for UNFPA is to support specific projects, dashboards, training and youth engagement in voluntary national reviews (VNRs) to ensure that adolescents and youth are on the national SDG agenda, and are considered in the results. The evaluation team observed that although few voluntary national reviews have addressed the availability of disaggregated data by age, including adolescent and youth indicators and results, the discourse has raised the visibility of reporting on youth-related SDGs at the national level. These efforts demonstrate the UNFPA commitment to creating national enabling environments where adolescents and youth are fully recognized as rights holders within the national development discussions. Unfortunately, the results of this work are rarely captured within existing results frameworks. This evaluation teams notes that is a missed opportunity to demonstrate the UNFPA contribution to increasing the attention and support for adolescents and youth within national agendas, which are critical actions for advancing adolescents and youth, adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (ASRHR) and other rights in countries. In Kyrgyzstan, for example, UNFPA contributed to the monitoring of the progress of national policies towards SDG Global Initiative 2030 through support to its Youth Well-being Index.⁷⁹ Also, within the framework of the United Nations Youth Thematic Group, UNFPA provided support for the United Nations Youth Delegate of Kyrgyzstan to take part in the voluntary national review process and the 2030 Agenda mainstreaming.⁸⁰ UNFPA advocated effectively for the inclusion of a chapter on youth in the National Sustainable Development Strategy 2040.⁸¹ Similarly in Ukraine, UNFPA developed a Youth Well-being Index to present SDG youth indicator data that could be used for national reporting.⁸² UNFPA also provided training to engage civil society organizations, government and private sector partners on the SDG indicators related to youth, and to raise awareness of the results achieved within the 2030 Agenda.

In addition to contributing to national commitments to the SDGs, UNFPA has played a key role in supporting national agendas. For example, in Zimbabwe, UNFPA worked with the government within the framework of the national development strategy to support harmonization and alignment of programmes with national priorities and coordination mechanisms that align with *My Body, My Life, My World*.⁸³ Further, UNFPA provided inputs into policy development processes in

73 UNFPA Addis Ababa Representational Office. *African Union Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend Through Investments in Youth*. 2017. Available at: <https://addis.unfpa.org/en/publications/au-roadmap-harnessingthe-demographic-dividendthrough-investmentsin-youth-0>.

74 Document review.

75 Montevideo Consensus: intergovernmental agreement for the follow-up and implementation of ICPD in Latin America and the Caribbean.

76 UNFPA Caribbean Sub-Regional Office. *165 million reasons: A call for investments in adolescents and youth in Latin America and the Caribbean*. 2019. Available at: <https://caribbean.unfpa.org/en/publications/165-million-reasons?page=30,0,2>.

77 Ibid.

78 UNFPA regional respondents and documentary review.

79 UNFPA Kyrgyzstan. *Youth Wellbeing and Development Index in Kyrgyz Republic*. 2022. Available at: https://kyrgyzstan.unfpa.org/en/publications/Youth_Wellbeing_and_Development_Index%20in_Kyrgyz%20Republic.

80 UNFPA: Youth Thematic Group (YTG) Retreat 2020, Raduga Hotel (Issyk-Kul), online 7-8 December 2020.

81 Kyrgyzstan civil society respondents.

82 Government of Ukraine. United Nations Partnership Framework 2018–2022.

83 Zimbabwe United Nations respondents.

Zimbabwe such as the national youth policy, to ensure that their programming aligns with current and future adolescents and youth policies.⁸⁴ As a result, UNFPA reinforced the national health strategy's focus on improving youth-friendly services by committing to a comprehensive adolescent health minimum service delivery package that includes SRHR, immunization, mental health, menstrual hygiene, HIV and nutrition that is offered at health facilities.⁸⁵ Likewise, the UNFPA country offices in Türkiye has aligned with the development objectives of Türkiye while also maintaining clear commitments to inclusion and rights.⁸⁶ The UNFPA approach within this particular context focused on the SRH for young people from a SDG perspective, linking it continuously to Türkiye's international voluntary commitments (i.e. Nairobi ICPD25 commitments), the national policy and the aspirations articulated in the 11th National Development Plan of Türkiye.⁸⁷

3.3 RELEVANCE, HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH, LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND AND PUTTING YOUNG PEOPLE FIRST

Evaluation question 3: To what extent is UNFPA strategic guidance – including the overarching UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth and other frameworks at global, regional and country levels – aligned to a human rights-based approach; including reaching the furthest behind, addressing issues of marginalization and putting young people first?⁸⁸

Finding 4: The human rights-based approach, a gender equality perspective, and the principles of leaving no one behind/reaching the furthest behind (LNOB/RFB) are well articulated in *My Body, My Life, My World* and organizational strategic guidance documents. Its operationalization in programming for adolescents and youth, however, has been interpreted differently across regions and countries, sometimes limiting application of the principles of the Strategy within local programming.

A human rights-based approach (HRBA) is significantly embedded into the fabric of the work of the UNFPA, especially in addressing laws and policies that undermine access to sexual and reproductive health, and in working to prevent and protect young women and girls from violence.⁸⁹ The HRBA and the principles of leaving no one behind (LNOB) and gender equality are well articulated in its strategic plans. Most recently, UNFPA developed an operational plan on LNOB and reaching the furthest behind (RFB), including a tool to help identify and prioritize factors that may result in particular groups of people being “furthest behind”. The operational plan provides clear definitions to help better understand the multiple factors of exclusion and discrimination. Under these strategic frameworks, *My Body, My Life, My World* gives particular emphasis on being inclusive to all adolescents and youth groups, leaving no one behind, applying a gender and power lens, ending discriminatory norms and reaching the poorest and most marginalized. The HRBA was evident in programme guidance related to non-discrimination of marginalized and vulnerable adolescents and youth, as was the importance of including adolescents and youth in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes targeting young people (as was done in this evaluation through youth evaluators).

Under such principles, however, programming focused more attention on non-discrimination and participation, and less on reaching those furthest behind first; the latter being a resource-intensive approach that must be purposefully planned when designing interventions.⁹⁰ Non-discriminatory programming was sometimes a challenge in contexts where structural inequalities prevented the participation and leadership of certain youth groups, especially youth in rural areas and youth with disabilities. Within the YPS space, this evaluation found some examples of practical steps for implementation of genuine inclusion and diversity, such as the inclusion of young people from diverse backgrounds

84 Zimbabwe country case study.

85 Government of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Health and Child Care. *National Health Strategy 2021-2025*. 2021. Available at: www.znfpc.org.zw/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/National-Health-Strategy-for-Zimbabwe2021_2025.pdf.

86 Türkiye partner respondents.

87 <https://stip.oecd.org/stip/interactive-dashboards/policy-initiatives/2021%2Fdata%2FpolicyInitiatives%2F25311>.

88 Assumptions: 3.1 UNFPA adolescents and youth frameworks are guided by a genuine human rights-based approach. 3.2 UNFPA adolescents and youth frameworks are guided by the principle of reaching the furthest behind first and addressing marginalisation, particularly through a gender and power lens 3.3 UNFPA adolescents and youth frameworks put young people at the centre and promote meaningful participation, including genuine leadership by youth. What could be improved?

89 In 2003, UNFPA adopted the United Nations Common Understanding on a Human-Rights-Based Approach (HRBA) to Development Cooperation, which clarifies how human rights standards and principles should be put into practice in programming.

90 Global and regional interviews and documentary review.

and utilizing *Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Handbook*, which includes guidance on how best to promote inclusivity.⁹¹

Operationalization of the HRBA has been interpreted differently between regions and countries. In an effort to increase the acceptability of messaging around rights language – particularly in relation to sexuality and diverse populations of youth – context-specific adaptations are sometimes made. While this can help facilitate entrance into dialogue to advance important concepts and principles, it can also be counterproductive to the overall aim of the organization. This situation deserves more discussion and guidance to streamline approaches and messaging.

Examples of rights based-programming

The UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage (GPECM) positively demonstrates a strong rights-based foundation, which is evident in programme advocacy at the global and regional levels. The GPECM has expanded efforts to help countries reflect on existing programmes and design gender-transformative programming with the support of the gender-transformative accelerator training tool⁹² – an area that remains challenging at the country level. Often, the necessary nuanced understanding of how to programme using a rights or gender-transformative approach is lacking, and this results in many community level interventions missing the opportunity to truly transform social and behavioural norms necessary to eliminate harmful. Similar challenges are observed in child marriage programming that are being addressed by the gender-transformative accelerator training tool.⁹³

The UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) aligns with human rights conventions and has influenced the use of human rights instruments to intensify efforts for the global abandonment of FGM. In 2021, for example, UNFPA supported the Government of Burkina Faso to submit a resolution on behalf of the group of Africa States calling for comprehensive, multisectoral and human rights-based measures to prevent and eliminate female genital mutilation, demonstrating the application of HRBA to programming. At the country level however, human rights principles are not always translated into community level FGM interventions. For example, in some contexts that have cultural sensitivities surrounding the practice, health messaging is the predominant messaging rather than the protection of girls' rights.

Integration of HRBA and LNOB principles at the regional level

At the regional level, all regional offices had a clear understanding of what was required for the HRBA and LNOB/RFB approach. However, the evaluation team noted that there was limited clarity between human rights as a field of work (advancing the use of legal instruments to secure the human rights young persons, such as the right to education, as an intervention strategy) versus human rights-based programming approaches (such as incorporating understanding of human rights and building on human rights principles such as non-discrimination within UNFPA programming). The difference has not been clearly or consistently articulated among different levels of staff and across regional offices.⁹⁴

There are some good practices of inclusion and a LNOB focus at the regional level. One prime example is in the Latin American and the Caribbean region. In 2016, a global indigenous youth meeting was held in the region and resulted in the inclusion of the topical areas of YPS and CSE in the roadmap developed for indigenous youth. This work was then further supported within specific countries in the region.⁹⁵ In addition, UNFPA LACRO has a specific focus on working with adolescents and youth of African descent that has included mapping of Afro-descendant youth organizations, a regional study of Afro-descendant youth, and a regional assessment of gender-based violence in Afro-descendant communities.⁹⁶ This evaluation team noted that explicit focus on marginalized young people from these specific subgroups in the region services an example that paves the way for country offices in the region (Brazil, Colombia,

91 UNFPA, UNDP, et al. *Youth, Peace and Security: A programming handbook*. 2021. Available at: www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/yys_programming_handbook.pdf.

92 UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage. *Gender-Transformative Accelerator Tool: Workshop Facilitation Guide*. 2021. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/GTA%20Tool%20Guide-2021-EN_0.pdf.

93 Global and regional document review, Niger and Mozambique country case studies.

94 Based on responses from multiple UNFPA respondents, at both regional office level but also at country levels.

95 UNFPA LACRO. *Contribution of the Indigenous Peoples and Minorities to the 15th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues*. 2016.

96 UNFPA LACRO. *Leaving No One Behind. Programme for the advancement of the rights of people of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean*. 2020.

Mexico and others) to replicate the good practice in their own programming with support from the regional office – an approach that could be further developed in other regions.⁹⁷

Integration of HRBA and LNOB principles at the country level

At the country level, challenges were observed in the understanding of rights terminology, the application in programming and the implications for young people themselves. There is also a challenge in the understanding and application of LNOB/RFB principles across country offices. Similarly, the previous *Evaluation of UNFPA Support to Adolescents and Youth (2008–2015)* found that UNFPA staff had significantly different understandings on which adolescents and youth are marginalized or vulnerable in their country context⁹⁸ and on how to ensure inclusion of specific groups. In the country case studies, there was reference to gender equality and non-discrimination; however, there was no real recognition of the other factors of exclusion and discrimination that may be at play. For example, some programming that utilized the HRBA involved ensuring that adolescent girls and young women participate in the programme or project.⁹⁹ Adolescent girls and young women are groups often left behind; ensuring their inclusion and participation in interventions is in line with HRBA. However, the HRBA as advanced by the United Nations¹⁰⁰ extends far beyond the factors of gender and age, and UNFPA has taken steps to address this with its new operational plan on LNOB and RFB.¹⁰¹ This understanding however has yet to cascade down to the programmes for adolescents and youth at the country level.¹⁰²

Despite these challenges, this evaluation revealed good examples of programming for adolescents and youth at the country level that take into account HRBA, gender-responsive approaches and LNOB for adolescents and youth. For example, in Niger, UNFPA promoted HRBA, gender equality and the inclusion of marginalized youth in its girls-centred programming and in its youth leadership activities.¹⁰³ UNFPA was able to address key human rights of girls¹⁰⁴ in relation to child, early and forced marriage and gender-based violence (GBV) in the country, through linking the UNFPA-supported safe spaces programme *Illimin* with the GPECM.¹⁰⁵ Alongside this, UNFPA made significant efforts to further promote gender equality in Niger through the engagement of men and boys. Some implementation models such as the Husbands' School and the Future Husband's Schools, have gained recognition for promoting engaging men and boys and its continued efforts towards promoting positive masculinities¹⁰⁶ and shifting social and gender norms at the community level. The *Illimin* programme thus extended their understanding of gender and rights towards a gender-transformative approach to ensure girls and boys understand they have equal rights, and what that means for gender and social relations.¹⁰⁷

In Brazil, UNFPA provides another example through its integration of gender, race, age and culturally relevant approaches as cross-cutting issues in their 2017–2021 country programme document.¹⁰⁸ The country office also addressed youth structural inequalities by targeting the most vulnerable groups of young people through its projects, as well as strengthening youth-led organization capacities so that young people were able to forge networks and engage in policymaking spaces and processes.¹⁰⁹

97 Regional and country case studies (Brazil, Colombia, Mexico); documentary evidence.

98 UNFPA. *Evaluation of UNFPA Support to Adolescents and Youth (2008-2015)*. 2016. Available at: www.unfpa.org/evaluation-unfpa-support-adolescents-and-youth-2008-2015.

99 Mozambique and Philippines country case studies.

100 <https://unsdg.un.org/resources/human-rights-based-approach-development-cooperation-towards-common-understanding-among-un>.

101 Leaving No One Behind and Reaching the Furthest Behind: Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

102 Mozambique country case study; Regional respondents.

103 Interviews, focus group with beneficiaries and documentary review.

104 Vulnerable girls including rural girls who never went to school or quit school, and who are married, or the “invisible girls” which in the country's context includes girls with disabilities or young unwed mothers, among others who cannot attend the skills-building sessions due to heavy workloads.

105 Safe Space programme *Illimin* was designed to combat both early marriage and pregnancy by educating and empowering adolescent girls to facilitate this change themselves.

106 UNFPA. *Evaluation de l'Initiative Ecoles de Maris du Niger, 2014*; Institut pour la Santé de la Reproduction, Université de Georgetown. *Étude des effets de l'intervention de l'École des Maris sur la dynamique de genre pour améliorer la planification familiale et la santé reproductive au Niger*. Août 2019.

107 Niger country case study.

108 UNFPA. *Country programme document for Brazil 2017-2021*. 2016.

109 Brazil country case study.

3.4 EFFECTIVENESS – HUMANITARIAN

Evaluation question 4: To what extent has UNFPA been able to adapt youth programming to COVID-19 over the past year, and to other humanitarian settings?¹¹⁰

Finding 5: UNFPA demonstrated agility and innovative adaptations in their response to COVID-19 and its effects on the implementation of its adolescents and youth interventions.

Global-level response

At the global level, faced with the COVID-19 pandemic UNFPA immediately acknowledged that young people would be significantly and systematically affected across a range of other socioeconomic factors.¹¹¹ This led UNFPA to develop a COVID-19 guidance document in June 2020, just three months after the pandemic started.¹¹² Respondents at the country level highlighted the usefulness of this guidance.¹¹³ The guidance provided practical adaptations to youth interventions through a series of technical briefs that cover all aspects of *My Body, My Life, My World*. This included specific technical guidance on delivering the essential package of SRHR interventions to adolescents and adapting comprehensive sexuality education programming during the COVID-19 pandemic. UNFPA subsequently documented lessons learned from its work on risk communication and community engagement with adolescents and youth during the pandemic that will inform further programming in such contexts.¹¹⁴ Both the guidance, and the forthcoming documentation of lessons learned, missed the opportunity to be more explicit on UNFPA added value/support to mental health issues as a result of the pandemic, despite considerable efforts by young people in countries to address these critical health needs of young people.¹¹⁵

In the “My World” dimension of the Strategy, the guidance showcases UNFPA innovation in working with the Prezi presentation platform and youth partners, to launch the #YouthAgainstCOVID19 campaign. The video series features young people sharing their views on how COVID-19 affects them, how to protect their sexual and mental health, and ways to support each other. Through partnering with Prezi Video, the campaign allows videos made by young people and youth partners around the world to be easily reused.

UNFPA demonstrated agility and responsiveness in the face of the immediate crisis by supporting young people risk communication and community engagement, which was a pillar of the pandemic response and an area where UNFPA had experience. UNFPA was part of the Risk Communication and Community Engagement working group, and due to its experience on working with young people, UNFPA was asked to co-lead with UNICEF a related sub-working group with a focus on youth.¹¹⁶ This is an example of how UNFPA expertise in programming for adolescents and youth and its connection with grass root youth organizations can add value in a global pandemic response.

110 Assumptions: 4.1 UNFPA adapted youth programming to the COVID-19 context, taking into consideration the impacts and actions outlined in the Compact COVID-19 guidance. 4.2 UNFPA adapted youth programming to humanitarian contexts, aligned with the guidance under the IASC Compact Guidelines. 4.3 UNFPA sought to position youth programming across the triple nexus – humanitarian, development, and peace where possible. What are the lessons learned?

111 UNFPA global respondents.

112 UNFPA. *My Body, My Life, My World Through a COVID-19 Lens*. 2020. Available at: www.unfpa.org/featured-publication/my-body-my-life-my-world-through-covid-19-lens.

113 Multiple country level UNFPA respondents.

114 Forthcoming Document: Programming in a pandemic: Lessons and examples from UNFPA’s work with adolescents and youth 2020-21 (2023).

115 Multiple country level UNFPA respondents.

116 Global case study respondents. Pandemic pivot: Achieving transformative results in the Covid-19 pandemic, 2020 report. https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/2021_Covid19_Report_UNFPA.pdf.

Regional and country level response

Guidance and leadership from UNFPA at the headquarters level cascaded down well across the regional and country levels. UNFPA regional offices served as a repository for information on strategies and responses to the pandemic for countries in their regions as well as on data on the impact of COVID-19 on adolescents and youth. For example, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the regional office collected information from all country offices on what adaptations had already been made and then shared good practices across the region.¹¹⁷ While in LACRO, the UNFPA regional office conducted research on the impact of COVID-19 on SRH services for adolescents.¹¹⁸

At the country level, many UNFPA country offices shifted their adolescents and youth programming online or to hybrid approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic to support the continuation of comprehensive adolescent sexual and reproductive health services (e.g. contraceptives, maternity), through phone, SMS, and chat-based helplines and consultations (UNFPA-supported mHealth solutions). In addition, there are many interesting and positive examples of UNFPA leveraging technology and piloting innovative programme adaptations to respond to the pandemic. This includes exploring modalities for digital delivery of CSE and training of facilitators; as well as COVID-19 messaging in CSE outreach and communication activities, and addressing areas that have been identified as critical during the pandemic such as mental health, sexual and gender-based violence and child marriage, online safety and security, sexual health and psychosocial support. For example, in the Philippines, the pandemic provided UNFPA the opportunity to create an online version (e-book) of CSE that is now being handed over to the Department of Education.¹¹⁹ The Philippines country office also supported initiatives such as the online #KaBayanihan intergenerational dialogue that provided Filipino youth a safe space to discuss the issues they faced during lockdowns with key government agencies.¹²⁰ While the shift towards online programming during the pandemic certainly helped the continuity of UNFPA programmes, it also introduced new challenges around the technological capacity of implementing partners and the equitable access to technology for all.

Beyond adaptation, UNFPA country offices recognized the emerging needs facing young people and made efforts to support their recovery as well as mitigate the pandemic's impact among those most affected. For example, UNFPA Guatemala adapted the #YouthAgainstCOVID19 Campaign to reach young people living in low-income and offline settings by engaging with indigenous and rural youth leaders, as well as young people with disabilities overcoming the challenges of lack of Internet and technology. However, the lack of technical resources to meet the diverse needs of young people, particularly as they related to psychosocial support, was challenging.¹²¹ Still, some countries made significant progress in this regard. For example, in Colombia, the country office created a WhatsApp group to follow cases and provide psychological orientation with survivors of violence.¹²² Another example is in Mexico where UNFPA coordinated with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to support an online training of 700 operators of remote services on GBV and psychosocial support to women and girls victims of violence. In addition, UNFPA, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the state of Hidalgo developed a youth intervention ("Promotion of the human security and youth approach" project) to support the recovery and address COVID-19 impact on young people lives, in particular young people forced to drop out of school and take up informal market activities.

117 Regional respondents.

118 Examples include: *Estimaciones del Impacto de la Pandemia de la COVID-19 en la salud sexual y reproductiva en México*. Produced by UNFPA Mexico, LACRO and CONAPO (the National Population Council). https://lac.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/estimaciones_del_impacto_de_la_pandemia_en_ssr_en_mexico_2.pdf and *Los riesgos de la pandemia de COVID-19 para el ejercicio de los derechos sexuales y reproductivos de las mujeres*. Produced by the Division of Gender in ECLAC and LACRO. https://lac.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/20-00906_folleto_riesgos_de_la_pandemia_-genero-.pdf.

119 Ibid.

120 Philippines UNFPA respondents.

121 Colombia case study respondents.

122 Ibid.

Finding 6: UNFPA has had a key role in terms of leadership with the development of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action. The roll out of support mechanisms and adaptation of guidelines show great potential for transforming the programming at the local level. While the roll out of the guidelines is incipient, the programming principles of the Compact have started to trickle down to country-level leadership and coordination in humanitarian contexts. Where humanitarian programming is not at the centre of UNFPA work, integration of adolescents and youth into humanitarian response is mixed. There are limited assessments and collection of disaggregated data on the needs of youth to understand their vulnerabilities in humanitarian settings.

Integration of adolescent and youth aspects at the global level

At the global level, UNFPA has been instrumental within the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action (Compact), the leading coordinating body for working with and for adolescents and youth in humanitarian situations. There is wide agreement that UNFPA leadership of the Compact has been effective.¹²³ The effective and systematic roll out of the Compact and its resources and support mechanisms, including With and For US: IASC Guidelines on Working with and for Young People in Humanitarian and Protracted Crises (2020), is at the initial stage. The roll-out requires ongoing effort in terms of human and financial resources, which remains challenging. Humanitarian funding is organized under thematic clusters and there is no specific allocation for adolescents and youth, which creates challenges in terms of funding adolescent and youth interventions at the outset of emergencies.¹²⁴ Furthermore, young people have no visibility during the humanitarian response as data is not age-disaggregated. As a result of this data gap, humanitarian actors are not able to identify what are the needs of young people and if they are a vulnerable group that need to be prioritized during the response. Further, there is no dedicated youth cluster and young people are not being prioritized in humanitarian response efforts, including with funding allocation.

The Evaluation of the UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action (2012–2019) found that UNFPA global commitments through the Compact have not trickled down to country-level leadership or coordination,¹²⁵ More recently however, local Compact chapters, though nascent, have been created in Jordan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan demonstrating increased engagement at the country level.¹²⁶ In Bangladesh, for example, the GPECM is working with an NGO, “Girl Shine”, to engage girls aged 10–19, and a programme titled “Champions of Change” to engage boys of the same age to provide life skills and skills building in refugee camps. This work is supported by community and religious leader engagement demonstrating a multisectoral approach to addressing the needs of young people in fragile contexts.¹²⁷ Good practices exist for integrating the needs and priorities of adolescents and youth in humanitarian action. For example, an adolescents and youth working group was created under the Protection Cluster in Afghanistan and has been chaired by UNFPA since 2022. This is a good model of humanitarian response to systematically address the needs and priorities of adolescents and youth in all stages of humanitarian action through countrywide technical and coordination support.¹²⁸

123 Interviews and documentary review.

124 Ibid.

125 UNFPA. *Evaluation of the UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action (2012-2019)*. 2019. Available at: www.unfpa.org/evaluation-unfpa-capacity-humanitarian-action-2012-2019.

126 Global case study respondents.

127 UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage. *Global Consultation on Child Marriage In Humanitarian Settings: Meeting Report*. 2020. Available at: www.unicef.org/media/72706/file/GP-2020-Child-Marriage-in-Humanitarian-Settings-Meeting-Report.pdf (See Global and Bangladesh case studies).

128 Afghanistan Protection Cluster Meeting Notes. https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/apc_monthly_meeting_-_25052022.pdf.

Integration of adolescent and youth aspects at the regional and country level

At the regional level, UNFPA has provided guidance and good practices on how to integrate adolescent and youth-responsive services, education and information and how to increase youth participation in humanitarian and crisis settings.¹²⁹ It is also evident in the creation of safe spaces for girls and young women, which has emerged as a key strategy for UNFPA humanitarian response. This global picture has been fully supported by the country case studies in this evaluation,¹³⁰ but there is less evidence of programming moving beyond the safe spaces strategy towards more holistic adolescents and youth programming in humanitarian settings and around the nexus. The evaluation team found that despite promising examples of humanitarian-led initiatives to include adolescents and youth specifically in their programming, a genuine integrated programmatic approach is largely absent.

At the country level, generally there is limited cross-fertilization between adolescents and youth and humanitarian teams and programmes are more siloed. Where coordination does occur, the extent of programmatic integration varies by country context. For instance, in countries where humanitarian action is the centre of the work, there is strong evidence of adolescents and youth integration. This is the case for UNFPA programming in Türkiye. Due to the decade-long humanitarian refugee crisis in the country, adolescents and youth interventions have been integrated into the humanitarian programme. Notably, UNFPA supports four youth centres open to both Turkish and refugee youth. Other examples of integration of adolescents and youth aspects into humanitarian response include UNFPA work in Bangladesh, Jordan, Moldova, Palestine and Syria.¹³¹ In Bangladesh, the UNFPA country office developed a youth programme (“Champions of Change”) in response to the ongoing crisis affecting the Rohingya. The aim of the programme is to reduce gender-based violence, support peacebuilding and strengthen social cohesion. This intervention illustrates the potential of positioning a humanitarian response programme within the humanitarian–development–peace nexus space, as it was specifically designed to provide longer-term benefits to the adolescents and youth participating within it. However, linkages between Champions of Change and the flagship development youth programme (“Generation Breakthrough”) still need strengthening. Strengthening a practical integration between development programming and humanitarian response programming could further improve efficiencies and ensure that there are opportunities to build synergies across the triple nexus space.

In other contexts, integration of adolescents and youth into the humanitarian response is a mixed experience. In some countries, UNFPA response to humanitarian contexts mainly builds on existing adolescents and youth programmes. UNFPA Mexico provides a good example of this point as it has a strong adolescents and youth portfolio. Following the 2017 earthquakes, UNFPA provided guidance, training and a facilitation package that emphasized youth as a vulnerable group. The humanitarian guidance that was produced stressed the importance of youth consultations during assessments as well as youth participation in emergency situations. Further, as part of its humanitarian response, UNFPA established safe spaces for youth. This is not the case for all countries. In other cases, humanitarian teams and humanitarian programmes are more siloed at the national level, which often means that programmes are unable to adequately integrate adolescents and youth.

There has been limited assessment and limited collection of data on the needs of youth to understand their vulnerabilities in humanitarian settings. Some examples of youth needs assessments were undertaken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Indonesia and in South Sudan but there is yet no systematic or consistent mechanism for assessing the needs of youth.¹³²

129 UNFPA. Women & Girls Safe Spaces: A guidance note based on lessons learned from the Syrian Crisis. 2015. Available at: www.unfpa.org/resources/women-girls-safe-spaces-guidance-note-based-lessons-learned-syrian-crisis.

UNFPA. Adolescent Girls in Disaster & Conflict: Interventions for Improving Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services. 2016. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/UNFPA-Adolescent_Girls_in_Disaster_Conflict-Web.pdf

UNFPA WCARO. Meaningful Adolescent and Youth Engagement (MAYE) during responses to epidemics and pandemics. 2021. Available at: <https://wcaro.unfpa.org/en/publications/meaningful-adolescent-and-youth-engagement-maye-during-responses-epidemics-and>.

130 Mexico, Türkiye, Zimbabwe.

131 Interviews and documentary review.

132 UNFPA. *Evaluation of the UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action (2012-2019)*. 2019. Available at: www.unfpa.org/evaluation-unfpa-capacity-humanitarian-action-2012-2019.

Youth, peace and security (YPS)

UNFPA work in YPS focuses on the linkages between youth, peace, security, stability, population dynamics, SRHR and gender equality, within its mandates area of expertise. At the global level, UNFPA provided leadership on the YPS agenda, by chairing the joint UNFPA/Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) Secretariat on Youth, Peace and Security, which provides system-wide support and coordination on the implementation of the YPS agenda. UNFPA also co-chairs the Global Coalition on Youth, Peace and Security a multi-stakeholder coordination platform with 300+ members from civil society, United Nations entities, academia and youth-led organizations. With the support of UNFPA, *Youth, Peace and Security: A Programming Handbook* was launched in 2021.¹³³ The adolescents and youth team in the Technical Division has provided guidance, training and technical assistance to country offices to develop project proposals for funding from the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund.¹³⁴ Within the time frame covered by this evaluation (2015–2022), there was a sharp increase in the number of UNFPA projects funded by the Peacebuilding Fund: from 5 in 2015 (US\$ 2.3 million) to 17 in 2021 (US\$ 11.8 million), particularly focusing on support to youth organizations, creating sustainable platforms for their engagement and facilitating access to the political processes. Projects with evidence of results included United Nations joint projects in the Guinea and Myanmar as well as innovative initiatives such as the support of young people's engagement in the elections in Guinea and the inclusion of young people in peace-related discussions through popular arts in Madagascar. Most of the projects funded have a strong gender lens and link the empowerment of both women and young people, such as the engagement of young girls in Nigeria for peaceful and inclusive participation.¹³⁵

At the regional level, UNFPA has developed regional and national plans on YPS¹³⁶ and issued guidance on the development of such plans jointly with the Global Coalition on YPS.¹³⁷ Some regional offices have undertaken research and analysis on YPS. In West and Central Africa, for example, the UNFPA regional office has contributed greatly to the research on YPS, underscoring the importance of youth in building and sustaining peace. However, knowledge-sharing across regions is yet to become systematic. It is not clear if the research is being used to inform programming, in particular, on the triple nexus so that YPS work is embedded both within and beyond conflict contexts.

At the country level, there is solid and relevant work on YPS. Challenges remain, however, in the proper framing, integration and scaling up within UNFPA programming, including its work on the triple nexus.¹³⁸ The challenges around framing relate to an understanding of YPS in terms of conflict or post-conflict settings only. A broader framing would allow UNFPA to draw on its experiences in these areas and to provide support on issues of social cohesion in other contexts. For example, some countries in Latin America face challenges related to high-rates of youth homicide. While these countries are not conflict settings, they could benefit from the YPS contextualized type of approach.¹³⁹ An important area of support is mental health and psychosocial support to adolescents and youth after conflict, which UNFPA is still developing in terms of capacity.

The other challenges around integration and scaling up are very much linked, where integration could be used to leverage resources at the country level. For example, the UNFPA country office in Kyrgyzstan engaged in YPS projects in conflict-prone areas over the last 10 years, with funds from the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund. Despite the efficient implementation and positive short-term results, the sustainability and impact of the projects are limited as they are

133 UNFPA, UNDP, et al. *Youth, Peace and Security: A programming handbook*. 2021. Available at: www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org.peacebuilding/files/documents/yps_programming_handbook.pdf.

134 Global respondents and UNFPA. *Mobilizing funds from the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF): A guidance note for UNFPA Country Offices*. No date.

135 Interviews and documentary review. Project documents: Guinée (UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO) Appui à la participation des jeunes hommes et jeunes femmes à la gouvernance dans les 20 communes les plus conflictogènes de la Guinée. Myanmar (UNFPA & UNICEF) Empowering young women and men as agents in peacebuilding in Myanmar. Guinea: Appui à la réduction de l'instrumentalisation et des violences politico-sociales des jeunes taxi-motards en période électorale. L'Art populaire au service des jeunes engagés pour la Consolidation de la Paix dans le Sud de Madagascar. Niger: Les jeunes filles nigériennes avec les leaders s'engagent pour une participation pacifique et inclusive.

136 Global respondents. Plans mentioned at regional level: Arab states, Great lakes, ASEAN. At national level: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria and Philippines.

137 Global Coalition on Youth, Peace, and Security. *Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at Country-level: A Guide for Public Officials*. 2022. Available at: www.un.org/youthenvoy/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/YPS-guide-for-public-officials-1.pdf.

138 Evidence gathered for this evaluation points to a gap between country-level tangible action and global-level leadership and commitments assumed with the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250 on youth, peace and security; a gap which had already been highlighted in the *Evaluation of the UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action (2012-2019)*, supra.

139 Case studies.

implemented in a few targeted communities and require scaling up.¹⁴⁰ This presents an opportunity where integration can be used to leverage both the Peacebuilding Fund and UNFPA resources, creating links and synergies across programmes to extend the reach and maximize the impact of interventions.

3.5 EFFECTIVENESS

Evaluation question 5: To what extent has UNFPA supported adolescents and youth at the country, global and regional levels across different areas of support?¹⁴¹

Finding 7: UNFPA is clearly positioned as a leader to spearhead efforts under the “My Body” pillar of the Strategy. This leverages its long-standing expertise in comprehensive SRHR services for adolescents and youth. Specific intervention areas such as GBV prevention, HIV prevention and family planning services for young people are well developed, while other areas, such as menstrual health and self-care, are still nascent. Integration of youth-responsive SRH services within primary health care remains limited to sporadic youth-friendly services, often not scaled up. Key intervention areas such as mental health, which emerged strongly during the pandemic, are yet to be appropriately integrated by the organization.

Integrated ASRH services

UNFPA has advocated and supported the provision of integrated SRH services for adolescent and youth through service models that are youth-responsive. Specifically, UNFPA has contributed significantly to creating access and availability of adolescents and youth sexual and reproductive health services through policy, advocacy, capacity building or direct support to service provision.¹⁴² This has resulted in some excellent best practice examples, but the project nature of the interventions means that few have been taken to scale, limiting reach and sustainability. The country case studies have shown gaps in the availability, quality and uptake of integrated sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and youth. In most of the middle income countries observed, integrated services for young people are available through the primary health care system, but this remains largely aspirational in lower income countries where some services are not even available for the general population.

Global standards and guidance

At the global level, UNFPA along with the World Health Organization have developed and issued international guidance on delivering youth-responsive health services with quality criteria and standards of care. This includes the Global standards for quality health care services for adolescents¹⁴³; the Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents (AA-HA!) framework¹⁴⁴ and, more recently, the report *Achieving Universal Health Coverage for the World’s 1.2 Billion Adolescents*.¹⁴⁵ The forthcoming operational guidance for the implementation of My Body, My Life, My World focuses on how to adapt the essential service package of sexual and reproductive health services to adolescents. UNFPA also developed guidance for the delivery of a minimum package of services in humanitarian settings¹⁴⁶ that is being rolled out primarily in refugee camps as observed and reported on in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Jordan, Kenya,

140 Kyrgyzstan country case study.

141 Assumptions: 5.1 UNFPA provided support under the framing of “My Body” – quality SRHR and broader health services, and access to GBV services for survivors. How is this framed as the foundation for “My Life” and “My World”? 5.2 UNFPA provided support under the framing of My Life – access to services necessary for well-being; education and CSE in and out of schools, building human capital across health, social, economic and cognitive assets. 5.3 UNFPA provided support under the framing of “My World” – meaningful participation of adolescents and youth in decision-making and dialogue. What could be improved?

142 Many UNFPA countries focus their efforts upstream on policies to secure the provision of quality services (i.e. through commodity security; removal of law and policy barriers to accessing services, etc.), while others concentrate investment in humanitarian areas where access to basic services and commodities for young people is limited.

143 World Health Organization. *Global standards for quality health-care services to adolescents: A guide to implement a standards-driven approach to improve the quality of health-care services for adolescents*. Four volumes. 2015. Available at: www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241549332.

144 World Health Organization. *Global Accelerated Action for the Health of Adolescents*. 2017. Available at: www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241512343.

145 World Health Organization. *Achieving universal health coverage for the world’s 1.2 billion adolescents*. No date. Available at: www.who.int/teams/maternal-newborn-child-adolescent-health-and-ageing/adolescent-and-young-adult-health/achieving-universal-coverage.

146 UNFPA Resources. Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for SRH in Crisis Situations. 2020. Available at: www.unfpa.org/resources/minimum-initial-service-package-misp-srh-crisis-situations.

Mozambique and Türkiye.¹⁴⁷ Implementation of these guidelines, however, is lagging partly because of the shift in engagement modalities by UNFPA – away from support and service provision, towards upstream policy and advocacy for services. While the guidance has been disseminated widely (with most countries aspiring to implement integrated services to these standards), challenges in its implementation have emerged when the standards exceed the country's capacity to deliver.

Advocacy and policy development

National-level policy work on guidelines, strategies and normative documents related to adolescent sexual and reproductive health and youth-friendly health services (YFHS) remained fundamental to UNFPA engagement strategies for YFHS and SRH more broadly. UNFPA achieved policy objectives in part by leveraging government interests to achieve national development priorities that benefit SRHR for adolescents and youth. For example, UNFPA Jordan supported the development of national standards for ASRHR, and a national lifecycle SRH strategy ensuring that age group-specific needs and requirements were included. In late 2021, the Government of Jordan endorsed and approved the strategy.

Capacity development

Training and capacity building of public health service providers to be youth responsive and/or deliver quality youth-friendly services remained a fundamental pillar of support for the provision of adolescent and youth-friendly health services (AYFHS). The training of health service providers was coordinated largely by the adolescents and youth team as evidenced by the Africa regional case studies, versus what has been reported and observed in middle income countries in Asia (Philippines), and LACRO (Mexico). In SRH-led training, the evaluation team did not observe the integration of an approach responsive to youth.

Through strengthening health systems to respond, expand and deliver quality integrated SRHR, GBV and HIV services, UNFPA further continued to support the institutionalization of integrated youth-friendly health services within the primary health care system.¹⁴⁸ However, capacity building in resource-poor countries often remains at demonstration or pilot level given the project nature of their implementation, limiting sustainability and ownership by the government. In middle income countries, the government capacity to conduct capacity building and embed the training within their own systems was more evident. This is demonstrated in Kyrgyzstan where UNFPA focused on building the capacity of state institutions to deliver quality integrated gender-responsive SRH services for women and young people, including vulnerable groups.

Integrated youth-responsive services

There has been a global shift towards more integrated “youth-responsive” services, rather than dedicated services generally termed “youth-friendly” (AYFHS). This shift is due in part to lack of human and financial resources for dedicated stand-alone services for youth, and the barriers to use of such dedicated services among other reasons. UNFPA has adapted to this shift with mixed success. At the regional level, ESARO flagship adolescents and youth programme – Safeguarding Young People – has effectively supported both adolescents and youth SRHR and youth leadership. The programme takes a multisectoral approach, integrating HIV and SRHR information and services, but also including a youth empowerment component. Through technical support provided by the regional office, and the South-South sharing and benchmarking, ESARO has leveraged advances in some countries to put pressure on others (through the programme) to do more – especially related to the delivery of SRH services for young people. This is evident in countries like Mozambique, where long-standing efforts to deliver stand-alone youth services have recently been questioned given the challenges presented in providing such youth-friendly services, coupled with a lack of attendance. Shared experiences of alternative approaches through webinars and regional events demonstrate alternative approaches that can be considered (see Zimbabwe example below).¹⁴⁹ At the country level, the picture is more mixed.

147 Global and regional case studies, Mozambique country case study.

148 UNFPA Zimbabwe. *Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) 2016– 2020 for the Programme of Cooperation Between the Government of the Republic Zimbabwe and the United Nations Population Fund*. 2015.

149 Regional case study respondents; Mozambique and Zimbabwe case study respondents.

In Benin, UNFPA initially supported youth centres for dissemination of SRH information and linkages and referrals to health services. However, stand-alone youth centres offering AYFHS had limited effectiveness, necessitating the country office and Ministry of Health to change strategy towards integrating youth-friendly services and approaches in routine health services, through the provision of integrated demand and supply services for reproductive health, including family planning. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, support for AYFHS has recently shifted away from stand-alone AYFHS towards facility-wide, inclusive adolescents and youth responsive services available at any health service delivery point (e.g. primary health care, maternity, outpatient, etc.). Still, the evaluation team noted that dedicated AYFHS initiatives continue to receive UNFPA investment and support despite global recognition of the need (in most contexts) to move away from youth-specific service points. These services are often under-utilized by young people owing to stigma, shame, concerns about privacy and cost of transport, among other barriers to access. For example, in Ghana, UNFPA AYFHS programmes have over 674 adolescent service delivery points within public health facilities operated by the Ghana Health Service in 2021. However, the use of these services by young people remains low, largely due to social stigma. While UNFPA Ghana has worked with peer educators and community-based organizations to foster young people's access to health facilities, the approach of stand-alone service points is being revisited as it does not reach the target population and is expensive.

Quality SRH services

In addition to their efforts to improve access and availability, UNFPA has contributed to improving the quality of SRH services for young people. One strategy being advanced in middle income countries primarily is the use of quality service labels for AYFHS. For example, in Brazil, the projects "*Bora Saber*" and "*Chega Mais*" use an "Adolescent Service Quality Label" to recognize and encourage public services and health teams to provide quality, integrated and innovative adolescent- and youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services. In Mexico, UNFPA and the Ministry of Health supported the development of the Comprehensive Model for Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Care (MAISSRA) that includes a certification system for continuous improvement of the quality of youth-friendly services. This was done by the Ministry itself with UNFPA technical assistance, in the context of the development of national programmes on family planning and adolescent SRH.

Increasing access and uptake of services

In recent years, UNFPA and partners invested in creating access to SRH services for young people through alternative models of delivery. UNFPA employed the use of mobile health clinics, innovation and digital technologies and referral systems to improve the utilization of adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health services.

Mobile health clinics: Mobile health clinics were utilized during the COVID-19 pandemic to bring services to young people that live in remote areas, and in crisis and humanitarian and refugee zones (e.g. camps). For example, in Kyrgyzstan, UNFPA has supported the provision of health services, and safe places for the victims of GBV during the pandemic through support to the Crisis Centre in Bishkek, work of mobile clinics to assist victims of gender-based violence, psychological assistance to adolescents during COVID-19, as well as hygiene kits for adolescents and young women during Batken border conflicts.¹⁵⁰

Digital technology: A growing opportunity to leverage digital technology to connect and engage with more adolescents and youth was observed by the evaluation across the case study countries. This is particularly true for more marginalized and vulnerable youth such as youth with disabilities, LGBTQI+ and those that engage in sex work that often feel discriminated against in mainstream services. The use of digital solutions in adolescent and youth programming has taken different forms from increasing the effectiveness of their interventions to improving access to information and services through various social and online platforms, which was particularly useful during the global pandemic.

In Benin, for example, UNFPA supported the development of apps and websites to increase access to SRH and GBV information by adolescents and youth (e.g. the "*Ma Vie, Mon Choix*" app on sexuality education; the *Tro Tor Gaho* e-platform on family planning and GBV). Innovations were also developed to increase access to family planning commodities (e.g. e-shops for condoms, young logisticians) and to support youth entrepreneurship (e.g. girls' social franchising for condom packing). Moreover, the country office's investments in digital outreach proved to be more

¹⁵⁰ Various case study respondents.

effective in increasing demand for services than the traditional, stand-alone approach to providing services. Through a “Mapathon” initiative, health services were adapted for adolescents and youth and offered through referral from schools delivering CSE. The Mapathon made the services more visible to the youth thus increasing its acceptability and use.

UNFPA is also utilizing digital technologies to broaden their reach across a diversity of young people, especially to reach those furthest behind. For example, in Columbia, UNFPA developed a chat bot to gather data about marginalized young people and to enhance the participation of young people across different municipalities in dialogues. Similarly, in Kyrgyzstan, UNFPA utilized the digital platform “Bilesingbi.kg” to reach the rural youth that speak primarily Kyrgyz language and have limited access to materials. The platform became a good tool for youth to ask sensitive questions regarding health and SRH that they would not normally ask parents and local doctors. It has also provided referrals to services.

Referral systems: A strong referral system is fundamental to improve the utilization of services. As youth do not generally seek health care, referral is a critical entry point to getting them the health care they need. Yet, referral continues to be a weak link in the provision of integrated services. Standard referral for SRH information, contraceptives and sexually transmitted infection (STI) and HIV testing is often supported through projects, as it has not been institutionalized in schools, clubs, youth centres and training centres by governments and partners, even when protocols and standards exist. For example, in Mozambique, government standards on referral and counter-referral are available, but rarely adhered to outside of project-supported efforts. UNFPA adolescent and youth programmes include support for the implementation of Ministry of Health protocols on referral, but the local administrators, teachers and providers often do not go far beyond sending the young person to the health services, despite training and availability of the referral slips.

Referral between school-based protection (e.g. Violence Against Children safety protocols in schools) and CSE and life skills programmes (“My Body” and “My Life” dimensions) and support for youth-led and youth supported participation and advocacy activities (“My World”) have been under-utilized to increase uptake of services by adolescents and youth. In humanitarian settings, UNFPA Türkiye supported four multisectoral youth centres with high concentrations of Syrian refugees that delivered SRHR and GBV services. A key activity of the centres is the referral for adolescents and youth in a safe environment, which the young people themselves often prefer over other service delivery points. Nonetheless, the evaluation team found that the case studies document little or no referral from youth-led movements or social and behaviour change communication activities (except from hotlines) – a missed opportunity to expand access by integrating service referrals with other programmes reaching young people. Given the lessons learned from GBV referral, and work with adolescents and youth in humanitarian settings such as in Türkiye, referral, including for mental health services, could be the entry point for expanding and institutionalizing cross-referral between programmes more broadly.¹⁵¹

Early and unintended pregnancy and contraceptive use

UNFPA has raised awareness about the dangers of early and unintended pregnancy and has prioritized access to contraceptives for adolescents and youth. There are many positive examples of UNFPA programming to reduce unintended pregnancy among adolescents. For example, in Mexico, the government committed to reducing adolescent pregnancy by 50 per cent by 2030. UNFPA Mexico harnessed the commitment of the national government to strategically support the comprehensive roll out of the national strategy to prevent teenage pregnancy at state and local levels, strengthening national capacities. UNFPA support helped to create buy-in by states through technical assistance, piloting initiatives and promoting evidence-based advocacy efforts. As a result, UNFPA leveraged national commitment to influence investment and action at the state level.

Still, in many contexts, UNFPA continues to tackle the barriers that limit the supply of critical contraceptives for young people in some countries. These include high prices, lack of disaggregated data on adolescent and youth needs and use, restrictions on accessing some contraceptives, and misconceptions about contraceptives. For example, in Ghana, through early planning, (and using data collected by UNFPA), UNFPA succeeded in controlling pricing and thereby increasing access of women and girls to an assortment of contraceptives that have a direct impact on early and unintended pregnancy, unsafe abortion and ultimately maternal mortality. As another example, UNFPA Zimbabwe worked with the national family planning council and the Ministry of Health to prioritize increased uptake and availability of integrated

¹⁵¹ Global and regional KII, Mozambique Country case study.

family planning services by training providers in long acting contraceptive services, and the provision of family planning services in a youth-friendly manner.¹⁵²

HIV prevention and testing

HIV prevention and testing has been fundamental to UNFPA strategies and programming for adolescents and youth. This includes support for more marginalized and vulnerable adolescents and youth through targeted approaches for key populations (Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Zimbabwe), HIV prevention education and information, and HIV treatment integrated into service packages and guidelines, e.g. Minimum Initial Service Package for Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crisis Situations, YFHS guidelines as well as within CSE. For example, in Brazil, the *Bora Saber* (“Get to Know”) project, a community-based outreach programme promoted by UNFPA, assisted in locating and linking adolescents and youth from key populations to appropriate information on HIV/STI combination prevention, voluntary HIV testing and health care services for immediate antiretroviral therapy and STI treatment. *Bora Saber* successfully expanded access of young people in vulnerable conditions to HIV testing, combining prevention and treatment strategies through youth-to-youth dialogue for out-of-school young people. In Kyrgyzstan, UNFPA collaborated with “Kyrgyz Indigo,” a human rights organization, to reach the LGBTQI+ community and provide HIV prevention and treatment services. In Zimbabwe, UNFPA supported civil society organizations partners to provide equitable SRH and HIV services to key populations in hard-to-reach communities based on existing hot-spot mapping and through scaling up pilot interventions.¹⁵³ The mapping indicated high HIV prevalence and barriers to service access for young women engaged in sex work both in rural and peri-urban areas, to which UNFPA responded by reinforcing HIV prevention programmes in these areas through a programme for young women sex workers implemented by CeSHHAR/Sisters with a Voice.¹⁵⁴

Multisectoral response to gender-based violence and harmful practices, including FGM

UNFPA has made significant strides towards putting in place multisectoral response and services to GBV, including harmful practices such as FGM. In all case study countries, specific programming to counter violence against women and girls (including FGM in some cases) was observed, demonstrating good coordination of GBV response across UNFPA work on adolescents and youth and gender programming. Still, further work is needed on gender-transformative programming to completely eliminate GBV.

The European Union-supported United Nations Spotlight Initiative, as implemented by UNFPA, demonstrates expanded programming for GBV through a multisectoral response across other projects and intervention areas. This was evident in Benin, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mozambique, Niger and Zimbabwe. Notably, the Spotlight Initiative has been pivotal in scaling up UNFPA GBV interventions in some countries. For example, in Mozambique, Spotlight interventions complimented the Joint Programme Mozambique Rapariga Biz programme by ensuring standards for referral for GBV were implemented beyond Spotlight districts of intervention.¹⁵⁵

Another joint United Nations initiative, the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme on the elimination of FGM, further demonstrates that the multisectoral response to GBV is well developed. While the joint programme supports a comprehensive package of services to support young women and adolescent girls, it falls short of fully operationalize gender-transformative programming. Such programming would address the underlying drivers of harmful practices and sexual violence, and, thus, would be paramount to advance towards the elimination of GBV.

Mental health and psychosocial support

Mental health issues of young people are increasingly recognized as linked to their health, safety and economic well-being. In countries experiencing high levels of violence whether due to political or protracted civil unrest due to illegal activities, or exposure to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), UNFPA programmes are increasingly confronted with expanding youth mental health needs within current programming. For example, the Joint Programme Mozambique Rapariga Biz programme found that girl mentors are facing questions related to mental health and psychosocial support and issues

152 Government of Zimbabwe, Ministry of Health and Child Care. *Report for the end-line review of the ASRH Strategy 2, 2016-2020*. 2020.

153 Ibid.

154 UNFPA Zimbabwe. *UNFPA Zimbabwe 2019 Annual Report Final*. 2019.

155 Documentary review and case study.

from their mentees in their safe spaces sessions that they are not prepared to manage. The programme has responded by including mental health and psychosocial support for both mentors and mentees.

In Colombia, the effects of the illegal drug trade are heavily impacting young people, and as a result, UNFPA and UNICEF have had to change programming to meet the needs of affected young people who have experienced violence. During the pandemic, the mental health service needs of young people were particularly acute with evidence of an increase in domestic violence, unprotected sex and unplanned pregnancies.¹⁵⁶ Many adolescent and youth programmes are increasingly incorporating mental health services, often linked to their GBV services as psychosocial support (e.g. Colombia, Mozambique, Philippines and Ukraine). In the Philippines, for example, UNFPA helped facilitate access to survivor support groups and referral services for young people who experienced GBV. These efforts were found to be highly beneficial to the victim-survivors as it provided them not only a safe space, but also linkages to relevant health, social and mental services.¹⁵⁷

UNFPA has also started to work on psychosocial support more actively in humanitarian contexts. Through the programme "Boys on the Move," UNFPA provided psychosocial support and life-saving information while building competencies of young male migrants experiencing changing and challenging circumstances. The programme is based on a non-formal curriculum designed for unaccompanied and separated male adolescents displaced by conflict, poverty or related causes. Guidance on how to address adolescent and youth mental health needs within existing programming is needed as mental health issues and the need of psychosocial support increasingly come to the fore.¹⁵⁸

Expanding SRHR intervention areas

In order to respond to the multifaceted needs of adolescents and youth, UNFPA has expanded its programming to include emerging strategic issues such as menstrual health and self-care interventions.

Menstrual health awareness and management, a critical issue for young adolescent girls as they come into puberty, is a learning area for UNFPA that has only recently started to gain traction within SRHR education and information activities. While some efforts have begun, menstrual health was identified as a gap under the areas of work for "My Body". The evaluation findings have identified a few examples of support for menstrual health in the UNFPA country offices of the Philippines and Brazil and in ESARO.

In the area of self-care, UNFPA uses the WHO Guideline on Self-Care Interventions for Health and Well-Being¹⁵⁹ as a means to expand access to ASRHR by increasing youth participation, engagement and self-efficacy around their own health care. This is particularly important in contexts where young people experience social and cultural barriers to using the existing public health services. For example, in the Arab States region, UNFPA has promoted such self-care interventions for young people to enhance their access to SRH services.¹⁶⁰ In the ESARO region, similar activities are under way to provide guidance for countries that want to implement adolescent and youth self-care intervention strategies. In Benin, for instance, YFHS programming focuses on developing GBV and sexual and reproductive health response capacity within university-based student health services, while developing approaches that encourage self-care among youth.¹⁶¹

156 Roy CM, Bukuluki P, Casey SE, Jagun MO, John NA, Mabhena N, Mwangi M and McGovern T (2022) Impact of COVID-19 on Gender-Based Violence Prevention and Response Services in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa: A Cross-Sectional Survey. *Front. Glob. Women's Health* 2:780771. doi: 10.3389/fgwh.2021.780771.

157 Colombia, Mozambique and Ukraine country case studies.

158 Country case studies.

159 World Health Organization. *WHO Guideline on Self-Care Interventions for Health and Well-Being*. 2022 Revision. Available at: www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240052192.

160 Logie, C.H., Abela, H., Turk, T. et al. Sexual and reproductive health self-care interventions in the Eastern Mediterranean Region: findings from a cross-sectional values and preferences survey to inform WHO normative guidance on self-care interventions. *Health Res Policy Sys* 19 (Suppl 1), 57 (2021). Available at: <https://health-policy-systems.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12961-020-00659-w>.

161 Benin case study.

Finding 8: UNFPA has made important contributions to the “My Life” component of the strategy, particularly, in out-of-school CSE, asset-building programmes for adolescent girls, ending child marriage interventions and the engagement of men and boys by promoting positive masculinities. Still, there are challenges around CSE opposition, the scaling up and country ownership of interventions, as well as impact measurement and reporting of results.

Comprehensive sexuality education

UNFPA has a comparative advantage in CSE and is recognized as a valued leader that has made important contributions to this area of work.¹⁶² UNFPA, in partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), convened the Global Partnership Forum on CSE in 2021. With over 50 members, the Global Partnership Forum is a well-recognized platform to advance research, promote good practice, enhance collaboration and deliberate over shared challenges in the implementation of CSE.¹⁶³ At the regional level, UNFPA has supported frameworks and other regional actions to enable progress of CSE. An example of this is UNFPA support to the East and Southern Africa Commitment on CSE and SRH Services for Adolescent and Young People led by the Regional Economic Communities such as the Southern African Development Community.¹⁶⁴

In-school CSE: UNFPA in-school CSE work is met with great success at the county level. The country case studies provide strong evidence of UNFPA's effectiveness in supporting governments to deliver a CSE curriculum that adheres to international standards and is fully operationalized. For example, UNFPA Zimbabwe worked to strengthen the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's capacity to effectively deliver CSE. UNFPA provided this support through radio, which has been highlighted as a game-changer, especially in the humanitarian context and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prevention of GBV was additionally integrated into CSE programmes, strengthening the linkages between CSE and service delivery.¹⁶⁵ Likewise, in the Philippines UNFPA has successfully assisted the government to fully operationalize a school-based, gender-sensitive CSE curriculum in accordance with international standards.¹⁶⁶

Where UNFPA has enabled in-school CSE, investments are increasingly directed at quality curriculum reform and teacher training.¹⁶⁷ However, the teacher training strategy is faced with the limitations of the education sectors in low and middle income countries, whereby despite training, teachers often remain reluctant to teach sensitive subjects. So, while training teachers will increase access to CSE for young people, this is undermined by a loss of quality in content delivery when teachers do not fully adhere to CSE principles. A future challenge for UNFPA and its partners will be to embed quality assurance measures in educational systems for CSE, including in teacher training.

Out-of-school CSE: UNFPA has led in the CSE out-of-school space at all levels in recent years, focusing on the “left behind” groups of young people.¹⁶⁸ In 2020, UNFPA produced technical guidance on out-of-school CSE for young people who are left behind,¹⁶⁹ making an important contribution globally to this area of work by generating evidence from a range of pilot and innovative models implemented by UNFPA. The guidance outlines how to effectively deliver CSE to specific groups of young people, including LGBTQI+ youth, those from indigenous communities, living with HIV, in detention and using drugs, among other factors.¹⁷⁰

In practice, UNFPA has applied these guidelines through locally adapted interventions that consider the needs, life experiences and vulnerabilities of groups of young people who are left behind. This is demonstrated in the multi-country project “Out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education for those left furthest behind” implemented in Colombia,

162 Interviews and documentary review.

163 <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-health-and-well-being/cse-partnership>.

164 The commitment was adopted in December 2013 by Ministers of Health and Education from 20 countries within the region, and reaffirmed in 2021. UNFPA ESARO and Restless Development. Youth Leadership, Participation and Accountability 2.0. Part 1: The recommendations. No date.

165 Zimbabwe government respondents.

166 UNFPA. *Country programme document for Philippines (2019-2023)*. 2018. Available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/1637110?ln=en>.

167 UNESCO. *The journey towards comprehensive sexuality education: Global status report*. 2021. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/The%20journey%20towards%20comprehensive%20sexuality%20education%20-%20Global%20status%20report.pdf.

168 Global case study.

169 UNFPA. *International Technical and Programmatic Guidance on Out-of-School Comprehensive Sexuality Education*. 2020. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Out_of_School_CSE_Guidance_with_References_for_Web.pdf.

170 Ibid.

Ethiopia, Ghana, Iran and Malawi. It provides a strong evidence base for designing and delivering the curriculum across different countries and regions.¹⁷¹ Other countries outside this multi-country project have also significantly contributed to the out-of-school CSE field. For example, the *Illimin* initiative in Niger; CSE provision to young Syrian refugees in Türkiye through the humanitarian refugee programme, to name a few. However, in some contexts (e.g. Latin America region), there are a number of small, localized pilots of out-of-school CSE interventions within UNFPA programming that raise questions about scaling up and long-term sustainability.

Opposition to CSE: Amid UNFPA efforts in this area, there is a growing opposition against CSE in some regions and countries. In response, UNFPA and its partners have made joint efforts to take stock of global progress in CSE implementation and supporting countries to adopt more strategic approaches in the implementation of CSE in more challenging contexts. This included developing advocacy strategies with recognized leaders or influencers to engage and mobilize communities – including parents, school officials, religious leaders, media and young people themselves – to create a favourable environment for CSE.^{172,173,174} For example, in Kyrgyzstan, despite UNFPA efforts, CSE was not integrated in the school curriculum for grades 6–11. As a second effort, UNFPA involved key religious organizations to deliver the CSE to madrasah students. The evaluation team found this approach innovative in a context of growing religiosity among youth, and moreover, effective. In 2019, a religious organization delivered CSE in 11 pilot madrasas and, in total, 120 madrasah teachers and 300 students were trained.¹⁷⁵ This strategy was also employed in India whereby, through an agreement between UNFPA, Bihar State Madrasa Education Boards and the Bihar Department of Education in 2019 led to Muslim traditional institutions opening their doors for interventions and assistance to empower young adolescents with accurate, age-appropriate and culturally adapted CSE.¹⁷⁶

Asset-building, girl-centred programmes

Under the “My Life” dimension, UNFPA has developed a number of interventions centred on adolescent girls that build their health, social, economic and cognitive assets, leveraging joint programming and multiple donor funding.¹⁷⁷ A few shared lessons can be learned from these programmes as observed in this evaluation.

First, multisectoral programming to meet the needs of adolescent girls and young women quickly becomes complex as UNFPA and partners attempt to engage at different levels and different entry points. This is difficult not only to manage and monitor, but it is also difficult to coordinate between implementing partners, United Nations agencies and government ministries. Another lesson observed was the difficulty to operationalize a sustainable economic model for the economic empowerment and employability of adolescent girls in their local contexts. These difficulties are partly due to the structural constraints of economies in low and middle income countries, but also due to the limited experience and capacity of country office staff in a technical area outside of the traditional UNFPA mandate. This calls for further exploring and strengthening partnerships with organizations with clear expertise in this area such as the International Labour Organization and others.

Good practices in protective asset-building, adolescent girls-centred programmes were observed in several countries. For example, in Mozambique, UNFPA supported the *Rapariga Biz* programme¹⁷⁸ interventions including mentorship (for sharing SRHR education and information or CSE and life skills), referral, economic empowerment and self-esteem building through leadership activities. *Rapariga Biz* also includes a focus on ending child marriage, contributing to the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage. In Ghana, within the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme “Empowering Adolescent Girls through Improved Access to Comprehensive Sexuality Education and Rights-Based Quality Sexual and Reproductive Health Services,” special attention has been given to vulnerable girls such as migrants

171 UNFPA. *UNFPA's Multicountry Programme on Out of School Reproductive Health Education: Country Cases: Ghana*. 2019. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/DR-casestudy-jun30_Ghana.pdf.

172 UNESCO. *The journey towards comprehensive sexuality education: Global status report*. 2021. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/The%20journey%20towards%20comprehensive%20sexuality%20education%20-%20Global%20status%20report.pdf.

173 UNFPA. *UNFPA's Multicountry Programme on Out of School Reproductive Health Education: Country Cases: Ghana*. 2019. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/DR-casestudy-jun30_Ghana.pdf.

174 https://wcaro.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/VF_Brochure%20CSE_EN_WCARO%20%281%29.pdf.

175 Kyrgyzstan country case study.

176 Global case study.

177 In line with the recommendations from the previous evaluation (2015) (see Finding 1).

178 A joint United Nations programme involving UNFPA, UNICEF, UNESCO and UN Women.

and refugees and those with disabilities. UNFPA-UNICEF joint programmes in Ghana have complementary approaches and are targeting different communities aiming to promote spillover effects across communities and reach more girls. As an example, through integrating child marriage and empowering girls under one training framework, the joint programme was able to simultaneously address GBV and SRH components. In Niger, the *Illimin* initiative started as an out-of-school CSE programme for vulnerable girls including a vocational training and economic empowerment component for young beneficiaries and expanded to include GBV and child marriage prevention strategies and a school reintegration programme for young girls.¹⁷⁹ Adolescent girls-centred programming allows UNFPA to integrate gender and youth programming through a synergic and strategic approach.

Ending child marriage

Led at the global level, the GPECM¹⁸⁰ demonstrates the potential of the United Nations to lead global efforts to combat harmful practices. GPECM, as seen with other integrated programmes, was able to attract complementary funding from a range of regional initiatives and donors, allowing it to scale up its interventions and target other SRH issues more comprehensively. Within the United Nations system, it consolidated the focus on adolescent girls and young women as a vulnerable group that requires specific programming and catalysed the global attention on this demographic group.

While the joint programme successfully makes the case for multisectoral programming, siloed programming by agency can persist at an operational level in some countries. GPECM also raises the question of reaching boys for the benefit of improving the conditions of all youth, but especially adolescent girls and young women. Thus, the involvement of adolescent boys has been more ad hoc, and it is not clear if the most vulnerable and marginalized were always reached.

Still, as observed in this evaluation, the programme has demonstrated overall positive results. In Niger, for example, UNFPA support has resulted in traditional leaders making public pledges against child marriage and organized community surveillance communities on child marriage, resulting in some localities not reporting any child marriage over recent years.¹⁸¹ In Zimbabwe, UNFPA support led to the integration of regional and international frameworks like the Maputo Protocol and the Southern African Development Community Model Law on Eradication of Child Marriages, which has contributed to improvements in child marriage prevention mechanisms and the harmonization of laws on child marriage. Moreover, UNFPA work to end child marriage has formed an integral part of the country's multisectoral response to addressing adolescent fertility, and is a growing component in the education sector's response to school drop-outs.¹⁸²

Beyond these programmatic approaches, UNFPA has more broadly contributed to ensuring that laws and policies increasingly recognize, protect and promote adolescent girls' rights, especially in regard to early child marriage. For example, UNFPA East and Southern Africa regional intervention action plan supports the East and Southern Africa Commitment on CSE and SRH Services for Adolescent and Young People to adopt the model law on Eradicating Child Marriage and Protecting Children Already in Marriage of the Southern African Development Community.

Promoting positive masculinities with boys and young men

UNFPA has focused the majority of its adolescent and youth programming on adolescent girls and young women but has also supported initiatives targeting men and boys through several strategic plans. Under the period of the evaluation, and in alignment with the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 which promotes positive masculinities, UNFPA has supported targeted interventions reaching out to boys and young men through community-based group education (e.g. Husband and Future Husband Schools in the West and Central Africa region) as well as community dialogues with boys and young men as decision makers and fathers. Interventions showing positive results include "Boys on the Move," a life skills programme for young migrants in EECARO, and initiatives under the GPECM that adopted a gender-transformative approach to promote the empowerment of girls and the promotion of positive masculinities with boys (e.g. in countries such as Burkina Faso).¹⁸³

179 Niger country case study.

180 Launched in 2016 and now entering Phase 3, this joint global programme is implemented in 12 countries across four regions.

181 Niger country case study. Data as reported by community-based child marriage/GBV surveillance committees.

182 Zimbabwe country case study.

183 Husband School project and Joint UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage documentary review and interviews.

At the global level UNFPA has pioneered the research agenda on how masculinities are shaping boyhood and its implications for ending child marriage. In partnership with Equimundo, UNFPA has developed an evidence review that incorporates the latest evidence, a programmatic review and key recommendations for programming with boys and young men.¹⁸⁴ This is an emergent area for UNFPA but is important for improved outcomes for adolescents and youth and involves engaging boys and young men in positive masculinities at multiple levels in a more holistic, comprehensive and coordinated way for sustained change in gender equality. Other opportunities exist in specific areas that focus on engagement of men and boys as programme beneficiaries, including HIV programming and, increasingly, sexual violence and GBV prevention and response initiatives.

Finding 9: UNFPA has effectively leveraged its population data and dynamics component not only to inform adolescent and youth programming, but also to position itself as the leader in adolescent and youth data and analysis. This has yielded positive results in terms of informing and influencing adolescent and youth policies and, to a lesser extent, strengthening national statistics on youth and national reporting on SDGs.

Under the “My Life” dimension, UNFPA has advanced the production of evidence-based data to raise awareness and influence policies and to better target its investments in adolescents and youth. UNFPA has demonstrated leadership at global, regional and country levels for its role in the production of youth statistics and generation of high quality evidence.¹⁸⁵

Adolescent and youth data and analysis

At global level, UNFPA, in partnership with WHO and UNICEF, has developed extensive evidence on adolescents and youth needs, as well as good practices in programming approaches and strategies. UNFPA has commissioned, for example, extensive reviews of CSE, YFHS and youth during the COVID-19 pandemic, among other thematic topics. The evidence produced informed the discussions and negotiations at the United Nations General Assembly, the Commission on Population and Development, and the Human Rights Council, among other high-level global platforms. The generation of data as well as advocacy for adolescent and youth health and well-being within these spaces has been acknowledged as a UNFPA comparative advantage. UNFPA also developed the Adolescents and Youth Dashboard containing data covering 24 countries on adolescent pregnancy, child marriage, family planning, sexual and reproductive health and gender equality for use in policymaking and programming.

At regional level, all UNFPA regional offices played an important role in ensuring that quality disaggregated data on adolescents and youth, across a breadth of areas, is available and accessible for policy decisions, advocacy and fundraising.¹⁸⁶ Underscoring this point, UNFPA EECARO produced a report highlighting the critical need for disaggregated youth data and how current policy frameworks relate to that data. Notably, UNFPA LACRO provides a practical example of how this was operationalized. The regional office commissioned the development of the MILENA methodology¹⁸⁷ to measure the socioeconomic consequences of adolescent pregnancy and provided support to its roll-out in six countries of the region, resulting in policy uptake in several countries such as Mexico. In West and Central Africa, UNFPA has been heavily involved in harnessing the demographic dividend in the region and many tools have been developed to help better understand this issue. This includes the development of a demographic dividend programming guide as well as the adoption of national transfer accounts¹⁸⁸, which both have helped to analyse demographic changes and their relation to the distribution of resources from one generation to another.

At country level, UNFPA country offices have placed different emphasis on producing evidence for policymaking or advocacy in support of the adolescent and youth agenda, with more efforts observed in middle income countries.

184 Equimundo. *Boyhood and Child, Early, and Forced Marriages and Unions: An Evidence Review*. 2022. Available at: www.equimundo.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Equimundo_CEFMU_Report.pdf.

185 Benin, Brazil, Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mozambique, Ukraine and Zimbabwe country case studies.

186 Regional level case study.

187 MILENA: Metodología para Estimar el Impacto Económico del Embarazo y la Maternidad.

188 National Transfer Accounts (NTA) provide a coherent accounting framework of economic flows from one age group or generation to another, typically for a national population in a given calendar year: www.un.org/development/desa/cdpmo/tools/2020/national-transfer-accounts-manual-measuring-and-analysing-generational-economy.

All country case studies demonstrated positive results in supporting advocacy and upstream policy efforts, as well as in strengthening the production and analysis of national statistics on youth, and national reporting for the SDGs. Respondents noted that UNFPA country-level data on adolescents and youth is of high quality, reliable and useful, providing a strong evidence base that informs policy dialogue and programming on adolescents and youth.¹⁸⁹ Moreover, UNFPA distinguishes itself by ensuring that data production and analysis on adolescents and youth emphasize the principles of the HRBA and LNOB.¹⁹⁰ Still, challenges remain in securing consistent and disaggregated data, particularly from national health and education partners.¹⁹¹

Several good examples of UNFPA support for producing quality data on young people exist. For example, in Colombia and Mexico UNFPA has extensively invested in adolescent and youth data generation in both countries to ensure the needs of adolescents and youth are identified and evidence is available to decision makers on the situation of young people. Notably, in Mexico, leading such efforts has allowed UNFPA to provide technical inputs and influence youth policies, such as the National Programme on Youth, jointly formulated with the National Youth Institute (IMJUVE). In Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan¹⁹² and Ukraine,¹⁹³ UNFPA supported the roll-out of youth data indexes (e.g. Youth Wellbeing Index and the Youth Development Index) to ensure the systematic and complex measurement of youth. The data is being used to inform policies, programme implementation in the respective countries. In Benin and Türkiye, UNFPA leveraged its data expertise to provide timely information on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on youth so that countries have an evidence base to adapt and target their programme interventions effectively. Notably, in Benin, UNFPA took part in United Nations-wide efforts to generate evidence on the impact of the pandemic and published in 2020 a comprehensive study on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19, including an exploration of the impact on gender and violence, vulnerabilities, the school system and other issues affecting youth.

National statistics on adolescents and youth

In addition to supporting data production on young people, UNFPA has also worked to support and strengthen national statistics on youth and national monitoring capacities. Leveraging decades of close work with national data and statistics institutions, UNFPA has helped to advance the mainstreaming of the adolescents and youth agenda on national statistical systems. Across the country case studies, there are promising examples of UNFPA influence on these systems to further the generation of quality, disaggregated data on adolescents and youth. For example, UNFPA supported the Zimbabwe National Statistics Agency and other key government ministries to enhance their capacity to collect, analyse and utilize youth population data at national and subnational levels, and to integrate population issues in development planning. In Mexico, in collaboration with the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), UNFPA contributed to the establishment of the Inter-institutional Youth Statistics Committee, which developed an Indicator System to monitor youth policies at the national and subnational level. And in Benin, UNFPA consistently works towards the effective integration of disaggregated data for ASRHR, GBV and family planning into the National Information System and Sanitary Management and the DHIS2 (an open source, web-based platform most commonly used as a health management information system).

Finding 10: While there is recognition that UNFPA is a leading agency working with and for youth, programming for the meaningful engagement of youth remains narrowly focused on youth from the SRHR sector, missing the opportunity to reach beyond its traditional mandate areas, and involve more diverse youth. Across the organization, there has not been unified guidance (until recently) on youth engagement, and as a result, a lack of shared understanding of the vision for the “My World” component, especially on how the concept of meaningful participation takes shape within different contexts.

189 Benin, Brazil, Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mozambique, Ukraine and Zimbabwe country case studies.

190 Colombia, Kyrgyzstan and Mexico country case studies.

191 Colombia and Kyrgyzstan country case studies.

192 The Kremnchuk City Council rolled out the Youth Well-being Index in 2017. The survey showed a high percentage of youth felt insecure due to the absence of street lightning. Following this finding, the city started implementing a Safe City programme. Two years later, the Index showed progress under the 'Safety and Security' sub-index.

193 Country case study.

Contributions to enhancing youth participation

At the global level, UNFPA has been instrumental in promoting the understanding that genuine and meaningful engagement and the participation of young people in civic affairs at local, national, regional and global levels is critical to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.¹⁹⁴ However, at regional and country level, the evaluation team found some inconsistencies around *what* meaningful participation is, *why* UNFPA should be doing it, and *how* it should be done with UNFPA support.

At the regional level, UNFPA has not fully capitalized or leveraged the work on youth participation within or across the different regions for maximized effectiveness. There is a clear opportunity to harness the investment by regional offices for accelerated global impact. Each region has been making strides in different areas of the “My World” components, but there is no evidence of institutionalized mechanisms within UNFPA to systematically share learnings within and across the regional offices. While each regional office has had different foci and approaches to creating meaningful youth participation either topically (e.g. Youth Arab Forum and the Centre of Excellence in the Arab States region), or operationally through the creation of youth networks and movements such as the African Youth and Adolescents Network (AfriYAN) in ESARO and WCARO or Y-Peer in ASRO, APRO and EECARO), these experiences are pertinent to adolescents and youth everywhere, even if thematic issues or approaches to meeting the needs of youth may differ. Thus, increased knowledge-sharing across regions, facilitated by headquarters, could be beneficial.

At the country level, UNFPA efforts towards adolescent and youth participation are varied. There is a general consensus that UNFPA represents good practice among United Nations agencies¹⁹⁵ with regard to ensuring meaningful engagement. This has been confirmed by young people themselves in the case studies. Several promising practices have been documented, including:

- Supporting young leaders and/or youth-led movements to be advocates of the UNFPA mandate:** This evaluation observed this was done through UNFPA-invited spaces in most cases. For example, in Benin, UNFPA supported girl leaders as part of the “Fati campaign” leading to their participation in the regional campaign of the “1000 girls”.¹⁹⁶ Similarly, UNFPA supported youth camps in Colombia to empower young people to become leaders and advocate for SRHR. Participation in the youth camps informed young people about their position as rights holders and government obligations as duty bearers.¹⁹⁷ The youth camp model was adopted by LACRO, which promoted regional editions to increase youth activism on the ICPD agenda. Later, it was also picked up by UNFPA Brazil, advancing South-South cooperation among youth activists and organizations.
- Supporting the meaningful participation of youth in broader national policymaking:** In Niger, during the 2018–2019 electoral process, UNFPA was instrumental in sensitizing women and youth on the importance of their participation for a peaceful electoral process. It also supported the equal participation of boys and girls as Junior Municipal Counsellors in local communities, and youth participation in “citizen spaces”.¹⁹⁸ Similarly, UNFPA Philippines placed adolescents and youth at the centre of policymaking by creating/facilitating spaces where young people are actively involved in political dialogues, decision-making and programming both in humanitarian and development settings. This helped position young people as actors and not beneficiaries, especially in humanitarian work.¹⁹⁹
- Fostering an enabling policy environment for youth participation:** In Mexico, UNFPA supported, in 2012, a broad consultation process to agree on a National Youth Agenda. This process has trickled down to the subnational level with the State Youth Agendas during the period covered by this evaluation. UNFPA supported, in four States, the participation of more than 17,000 adolescents and young people. Government representatives at the State level reported that the priorities set by the Youth State Agendas are guiding their planning.²⁰⁰ Likewise in Kyrgyzstan, the Youth Policy 2020–2030 was developed in consultation with young people and outlined for the first time

194 Global level respondents.

195 Ibid.

196 Benin country case study.

197 Colombia country case study.

198 Niger country case study.

199 Philippines country case study.

200 Mexico country case study.

how the State should treat youth as equal members of society. The previous legal acts, e.g. Law on Youth from 2009, did not analyse youth needs and considered youth participation should be limited to youth policymaking, but not to other decision-making processes.²⁰¹

- **Reinforcing the capacity of youth-led movements:** In Zimbabwe, the UNFPA country office has invested in building the capacity of adolescents and youth networks to review and develop national documents such as the Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Strategy and the Zimbabwe National Youth Development Report.²⁰² In Brazil, UNFPA invested significant effort to institutional strengthening of youth-led organizations which have received financial contributions and training to pursue their own mandate, including targeted initiatives to indigenous and afro-descendants groups.²⁰³
- **United Nations Youth Advisory Panels:** In the Philippines, the United Nations Youth Advisory Board provides inputs on the decisions of United Nations YTG, and is now in its second batch of board members. In Bangladesh, a United Nations Youth Advisory Panel has been promoted but has been less active for the last two years. Youth panels allow young people to not only engage but lead and make decisions on processes and policies at the national level.

Challenges to youth participation

Although country offices are innovating according to their contexts, it is not clear if these initiatives respond to strategic and informed choices on where to invest and why. Further, the evaluation surfaced issues around access and privilege, unintended effects and the sustainability and scaling up of youth participation interventions.

Relating to access and privilege, the participation of young people in UNFPA-invited spaces oftentimes results in the inclusion of a select group of youth – usually the UNFPA SRHR youth advocates – limiting the impact on the broader youth agenda.²⁰⁴ While young people benefit from participating in UNFPA-invited spaces, there are still unresolved issues of inclusivity and representation among the young people who ultimately engage in such initiatives. This is particularly seen in the engagement of youth in policymaking, which often requires a particular educational and economic background that allows young people to participate fully. Alongside these issues, the digital divide continues to inhibit the participation of the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups.²⁰⁵ In some contexts, opportunities provided by UNFPA to engage in international agendas (SDGs, ICPD) or in programming often end up reaching privileged young people.

Regarding unintended effects, UNFPA, while promoting its own invited spaces, is challenged with ensuring youth-claimed spaces are promoted and protected. Youth interviewed in this evaluation questioned the extent to which UNFPA-invited spaces might detract from supporting youth-claimed spaces or already established spaces and movements under the UNFPA mandate.

The other identified challenge to youth participation was the sustainability and scaling up of youth participation initiatives. Youth respondents highlighted that these initiatives were often one-off interactions, and that there was a need for follow-up strategies.²⁰⁶ In particular, UNFPA strategies were more focused on fostering individual capacities rather than strengthening youth movements. While it can be claimed that UNFPA also targets the renewal of youth leadership, it is not clear if such efforts are geared towards strategies that support a sustainable youth movement, or as part of civil society strengthening efforts, which are necessarily long-term and resource-intensive.

201 Kyrgyzstan country case study.

202 Zimbabwe country case study.

203 Brazil country case study.

204 Colombia country case study.

205 Brazil, Colombia and Mexico country case studies.

206 Mexico and Brazil country case studies.

Box 2. What young people say: “My World”

“We want to make a panel showcasing successful youth in Chocó. We participate in youth summits worldwide, there may be strategies that can be useful in other countries. [We want] those in power to really listen to us. We young people want to participate in politics.” –*Colombia FGD participant*

“We have begun to participate even in budget consultations at the district level. The advocacy meetings we have had have given us the opportunity to interact with stakeholders and get their support and views. Young people have been given various platforms to engage and say what they want. There was a meeting with all district and provincial facilitators, and we managed to relay our views and state that within the network itself and how we propose to address the issues.” –*Zimbabwe FGD participant*

3.6 EFFECTIVENESS – MEASURING RESULTS**Evaluation question 6: To what extent has UNFPA measured results across individual, community and societal impacts?²⁰⁷**

Finding 11: Output indicators are comprehensively in place. However, measuring results at the outcome level is much less advanced. There are significant challenges in measuring impact and quantifying how adolescents and youth programming contributes to the three transformative results of the UNFPA strategic plan.

Overall, there are many solid indicators at the activity, output, and outcome levels across UNFPA adolescents and youth programming to measure the impact on individuals under a rights-based imperative. However, outcome indicators linked to the development and demographic imperatives highlighted in the strategy, particularly related to measuring the impact of working with adolescents and youth at the wider societal level, have been more challenging to incorporate into programming in a holistic manner. Case studies reveal that UNFPA has a good track record in evaluating its own interventions, especially when engaging in direct implementation.²⁰⁸ Joint programmes, in particular, have robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks in place, and are regularly evaluated not only at the country level, but also global level.

Output level

At the output level, indicators are in place for measuring results at the individual level. For example, many adolescent and youth programmes delivering out-of-school CSE measure the number of young people trained or exposed to an intervention (radio programme), but there was little evidence of a results framework capturing important nuance such as the dose of inputs the young person received (i.e. number of times, and the duration of the messages received over the radio, or through a school CSE session).

Outcome level

At the outcome level, short-term results at individual and community levels are well captured through UNFPA monitoring and evaluation systems.²⁰⁹ For example, adolescent girl and young women programming often captures whether girls in the programme have become pregnant, dropped out of school, accessed family planning or married.²¹⁰ There is less evidence of consistent outcome-level indicators at societal levels.²¹¹ For example, although UNFPA contribution to policy

207 Assumptions: 6.1 UNFPA monitored and recorded results related to the ‘rights imperative’ – adolescents and youth have been supported to make choices about their bodies and lives as is their individual rights. 6.2 UNFPA monitored and recorded results related to the ‘development imperative’ – adolescents and youth have been supported to contribute to sustainable and progressive development within their communities. 6.3 UNFPA monitored and recorded results related to the ‘demographic imperative’ – UNFPA has supported global south countries to maximise and leverage the demographic dividend of high numbers of adolescents and youth for accelerated development. What could be improved?

208 Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Niger, Türkiye and Zimbabwe country case studies.

209 Ibid.

210 Mozambique, Niger, Benin.

211 Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Jordan, Mexico, Niger, The Philippines, Türkiye.

changes is extensively monitored,²¹² the impact of such policies is less so. Interventions around advocacy, strengthening national capacities and changing social norms still struggle with measuring results.

There have been considered efforts by UNFPA to address these gaps in measuring results at the outcome level. For example, in 2021, UNFPA developed the ACT Framework to monitor multi-indicators and important changes in social norms. While the ACT Framework is considered too comprehensive for easy application, it is a positive development towards improved measurement of transformative and empowerment programming that is fundamental to UNFPA ambitions in the context of holistic programming.²¹³

Impact level

At impact level, an assessment of the indicators under the most recent Country Programme Documents' integrated results and resource frameworks shows a mixed picture. In some cases, impact level indicators for SRH, gender and adolescents and youth aligned directly with UNFPA three transformative results target and have age and/or gender disaggregation.²¹⁴ There was also a significant number of indicators for SRH and gender that capture age disaggregation.²¹⁵ In terms of sources, the evaluation identified that while in some cases alignment between indicators and official national statistics and global standards (World Health Organization, DHMIS2) is straightforward, in others indicators were harder to quantify and dependent on large-scale surveys or census. It is worth mentioning that challenges related to insufficient outcome results monitoring and to providing evidence of progress towards the organization's stated results have been previously assessed and are not exclusive to programming on adolescents and youth.²¹⁶

Leveraging other data sources

UNFPA population and development programming has a wealth of data that could be utilized to measure impacts on adolescents and youth at societal level. The evaluation observed some promising practices that could be further enhanced to fully leverage this data. As seen in Finding 9, there are several examples across countries of how UNFPA generates high quality evidence, including numerous studies and reports with interesting methodologies that provide youth situational analysis and inform programming. Still, it is less clear to what extent this body of evidence can be used to track longer-term impacts as there is not necessarily always a clear delineation between assessment data and results data. Moreover, those analyses are mainly UNFPA-driven, and often one-off initiatives, which undermines long-term sustainability.²¹⁷

Challenges to measuring results

An important gap assessed by this evaluation refers to the lack of outcome indicators to assess UNFPA efforts and results under "My World", especially related to youth meaningful participation. In order to address this gap and move beyond output and short-term outcome levels of measurement, UNFPA needs to resolve several underlying issues. These include: programme funding cycles which do not allow for measuring longer-term outcome-level indicators; lack of a financial marker for adolescent and youth interventions; contribution versus attribution analysis of specific interventions at the individual community or societal levels; and the general overstretch of UNFPA monitoring and evaluation staffing, as well as implementing partner capacities.

An emerging challenge is the increased focus on digitalization for adolescents and youth programming, which requires significant rethinking of traditional results measurements. This includes support for measuring impact of different social media channels, and accessing services through online platforms, or accessing information through non-digital and non-face-to-face mechanisms such as radio.²¹⁸

212 Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, The Philippines and Zimbabwe country case studies.

213 Global and regional documentation.

214 Benin, Brazil, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico and Ukraine country case studies.

215 Colombia, Niger, The Philippines and Türkiye country case studies.

216 UNFPA (2017) Evaluation of the architecture supporting the operationalisation of the UNFPA strategic plan 2014-2017 and UNFPA (2022) Meta-analysis of findings and lessons learned from centralised and programme-level evaluations at UNFPA (2018-2021) to support the implementation of the 2022-2025 strategic plan.

217 Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Türkiye and Ukraine country case studies.

218 Bangladesh, Benin and Türkiye country case studies.

3.7 LEADERSHIP, COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Evaluation question 7: To what extent has UNFPA coordinated with and provided leadership to broader efforts to work for and with young people within the United Nations system and beyond.

Finding 12: At the global level, UNFPA leadership in the adolescents and youth space has evolved over the years with UNFPA filling a gap and becoming the de facto leading United Nations youth agency. Coordination differs widely across different programmatic areas, and leadership tends to occur in a fragmented manner across different topics.

Leadership across thematic areas

At the global level, UNFPA filled a leadership void in some thematic areas, becoming the de facto leading United Nations agency on youth in both traditional (SRHR) and new areas of intervention (YPS, humanitarian). On specific thematic areas however, UNFPA shares leadership with various agencies, as best highlighted through the joint programmes such as the GPECM with UNICEF. Globally, UNFPA focus and support on adolescents and youth have substantially increased in recent years, as attention is sharpened in the UNFPA strategic plans to focus on those “left behind”, particularly adolescent girls and young women.

Despite this very “crowded space”, UNFPA has been able to stand out, specifically in three areas. First, UNFPA continues to play a key part, as a leading agency, in the structure and purpose of the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth. UNFPA has provided human resources to the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth, which acts as a coordinating forum for United Nations adolescent and youth interventions and approaches. It is through this support, that the Office of the Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth was able to develop and launch the overarching United Nations Youth Strategy (Youth2030).

Second, UNFPA has exhibited consistently strong leadership and coordination for the Youth Compact and for YPS at the global level. UNFPA is one of the global lead organizations (together with the International Federation of the Red Cross for the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action. For YPS, UNFPA has been at the forefront of this agenda at the global level from the start. UNFPA established the youth and peacebuilding working group in 2012 as part of IANYD, co-organized the Global Forum on Youth, Peace and Security in 2015, and provided the Secretariat support for the independent progress study on youth, peace and security mandated by resolution 2250. Together with Peacebuilding Support Office, UNFPA acts as the United Nations Secretariat on YPS providing system-wide coordination support to the implementation of the YPS agenda. UNFPA also continues to co-chair the Global Coalition for YPS.²¹⁹ This shared leadership with non-United Nations entities helps to position UNFPA as a reliable and trustworthy partner, UNFPA leadership in this arena is recognized and well-respected across United Nations, NGO and civil society partners. Many partners highlighted in particular the participatory manner of ensuring that civil society is included, even in activities such as preparing the biannual reports of the Secretary-General on YPS.

Third, UNFPA is leading on advancing in-school and out-of-school CSE programming. UNFPA is a co-convenor of the Global Partnership Forum on CSE. The Global Partnership Forum on CSE was established to ensure global dialogue and strategic positions of CSE, and inform programming in regions and countries. Such partnerships also recognize the role and provide a platform to engage with critical international partners such as the International Planned Parenthood Federation as well as other 65 international and regional organizations and academia essential to implementing adolescent and youth interventions in countries.²²⁰

219 The Global Coalition predates UNSCR2250, which gave an official framing for YPS in 2015. Prior to this, the Working Group on Youth and Peacebuilding was established in 2012, and renamed the Global Coalition on YPS in 2015. It is chaired by UNFPA/PBSO and two civil society organizations, the United Network of Young Peacebuilders and Search for Common Ground.

220 Global respondents.

Coordination across the United Nations system

UNFPA has increased its cross-agency collaboration for more effective and efficient programming. This includes UNFPA work with the World Health Organization on normative guidance and service provision, with UNICEF on adolescent girls, with UNESCO on in-school CSE, with UN Women and UNICEF on GBV and FGM, with UNDP on youth participation, and with International Labour Organization and the World Bank on employment. UNFPA has, for example, worked with the UNFPA co-sponsored Special Programme on Human Reproduction at the World Health Organization on adolescent and youth SRH, particularly CSE. Coordination with UNICEF has also been strong and organizationally embedded through the two global joint programmes – GPECM and the Joint Programme on FGM. More broadly, UNFPA works closely with the “H6” and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health on adolescent health and well-being.²²¹ However, across all the thematic areas and coordination platforms, the evaluation team find that there is a risk that remains of duplication and competition between United Nations agency mandates, activities and funding streams. While joint programmes such as the global FGM and child marriage programmes have strategies and organizational structures to define roles and responsibilities minimizing duplication and competition, other areas of support for adolescents and youth face these challenges.

Youth2030, to which UNFPA has significantly contributed, has not yet fully provided a coherent umbrella to address the duplication issues that exist between agency mandates. This is particularly the case in youth programming focused on prevention of violence which is included in multiple United Nations agency mandates in various forms (UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP, UN Women, UNESCO, etc.). Further, there is a sense that good coordination is still overly reliant and dependent upon individuals. Close collaboration through the joint UNFPA/Peacebuilding Support Office Secretariat on Youth, Peace and Security and the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and other United Nations counterparts have both facilitated cooperation and strategic alignment on specific issues. Yet, as the adolescents and youth space become an ever-larger proportion of the social and economic development agenda, with ever more actors, good coordination becomes increasingly important.²²²

While coordination at the global level on the above thematic areas has grown, resources differ dramatically between agencies and partners with implications on perceived leadership positioning. As a result, some agencies are able to influence adolescent and youth programming significantly in regions and countries while others may participate technically, but not in terms of funding. In some cases, UNFPA struggles to have sufficient technical staff to cover all important global forums, even on the topics where they are recognized as the global leader. For example, there has been a plethora of recent discussions on CSE and the impacts of COVID on adolescents and youth across regions. However, given resource constraints, UNFPA staff have not been able to participate in all discussions.²²³ This reinforces the sense that leadership and coordination is disparate across different aspects of the adolescents and youth global agenda both across the United Nations, and within the agencies themselves, where teams and units vie for leadership and control of thematic issues, and ultimately the associated resources.

Box 3. UNFPA is a top-performer of Youth2030, the United Nations Youth Strategy

In 2021, for the first time, United Nations entities self-reported their progress on the United Nations Youth Strategy (also known as Youth2030) against 18 key performance indicators.²²⁴ UNFPA ranked among the top three performers out of 40 United Nations entities. A comparative analysis under each dimension assessed provides an overview of UNFPA strengths. It also highlights those areas where there is still room for improvement:

On advancing global commitments FOR youth and delivering them WITH youth, UNFPA shows solid progress with comparative outstanding performance. On making data and evidence on youth widely available and setting standards for work on youth, UNFPA performance is above average when it comes to completed evaluations on

221 The H6 are a group of Bretton Woods organizations working on health including WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UN Women and the World Bank Group.

222 Global Kills, Mozambique case study.

223 Global and regional Kills, Donor Kills.

224 United Nations. *Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. Youth2030: A Global Progress Report, 2022*. 2022. Available at: www.unyouth2030.com/progressreport.

youth, including joint-evaluations, releasing new data products, as well as new guidance, tools and standards, with a LNOB perspective on youth left behind. An area of improvement is harnessing big-data sources for insights on youth issues. Regarding support to governments in policymaking and programmes on youth, sectors and areas under UNFPA mandate are among the top issues supported, respectively health and disaggregated data. On establishing programmes and partnerships on youth, UNFPA scores above the average when it comes to joint programmes and multi-stakeholder initiatives on youth, however, on directly funding youth-led organizations to undertake projects, UNFPA is not at the milestone yet. On supporting the exchange of knowledge on youth, UNFPA stands out for maintaining a knowledge portal with information on youth, including joint initiatives.

A youth focus in United Nations strategic planning processes is the area where UNFPA performance is less consistent. Although the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 includes a youth perspective on its situational analysis, it does not include results for youth at outcome and output levels. Regarding specific corporate strategies, UNFPA human resource plans cover both strengthening internships and increasing youth in their workforce. Funding for youth is a dimension where there is room for improvement. Although UNFPA has an outstanding performance on making information on allocated funding for youth-related activities available, it does not have a marker/tagging system to track resources.

Regarding United Nations entities architecture and capacities to deliver on Youth2030, UNFPA shows comparative outstanding performance on strengthening internal capacities and improving and increasing youth workforce.

Under “meaningful youth engagement in the United Nations system” UNFPA performance is strong when it comes to engaging youth in strategic planning processes, while there is room for improvement when it comes to establishing policies, processes and platforms for meaningful youth engagement.

Finding 13: At the regional and country level, UNFPA leadership on adolescent and youth issues does not always translate into a transformational agenda or strategic positioning of adolescents and youth as an issue within the United Nations system, or internally as a priority issue for the organization.

Regional-level leadership and collaboration

At the regional level, there are multiple examples of leadership by UNFPA and collaboration with a variety of United Nations and NGO actors within and beyond the spheres of UNFPA traditional mandate areas linked to adolescents and youth, but there has been limited success in elevating these regional initiatives to a global level for leveraging investment and shared intraregional learning. UNFPA has also made some progress on demonstrating mitigating fragmentation, duplication and competition between agencies working on youth through its regional coordination platforms.

The following are regional examples of UNFPA leadership and collaboration:

- In West and Central Africa, UNFPA advocated for, and secured a focus on adolescent girls in the World Bank supported Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) project in Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The programme is implemented by national governments with partners including UNFPA to help increase women and adolescent girls’ empowerment and their access to quality education and reproductive, child and maternal health services.²²⁵
- In East and Southern Africa, the evaluation team found that UNFPA is strong on regional-level leadership and coordination. This is demonstrated by ESARO efforts in the initiation of a global United Nations Youth Working Group on SRHR and climate change which has had a significant impact since its establishment in 2021, including supporting the participation of youth²²⁶ to the United Nations Climate Change Convention Conference of Parties

225 Regional case study respondents and document review. <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P150080?lang=en>.

226 UNFPA supported YOUNGO by providing funding for scholarships to support participation of young people from the global south. UNFPA also provided funding for the Youth Pavilion and for the Conference of Youth.

in Glasgow, Scotland (COP26) and Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt (COP27). In addition, UNFPA and the International Labour Organization are the founding members of the global initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth. This initiative aims to scale up action and impact on youth employment under the 2030 Agenda.

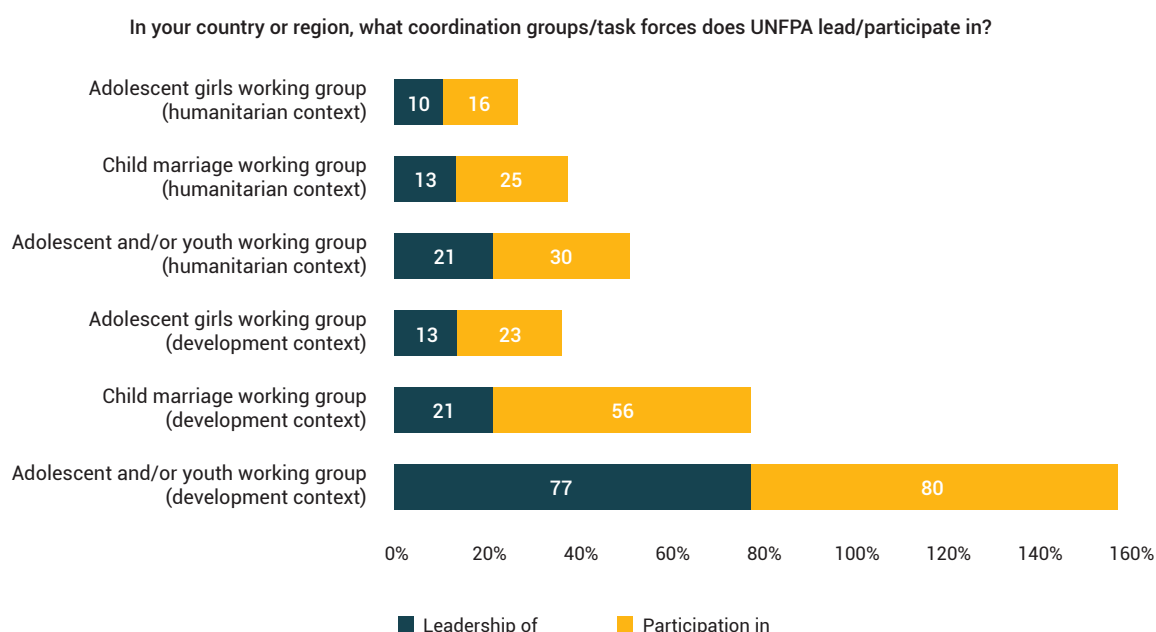
- In Asia and the Pacific, there are multiple regional coordination mechanisms within which UNFPA collaborates. For example, UNFPA APRO contributes to a number of regional working groups and inter-agency task teams, some of which are permanent coordinating platforms, and some of which were established as focused, activity-specific and time-bound mechanisms. In addition, the regional office has undertaken key partnerships with other regional actors to lead specific areas of work or research. One example is the joint CSE review conducted by UNFPA, UNESCO and the International Planned Parenthood Federation East, Southeast Asia and Oceania Region Office. In 2019, UNFPA along with these entities, collaborated on a regional review of the status of comprehensive sexuality education and the production of a report providing an overview analysis of CSE within the region.
- In the Arab States, UNFPA and the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Professional Inclusion in Tunisia launched a Centre of Excellence for Youth in the Arab Region in 2021. This followed the UNFPA-supported Youth Arab Forum in 2019. In 2021, UNFPA ASRO also coordinated with the Asian Population and Development Association and the Forum for Arab Parliamentarians for Population and Development to develop and publish an approach to the implementation of ICPD Plan of Action based on a clear lifecycle focus.

Country level leadership and collaboration

At the country level, the evaluation found that in most countries UNFPA is the leading United Nations agency for youth, playing an important role as inter-agency coordinator and yielding promising results in terms of joint programming. The case studies provided different insights on UNFPA coordination, namely on the opportunities to leverage United Nations response and bolster the United Nation Youth Strategy (Youth2030), but also on the challenges faced by UNFPA at the country level to push forward the adolescents and youth agenda within the United Nations common frameworks.

Survey responses show that UNFPA mainly leads in adolescent and youth working groups, especially in development contexts, with a much greater range of thematic groups within which UNFPA participates. This is supported across a number of case studies observed in this evaluation.²²⁷

FIGURE 4: Survey responses to UNFPA leading and participating in coordination groups at the country level



227 Brazil, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, Mozambique, Ukraine, The Philippines and Bangladesh country case studies.

Overall, the leading role of UNFPA in such platforms is praised by other United Nations agencies. Examples of coordinated activities include campaigns and consultations with youth, inputs to national policies and actions to respond to COVID-19 pandemic.²²⁸ More recently, such spaces have also been instrumental to roll out the Youth2030 scorecard,²²⁹ and in some countries, UNFPA has taken this opportunity to renew its leadership within the United Nations system.²³⁰ To a lesser extent, in countries where adolescent and youth inter-agency mechanisms have long been in place, they have facilitated United Nations entities to move beyond more one-off initiatives to the development of joint projects and programmes.²³¹ However, the evaluation also found cases where the establishment of an inter-agency mechanism did not avoid duplication of work nor lead to more effective coordination.²³²

Coordination on specific agendas

When it comes to specific agenda coordination, assessments of coordination on child marriage and CSE have been overall positive.²³³ Similarly, stakeholders acknowledge that United Nations agencies have complemented each other's efforts on YPS.²³⁴ Generally, coordination on GBV interventions are somewhat more coordinated due to differing agency mandates and thus comparative advantage. For example, UNICEF works in the child protection space, particularly at school, while UNFPA usually supports health system response. UN Women plays the coordinating role for GBV interventions given their positioning usually within ministries of gender in countries.²³⁵ In more traditional humanitarian contexts, coordination is well established across all sectors at the country level, and this is reflected in adolescents and youth work. However, in emerging crisis contexts where UNFPA humanitarian programming is more recent, coordination on adolescent and youth is mostly missing.²³⁶ Across countries and agendas, the evaluation found examples ranging from information-sharing and ad hoc activities to promising practices that points to the importance of joint programming to ensure consistent support to youth across various domains.²³⁷

Challenges to coordination

Still, several challenges were identified in this evaluation that hindered effective UNFPA coordination with other United Nations agencies as well as UNFPA positioning as the adolescent and youth leader within the United Nations system. These include structural challenges within the United Nations system, lack of institutional incentives (such as indicators or allocated budget for inter-agency work; transactional costs implied in coordination), and the perception of overlapping mandates among sister agencies.²³⁸

It is also still uncertain how adolescent and youth inter-agency coordination mechanisms will play out in the context of the new generation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and United Nations Country Team. Evidence from the case studies points to some instances where platforms were either discontinued under the new UNSDCF or downturned. Several stakeholders acknowledged that advancing the agenda for adolescents and youth will depend on how high it is placed within the UNSDCF and United Nations Country Team.²³⁹ In that regard, at the country level, UNFPA's role during the Common Country Assessment and UNSDCF development processes is key to ensure that country offices lead the agenda for adolescents and youth within the One-UN/UN reform frame.²⁴⁰ A strong contribution from UNFPA is expected in order to ensure those frameworks both reflect adolescents and youth in a cross-cutting manner and provide a comprehensive approach for this area of work.

228 Mexico, Brazil, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan, The Philippines country case studies.

229 Mexico and Kyrgyzstan country case studies.

230 Brazil and Colombia country case studies.

231 Mexico, Brazil, Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, and The Philippines country case studies.

232 Country case studies.

233 Bangladesh, Jordan.

234 Kyrgyzstan.

235 Country case studies.

236 Brazil, Bangladesh, Colombia country case studies.

237 Benin, Mozambique, Ghana, Kyrgyzstan.

238 Mexico and Brazil country case studies.

239 Bangladesh, Jordan, Colombia, Brazil and Mexico country case studies.

240 Mexico and Brazil country case studies.

Beyond the United Nations system, UNFPA extensively engages with existing national youth structures, however, the results of such engagement are also uneven, and it is not clear to what extent the adolescents and youth agenda is being systematically and consistently pushed forward through this type of engagement. For example, UNFPA often invites and works closely with other youth-focused organizations at the country level that are engaged in SRHR or HIV activities such as South Africa AIDS Dissemination Service (SAFAIDS) in South Africa, but it is unclear to what degree these relationships translate into pushing a broader youth agenda with government partners. The translation of the relationship with NGOs to broader level advocacy is often topic-specific (HIV treatment access), rather than youth positioning or transformative.²⁴¹

Finding 14: UNFPA has broadened its partnerships both at the regional and country levels, engaging a wider network of non-traditional partners, such as the private sector and research institutions. While UNFPA has strong links to youth organizations, in particular those advocating for SRHR, it has missed an opportunity to expand its reach by establishing partnerships with large-scale youth-serving organizations and networks with global reach.

UNFPA traditional partners

UNFPA, like other United Nations agencies, has long-standing traditional partners for policy work, implementation and research (data generation) at all levels. UNFPA partners with regional and national political and economic structures such as the Southern African Development Community, and the African Union in sub-Saharan Africa, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pan-American Health Organization, and the Ibero-American Foundation in Latin America. At the country level, the main partner of UNFPA is generally the government ministry counterparts of their programmatic areas, and when engaged in direct implementation, UNFPA also relies on its network of implementing partners. However, those must meet specific criteria to be eligible, limiting new or young organizations, and youth-led organizations or movements that are not fully registered, from qualifying. As a result, the bulk of collaboration remains largely with traditional or historic partners, which often have a more circumscribed scope for engaging with and for young people.²⁴²

Broadening partnerships at the regional and country level

Evidence from case studies reveals that harnessing complementarities among different types of partnerships is a promising approach to tackle the challenge of UNFPA alone effectively addressing all dimensions of *My Body, My Life, My World*. It also points to the importance of UNFPA investing in its catalyst role and fostering broader networks of partners beyond its traditional partners, including private sector, universities, media and other United Nations entities beyond UNFPA sister agencies.

At the regional level, UNFPA has broadened its partnerships to advance work outside core UNFPA mandate areas. For instance, the UNFPA regional office in East and Southern Africa has developed guidance with the World Bank and the International Labour Organization among other partners to integrate economic empowerment interventions into SRHR programming. Such collaboration offers an example of strategic partnerships to advance youth economic empowerment programming by UNFPA.

At the country level, there are good examples of how country offices advanced adolescents and youth programming with innovative partnerships for funding and technical support, such as with the private sector. UNFPA Mexico demonstrates how their diversified partnerships among the private sector helped to advance their adolescent and youth initiatives. UNFPA Mexico leveraged private sector partnerships to advance the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth in non-conventional ways (e.g. in partnership with Bank Azteca, UNFPA disseminated teenage pregnancy messages through their cards and with signs in their branches; with MTV (Mexican public television) and the Cisneros Foundation UNFPA developed 14 video capsules with rock bands to spread messages to prevent adolescent pregnancy and STIs and promote life projects). Similarly, in Ukraine, UNFPA, in partnership with private sector actors (e.g. Lifecell, Reinkartz, AlfaBank), academia and young people established "Pact4Youth", a platform for career development offering career

²⁴¹ Regional respondents.

²⁴² Global respondents.

services to young people (curriculum vitae drafting, interview preparation), while working with companies to facilitate more youth-friendly work environments and job opportunities for young people. Moreover, within the Pact4Youth Forum young people were actively engaged in preparing recommendations to the national and local governments for the improvement of youth opportunities and well-being. During COVID-19, for example, UNFPA expanded into more innovative partnerships that contributed with financial and technical resources and made available expertise complementary to the UNFPA mandate. In Colombia, UNFPA partnered with a private university offering summer-school classes to leverage this resource for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by offering extra schooling for kids from poor neighbourhoods in Medellin. UNFPA facilitated the opportunity for these communities of young people without any financial contribution, building on the offer made available by the university partner.

Partnering with youth-led organizations and networks

A key pillar of *My Body, My Life, My World* is young people's engagement and meaningful participation, specifically through youth-led and youth-serving organizations. In many countries, this involves UNFPA partnering with youth networks such as the African Youth and Adolescents Network (AfriYAN) and Y-Peer, among others, to do advocacy and outreach on ASRRH related topics through their networks. In some countries, UNFPA extended support to youth-led networks through capacity building.²⁴³ Rarely, however, are youth-led partner organizations or networks given significant support as an implementing partner beyond small advocacy assignments. This is largely related to institutional administrative and financial regulations on the requirements of an implementing partner to receive funding that many smaller youth-led organizations cannot fulfil. Some countries are trying to find ways to overcome this challenge. In Brazil, UNFPA launched calls for proposals and provided direct support through unilateral agreements aiming at strengthening civil society, including youth-led organizations, supporting them with financial contribution and training (*Nas Trilhas do Cairo* initiative).

Currently, corporate bureaucratic procedures circumscribe the ways in which UNFPA can partner with youth organizations and movements, limiting flexibility and therefore efficient partnership modalities. It is worth highlighting that directly funding youth-led organizations is one of the key performance indicators of the United Nations Youth2030 Scorecard which UNFPA has not reached. This is a challenge already noted in the previous evaluation²⁴⁴ that hinders UNFPA capacity to partner not only with youth-led organizations, but also with existing actors in the adolescent and youth space that could expand their programme capacity and reach.

In particular, UNFPA does not have established global or regional partnerships with the "Big 6" youth organizations²⁴⁵ that have a reach of 250 million youth in their own networks. While UNFPA has developed its own networks, the reach is not as extensive as it could be by leveraging the already existing networks of well-connected youth alliances such as the Big 6. It is worth noting that other United Nations agencies, including UNICEF, the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), World Health Organization, UNDP, the United Nations Secretary-General's office all have memorandums of understanding with the Big 6. Notably, the "Global Youth Mobilization" initiative was created to address youth challenges during COVID-19 in part, through small grants, countering the challenge many United Nations organizations have to fund small youth-led organizations. It is a joint mechanism to facilitate grant-making to new civil society organizations in countries and regions.²⁴⁶ Such a mechanism is an example of how expanded partnerships could contribute to UNFPA reaching out to and supporting youth-led organizations, since it minimizes the risks that limits youth-led organizations capacity to receive funding from UNFPA and other United Nations organizations.²⁴⁷

243 Global and regional respondents.

244 Evaluation of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth 2008-2015.

245 Formed in 1996, the Big 6 Youth Organizations are an alliance of leading international youth-serving organizations: World Organization of the Scout Movement (WOSM), Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), World Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and a leading programme for youth development, The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (The Award). <https://bigsix.org/>.

246 <https://globalyouthmobilization.org/about/>.

247 Global and regional respondents.

South-South cooperation

There are also several examples of how UNFPA-brokered South-South cooperation can be further explored to address dimensions of *My Body, My Life, My World*. This is particularly relevant given that one of the recommendations put forward by the 2020 evaluation on UNFPA approach to South-South cooperation was for UNFPA to further clarify the potential opportunities of South-South cooperation in all of its thematic areas of intervention, including in the area of youth.²⁴⁸

Examples of positive results in South-South cooperation include:

- **Government-to-government exchanges:** Such exchanges can be beneficial in addressing the three transformative results while fostering the engagement of young people. A good example of this is the partnership between the Philippines and Indonesia around SRH and family planning which aimed at strengthening the capacities of religious leaders, government officials and young people.
- **Regional programmes aimed at ASRHR:** Regional initiatives such as the Safeguard Young People in Southern Africa, that aim at scaling up comprehensive interventions for adolescents and young people through a multisectoral approach, touching on policy, integrated HIV and youth-responsive sexual and reproductive health services, CSE for in- and out-of-school youth as well as youth empowerment.
- **Youth-to-youth exchanges:** Such exchanges are relevant in linking global south actors and fostering knowledge and experience sharing among young people. Some good examples include the Youth Camp in LACRO and the China-Africa Youth forums, brokered by country offices in China and Ghana and supported by the Chinese private sector.

3.8 EFFICIENCY

Evaluation question 8: To what extent has UNFPA allocated adequate financial, human, technical and other resources to achieve the results as articulated within the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth *My Body, My Life, My World*?²⁴⁹

Finding 15: There is limited clarity on total investment of UNFPA in support to adolescents and youth owing to its diverse funding base and limitations to fully track these investments. While there is a sense that *My Body, My Life, My World* has helped to galvanize funding for adolescents and youth support against a coherent framework²⁵⁰ the prioritization of financial and human resources in the area of adolescents and youth varies significantly across regional and country offices.

In general, respondents to this evaluation consider UNFPA to be an agency that achieves effective results relative to investment. At the same time, some respondents perceive that the prioritization of adolescents and youth within UNFPA, and the ambition of UNFPA to be the lead agency in this area as articulated within *My Body, My Life, My World* could be better matched by adequate investment at all levels. This evaluation, however, faced limitations in investigating these perceptions further and undertaking an in-depth financial analysis of UNFPA investments in the adolescent and youth portfolio as there are significant challenges to quantifying the financial resources allocated to adolescent and youth programming across the organization. In particular, the financial analysis was hindered by limitations in the UNFPA financial tracking system to fully capture adolescent and youth expenditures and the fact that *My Body, My Life, My World* is funded in different ways, both in targeted (specific outputs, global programmes) and mainstreamed (across outputs) funds, and there is no centralized funding stream (i.e. dedicated thematic fund).

248 UNFPA. *Formative evaluation of UNFPA approach to South-South and Triangular Cooperation*. 2020. Available at: <https://www.unfpa.org/formative-evaluation-unfpa-approach-south-south-and-triangular-cooperation>.

249 Assumptions: 8.1 UNFPA allocated sufficient financial resources to adolescents and youth programming at the global, regional, and country levels 8.2 UNFPA allocated sufficient human resources to adolescents and youth programming at the global, regional, and country levels 8.3 UNFPA allocated sufficient technical resources to adolescents and youth programming at the global, regional, and country levels 8.4 How is UNFPA measuring additional support (i.e. to political capital) to adolescents and youth? What could be improved?

250 Global respondents.

Tracking funds for adolescents and youth

At UNFPA, the Global Programming System (GPS) is a financial tracking module used to track progress in advancing outputs and outcomes of the UNFPA Strategic Plan. GPS can tag expenditure at the activity level (rather than project level), allowing for a more detailed analysis of budgets and expenditures than was previously possible. Even so, there are limitations to the tool, particularly its inability to precisely determine the amount of expenditure in support of the thematic focus of work (financial and human resources), in this case, programming that supports adolescents and youth. In addition to this, there is no centralized thematic fund dedicated to the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth to mobilize or track its budget and expenditures within the system. UNFPA stakeholders confirm that there are gaps, in particular to the lack of monitoring mechanisms such as financial markers, to better understand the proportion of resources being invested in adolescents and youth programming, and its relation to programme results and impact. The evaluation also noted that having a marker to track funding for youth is one of the 18 mandatory key performance indicators proposed by the United Nations Youth2030 scorecard and, in 2021, half of the United Nations entities reporting to the scorecard still had not implemented such an instrument, including UNFPA.

At the global level, financial support for UNFPA programming for adolescents and youth comes from diverse sources, with a very small annual amount from funding for Sexual and Reproductive Health (from global and regional interventions). Funds are received from donors towards various UNFPA efforts in adolescent and youth programming, such as ending child marriage or promoting comprehensive sexuality education. Donors include the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), for example. Discretionary funds come from the Office of the Executive Director.

At the regional and country level, the financial support for adolescents and youth is less clear. GPS does have the capabilities of tracking expenditures by outputs and outcomes at these levels and this is helpful when (as in the previous strategic plans) there is a dedicated outcome or output for adolescents and youth. However, it should be noted that work for adolescents and youth is also mainstreamed across outcomes and outputs and these expenditures are less clear to capture.

In this view, the data presented below can be used to get a sense of investments being made, particularly at the regional and country levels. However, this does not account for the total investments across the organization. Taken together, these factors make it challenging to genuinely capture, not just the total investment in adolescents and youth at UNFPA, but also understand how much is actually needed to achieve the goals of Youth2030.

Resources at the regional level

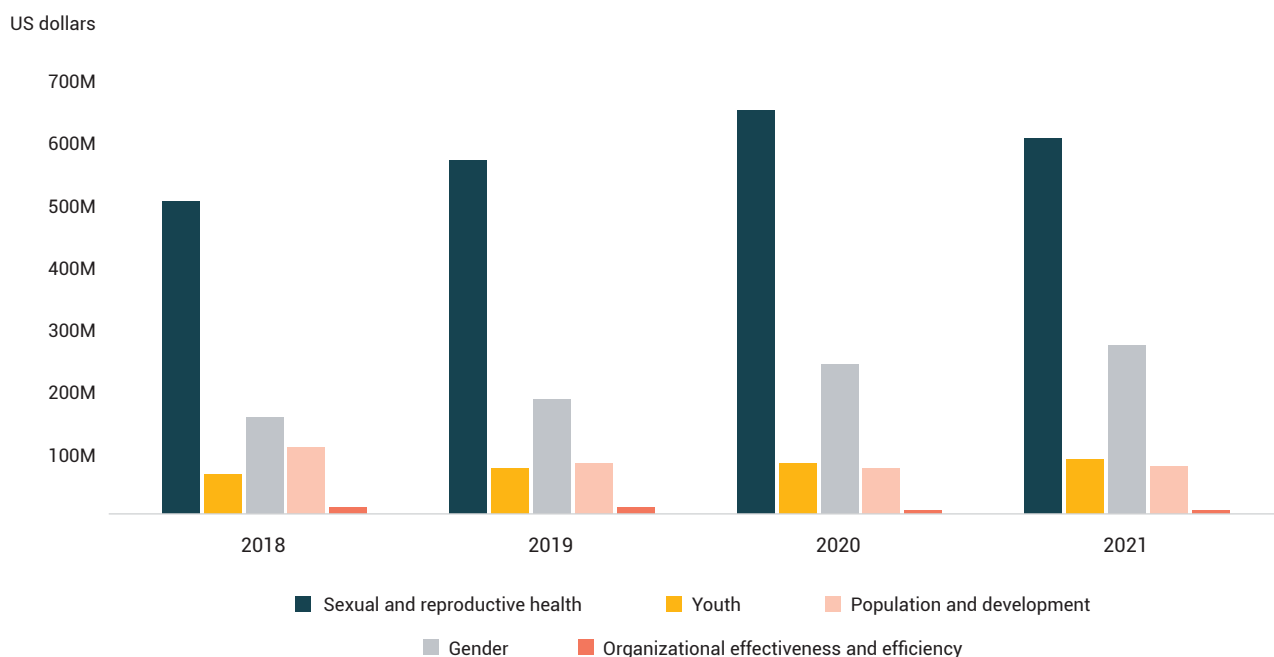
At the regional level there is a sense from respondents that the adolescents and youth pillar is invested in less than other pillars within the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 with most resources utilized coming from the regional programme budget, not from core resources.²⁵¹ Figure 5 presents the actual expenditures by outcome area across regional offices during this time period.²⁵² Compared to the outcome areas on SRH and gender, targeted investments towards adolescents and youth at the regional level are significantly less. While it is clear the investments allocated to gender, SRHR and population dynamics also benefit adolescents and youth, specific investment towards programming for adolescents and youth across all regions is considered insufficient to implement the strategy by respondents.

²⁵¹ Regional respondents.

²⁵² UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2022 - Outcome 2: Every adolescent and youth, in particular adolescent girls, is empowered to have access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, in all contexts.

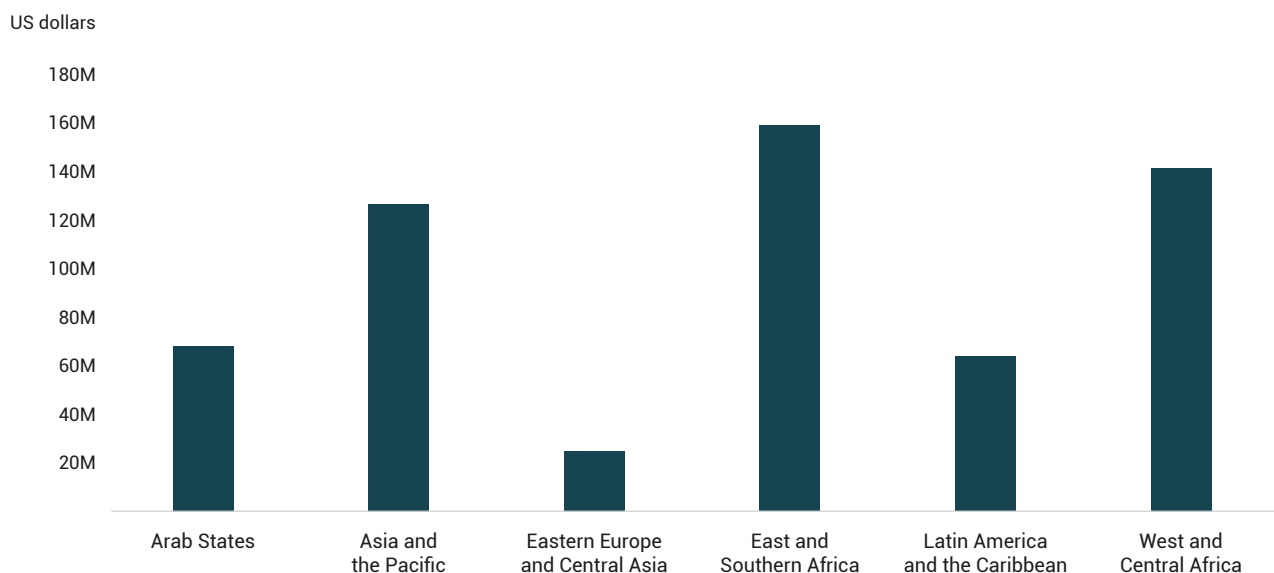
UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017 - Outcome 2: Increased priority on adolescents, especially on very young adolescent girls, in national development policies and programmes, particularly increased availability of comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health.

FIGURE 5: Total expenditure by outcome at regional level, 2018–2021



As seen in Figure 6, resources vary greatly across the regions. Some respondents noted there are very few funds dedicated solely to adolescents and youth for the regional offices and middle income countries. The disparity in funding hampers UNFPA ambitions to be the global lead United Nations agency for youth across all regions.

FIGURE 6: Total expenditure by region, 2014–2021²⁵³

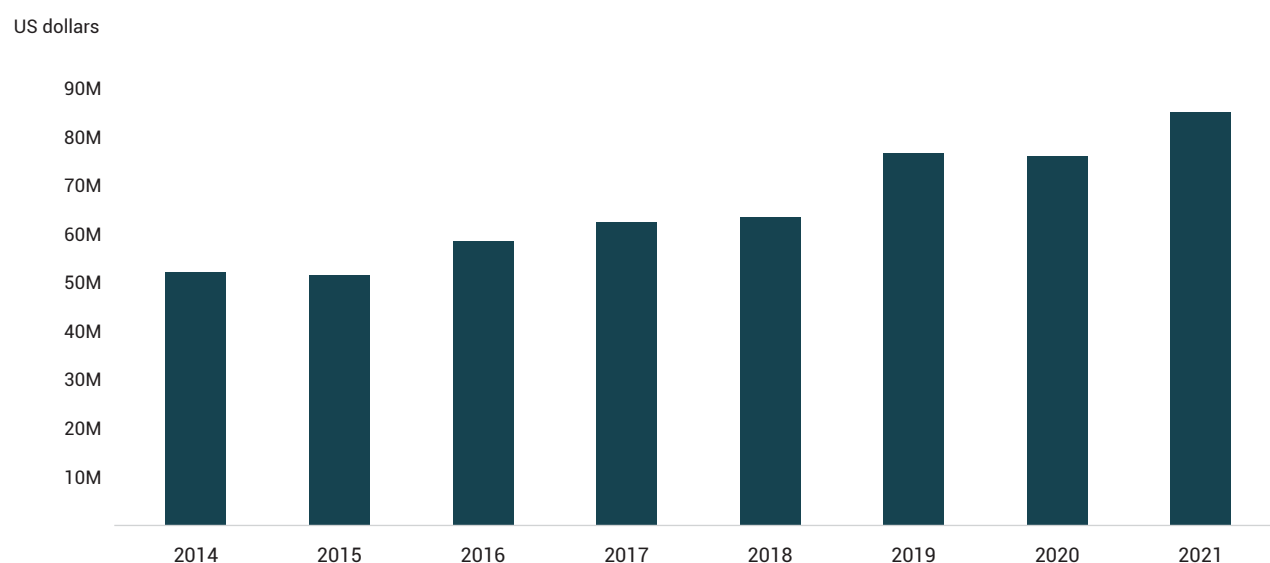


253 Total expenditure by Strategic Plan Outcome related to adolescents and youth.

Resources at the country level

At the country level, the majority of total expenditures on adolescents and youth fell under the respective targeted outcomes for adolescents and youth under the two previous strategic plans.²⁵⁴ Still, there is a significant amount that was mainstreamed under the other outcomes. Data was extracted on these specific outcomes, to understand the trends on targeted funds at the country level across the two strategic plans. Figure 7 presents an increasing trend year over year across the outputs dedicated to adolescents and youth. In the country case studies, this overall trend is reaffirmed by several country offices that reported an increase in their resource allocation for adolescents and youth from their previous Country Programme Documents.²⁵⁵ However, the overall increasing trend overshadows the country offices with sufficient funding but inadequate staffing as well as the number of country offices struggling to raise sufficient funds specifically for adolescent and youth interventions.

FIGURE 7: Expenditure on adolescents and youth outputs



In Mozambique, adolescents and youth programming is prioritized and sufficiently funded for programme implementation; however, stretched staffing and partner availability and capacities limit implementation achievements for the ever-expanding youth portfolio. New strategies for training have been implemented with the adolescents and youth focal point but given the demanding workload, many of the new young staff, once trained, leave UNFPA for higher opportunities at other organizations. While the Mozambique country office is financially expanding (e.g. US\$ 258 million allocated for humanitarian work in 2020 increased to US\$ 388 million in 2021), the use of funds for staffing (related to coordination versus implementation) remains severely constrained. In addition, staff contract modalities, inflexibility, long work hours and shortage of skilled people, coupled with government restrictions on hiring foreign nationals (further limited due to Portuguese language requirements) make qualified staff retention extremely difficult to manage.

In other countries, UNFPA offices experience both financial and staffing constraints in implementing their adolescent and youth interventions. Some UNFPA offices with small portfolios and budgets have less than US\$ 20,000 annually to work on adolescent and youth interventions.²⁵⁶ Under these conditions, country offices are forced to adapt the adolescent and youth portfolio by scaling back activities, prioritizing fewer regions and reducing human resources to work within budget constraints. It is also common for country offices to rely on other partners to supplement the funding gap. Where there is already limited staffing, country offices compensate by hiring short-term consultants to move the work

254 UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2022 - Outcome 2: Every adolescent and youth, in particular adolescent girls, is empowered to have access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, in all contexts.

UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017 - Outcome 2: Increased priority on adolescents, especially on very young adolescent girls, in national development policies and programmes, particularly increased availability of comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health.

255 Multiple country case studies: Brazil, Ghana, Mexico, Mozambique.

256 UNFPA Atlas data on GPS.

forward. While these adaptations have seemed to advance the work, the examples from country offices below point to a fundamental issue that needs to be addressed – adequate funding and staffing are critical to ensuring the effectiveness, sustainability and scalability of these adolescent and youth interventions.

For example, in the Philippines, UNFPA has very limited financial resources on adolescents and youth programming despite the priority given to this area in the Country Programme Document and strategic plan. The country office team reported the minimal amount of financial resources available to achieve the results indicated in the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth and programming in the Country Programme Document. While partners stated the resources were adequate, this meant reducing activities, targets and human resources to fit the budget provided to them by UNFPA and/or leaving the implementing partners to supplement the funding gap, which has been problematic for partners.²⁵⁷ While partners reported that the UNFPA adolescents and youth staff are readily available to provide technical assistance to partners, the limited number of people makes the provision of technical assistance challenging, particularly as Member States and youth groups need significant support. Respondents reported that UNFPA tends to hire short-term consultants given the funding gap, yet the youth portfolio is a longer-term priority and requires permanent staff of a higher grade, especially for policy work that requires specific skills of their staff and partners.²⁵⁸

In Niger, the limited availability of financial resources is a challenge to the scale up of activities.²⁵⁹ In the context of limited financial resources, UNFPA purposefully targets the regions that are most in need to maximize impact.²⁶⁰ UNFPA in Niger is supported by several donors and has attracted several sources of funding from regional adolescents and youth programmes, many of which constitute stable and long-term support. However, the country office team reported insufficient human resources to implement activities to scale in a context of huge needs. In response to this, the team is implementing a “synchronized (or transversal) approach” whereby each adolescent and youth staff member focuses on a particular group of stakeholders (girls, traditional leaders, decision makers, husbands, etc.) across all domains of programming. There is a pressing need for more technical staff.²⁶¹

Finding 16: UNFPA has a diverse range of staff dedicated to adolescents and youth work at global, regional and country levels. However, the current staffing numbers combined with the varied capacities of staff hamper delivery of the comprehensive programming envisioned in *My Body, My Life, My World* and ultimately, UNFPA efforts to advance the global adolescent and youth agenda.

Despite the priority of adolescent and youth programming to achieve the three transformative results of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, the organizational set-up does not support the scaled-up delivery of the adolescent and youth agenda.²⁶² UNFPA has put in place human resources at global, regional and country levels to implement adolescents and youth programming, but there are still challenges and gaps in the institutionalization, structure and coordination of teams as well as staff capacities to adequately cover this area of support.

Human resources at the global level

At the global level, a dedicated eight-person adolescents and youth team was created in 2017 within the Sexual and Reproductive Health Branch in Technical Division. The adolescent and youth team covers all areas of *My Body, My Life, My World* including SRH, gender, youth participation, youth, peace and security and humanitarian action, thus supporting implementation in a holistic way in areas not limited to SRH. The establishment of this adolescent and youth team has strengthened the work on adolescents and youth across the different support areas providing a more comprehensive approach with more synergies, linkages and cross-fertilization.²⁶³ The team is led by a team leader at P4 level and composed of two staff at the P4 professional grade, three at the P3 level and two at the P2 level. There is no senior staff at the P5 level in the team as opposed to teams in other thematic areas in Technical Division such as gender and human

257 The Philippines partner respondents.

258 Ibid.

259 Niger UNFPA respondents.

260 Niger case study respondents.

261 Ibid.

262 Human resources and interviews.

263 Interviews at all levels.

rights, population and development and sexual and reproductive health. Even though there is strong coordination within the adolescent and youth team, the accountability and supervisory lines are unclear; only one team member reports to the team leader while the other members report directly to the chief of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Branch or other team members.²⁶⁴ Positioning of the adolescent and youth team within the organization is important both in terms of functionality and efficiency, but also politically in terms of influencing and leveraging this area.

In humanitarian settings, the adolescent and youth institutional set-up is also not sufficient to support effective delivery. Within the Humanitarian Response Division, there is no staff position or focal point to support and integrate adolescent and youth interventions across humanitarian programming, particularly in cases of emergencies. Furthermore, while there is an adolescents and youth expert profile within the Global Emergency Surge roster, the roster is inactive and there is insufficient expertise or training efforts to create adolescent and youth capacities for staff to provide support within the humanitarian response teams.

Human resources at the regional level

At the regional level, organization and staffing in the adolescent and youth area varies substantially between regions, with regional offices having between one and three full-time staff working on adolescents and youth at different levels. APRO and ASRO have one P5 level advisor in charge of adolescents and youth while ESARO has a team of three staff working in this area. In LACRO, adolescents and youth work is covered by a P5 level advisor in charge of the area of LNOB with an International United Nations Volunteer as the focal point for adolescent and youth support. WCARO has two staff working on adolescent and youth, a P4 and a P3 working on youth, peace and security while EECARO has an officer at the programme specialist level.²⁶⁵ There is a perception that adolescent and youth staff allocation was inadequate and not commensurate to the institutional priority given to adolescents and youth. Multiple respondents across UNFPA regional offices highlight the need for more staff (with longer-term contracts) working on the adolescent and youth portfolios.²⁶⁶ Various regional respondents also reported that the lack of more senior staffing positions (i.e. P5) and the lack of more than one regional position allocated to the adolescent and youth portfolio, jeopardizes the leadership position UNFPA has tried to attain in this space. In some cases, adolescents and youth is the only mandate area where UNFPA does not have a regional P5 position.²⁶⁷

Human resources at the country level

At the country level, almost all offices have adolescent and youth officers or focal points appointed. Nevertheless, it is rare for those officers to be exclusively dedicated to adolescent and youth, as they often accumulate responsibilities for other portfolios. Across case studies, adolescents and youth staffing vary considerably. UNFPA country offices such as Benin, Brazil, Colombia and Mexico have large adolescents and youth teams of four to five staff while other country offices such as Niger and Kyrgyzstan have only one person working on the adolescent and youth portfolio.²⁶⁸ The evaluation also noted that the majority of adolescent and youth officers and focal points are under temporary service contracts while some are Junior Professional Officers, United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) or junior intern/volunteer positions.

At all levels of the organization, in terms of position title of all UNFPA staff, only 2 per cent contain the words “adolescents”, “youth” or “young” in their title while most staff and non-staff working on adolescents and youth have other titles and cover more than one area of support. This shows low visibility and prioritization of staff working on adolescents and youth which is an important area of support for the organization.

As an example, UNFPA Colombia has a large youth team but with only one staff position; all other team members are consultants and interns.²⁶⁹ This has implications for the consistency of implementation and influencing the policy agenda since junior staff or those with temporary contracts often do not have the institutional gravitas to push the agenda forward. In these cases, there are also challenges with turnover and retention of skilled staff – many of whom

264 Division of Human Resources and interviews.

265 Division of Human Resources data.

266 Multiple regional respondents.

267 Ibid.

268 Colombia, Benin, Brazil, Mexico, Niger, and Kyrgyzstan country case studies.

269 Colombia country case study.

leave UNFPA for better contractual conditions after developing their capacities at UNFPA. This limits the development of strong internal technical adolescent and youth expertise. For those with fixed-term contracts, most staff are covering other areas such as SRH or gender in addition to adolescent and youth. Even in Mozambique with its well-financed youth portfolio of projects, adolescent and youth staff are project positions, with predominantly one-year contracts.²⁷⁰

Gaps in staff capacity

There is strong expertise at global and regional level to implement *My Body, My Life, My World* and to lead in all the areas of adolescent and youth support. Staff capacities at the country level varies – where some staff are very strong at youth policy, programming and building intellectual property capacity, others are not as experienced, thus making their contribution to the work of the office less optimal. The gaps in staff capacities poses a real risk to the delivery of *My Body, My Life, My World* at the country level. This is both in terms of the effectiveness and quality of implementation. The evaluation also found gaps in terms of staff capacity to integrate adolescent and youth support in humanitarian settings and deliver on the YPS agenda. Some countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and regional offices such as WCARO and ASRO have a YPS officer dedicated to support YPS interventions.

Finding 17: While UNFPA has made efforts in creating space for young people to participate and contribute within the organization, there are still opportunities to further institutionalize and increase pathways for youth inclusion and leadership in order for UNFPA to attract, nurture and retain a younger workforce, and leverage and empower its young talent.

Attracting and managing young talent in United Nations organizations is emphasized in the UNFPA Strategic Plan and more broadly in Youth2030 and the Secretary-General's Our Common Agenda.²⁷¹ The Youth2030 Scorecard²⁷² for United Nations Country Teams contains one indicator related to increasing the share of youth workforce (35 years or younger) and calls for all agencies to report annually on their youth workforce (proportion, age, gender disaggregation) and gaps in acquisition, retention and management of young talent. The UNFPA Strategic Plan monitors young people's engagement by including a dedicated indicator under organizational effectiveness and efficiency.²⁷³

Young professionals at UNFPA

Of the total staff and non-staff at UNFPA, which includes fixed-term appointments, temporary appointments, JPOs, UNVs and service contracts, only 16.4 per cent are under 35 years of age at all levels of the organization. This number does not include young consultants, interns (137 across all levels) and young innovator fellows (18 at regional and country office level). In the past years there has been a decrease in young staff at UNFPA, particularly those below 30 and between 30–40 years old, with more than half of all staff being 43 years and older, a trend that poses a challenge to the commitment to the Youth2030 agenda.²⁷⁴ Approximately 60 per cent of people under 35 do not have staff contracts, which creates instability in the roles and affects the continued participation and contribution of those young professionals to the organization. Of those who do have contracts, the largest percentage are under fixed-term appointment contracts (36 per cent), followed by service contracts at regional and country office levels (32 per cent), UNV contracts (27 per cent) and temporary appointment contracts (4.5 per cent). In terms of position level of staff under 35, only 12 per cent are at the professional level (P2, P3, P4) with the majority at the P2 level (with no P1 posts), particularly at country office and headquarters levels. Approximately 11 per cent of staff under 35 work at the national officer level while 18 per cent work as general support staff.²⁷⁵

270 Mozambique country case study.

271 United Nations Office of the Secretary-General. *Our Common Agenda: Report of the Secretary-General*. 2021. Available at: www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf.

272 The Youth2030 Scorecard is a tool for strategic planning, performance measurement, and accountability for United Nations Country Teams.

273 2022-2025 Strategic Plan OEE 1.7 UNFPA meets the green rating for Youth 2030 performance on meaningful youth engagement in the past year, as set out in the Youth 2030 Scorecard (QCPR5): (a) Policies and processes for meaningful youth engagement (b) Diversity of youth (groups) engaged (c) Meaningful youth engagement in strategic plan processes (d) Meaningful youth engagement in support of Governments or intergovernmental processes (e) Meaningful youth engagement in United Nations-led programmes, projects and campaigns.

274 Human resources data.

275 Human resources data 2022.

Initiatives to support young professionals

Some successful initiatives have increased the participation and contribution of young people in the organization. One example is “Tangerine”, an informal global network of 400+ young professionals under the age of 35 working at UNFPA at all levels. This network, which was started by young professionals working at UNFPA in 2018 with the allyship of the Executive Director and Senior Management, was the first of its kind in the United Nations system,²⁷⁶ providing young people a dedicated space for discussion, collaboration, innovation, learning and contributing towards achieving the UNFPA mandate. The profile of this network is varied. Approximately 69 per cent of Tangerines are women and 30 per cent are men, while 20 per cent work at headquarters and 80 per cent work at regional and country office levels. Members are under different types of contracts including service contract (25 per cent), consultant (23 per cent), UNV (14 per cent), intern (11 per cent), JPO (9 per cent), general service (7 per cent), and professional fixed-term (7 per cent), with the highest percentage on Tangerines under service and consultant contracts and the lowest under professional fixed-term.

Tangerines have substantially contributed to several policy and programming processes across the organization, including development of the UNFPA strategic plans, the development of the Young People Strategy²⁷⁷ in coordination with Human Resources Division, the development of “Walk the Talk” training on multigenerational leadership in partnership with Technical Division and the Division for Human Resources, innovation and change management initiatives, and the newly adopted scenario planning approach. Members of the network actively participated in the ICPD25 Summit and coordinated a think tank that contributed ideas to the Summit. Tangerines have also participated and substantially contributed to centralized evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office including the Evaluation of the Innovation Fund and the Developmental Evaluation of Results-based Management, among others.²⁷⁸

Alongside the Tangerines, UNFPA has a paid internship programme to support under- and postgraduate students from diverse regions and academic backgrounds.²⁷⁹ In 2021, UNFPA also launched the Young Professionals from Africa and of African Descent programme, which is open to those who are of African descent, younger than 32, to gain work experience at the P2 level within New York headquarters.²⁸⁰ Finally, another important initiative which provides the opportunity to bring the youth perspective and contribute to innovation efforts at UNFPA is the Young Innovators Fellowship Programme,²⁸¹ deployed to country or regional offices.²⁸²

Further, there are mechanisms at the field level (e.g. regional Tangerines) to ensure young people participate in internal decision-making processes, although there is also room for improvement here as evidenced by survey results and interviews.²⁸³ Among those offices who do have young staff, 56 per cent have mechanisms in place to include younger staff in planning and implementation of interventions but less so in strategic decision-making processes. In many cases, however, the space for contribution and inclusion of young people in decision-making and co-leadership is determined by the environment created by individual managers, rather than institutionalized as an intentional corporate approach towards investing in the next generation of leadership and talent on the UNFPA mandate. The evaluation found that young people at UNFPA face various challenges, including limited induction for new staff and non-staff, career growth, learning and development opportunities as well as contractual insecurity.²⁸⁴ In this view, there are opportunities for UNFPA to further institutionalize, strengthen and leverage young professionals’ inclusion internally and foster multigenerational leadership.

276 UNFPA. *My Body, My Life, My World: Rights and choices for all adolescents and youth: a UNFPA global Strategy*. 2019. Available at: www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/FinalVersion-Strategy-Web.pdf.

277 Human resources focused strategy.

278 Interviews and documentary review.

279 UNFPA. *Internship Policy (2020)*. Frequently Asked Questions. 2020.

280 <https://www.unfpa.org/YPAD>.

281 The programme is targeted to young people aged 18-26.

282 Human resources and Innovation Unit.

283 Ibid.

284 Interviews and survey to young people at UNFPA.



© UNFPA/Siegfried Moldova.

Youth socialize in a UNFPA Orange Safe Space of a refugee shelter in Chisinau, Moldova.

4

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. The UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth is relevant to UNFPA programming and articulates changes that are needed to fully realize the three transformative results. The integrated and multisectoral nature of the Strategy has the potential to fundamentally change the way UNFPA addresses adolescent and youth issues but it has yet to be fully operationalized.

Links to findings: 1, 2, 4, 6, 13, 14, 15, 16

The Strategy provides an excellent framing of the intersectional needs of adolescent and youth, showcasing UNFPA strengths and its comparative advantage in all three of the Strategy's dimensions (body, life, world). It aligns well with the organization's past and present strategic plans by embracing a life-course approach, placing adolescents and youth at the centre of development and humanitarian programming, and prioritizing the poorest, the most vulnerable and those left furthest behind. The Strategy reinforces the UNFPA change story and demonstrates how the realization of youth rights is needed to fully realize the three transformative results and, more broadly, the ICPD and the SDGs.

Through the three dimensions of the Strategy, UNFPA is able to develop multisectoral programming, leveraging its comparative advantage and exploring new pathways for UNFPA support, integrated in a systematic effort to fulfil its commitments to young people. However, the integrated and multisectoral vision of the Strategy has yet to be fully operationalized. While the adolescent and youth team participates in cross-thematic discussions and strategic thinking of thematic areas, such as SRHR, gender, and population and development, at headquarters and regional offices, the collaboration between the adolescent and youth team and other thematic teams has the potential to be expanded and rendered more systematic under the umbrella of the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth.

Similarly, UNFPA technical programmes mainstream adolescent and youth interventions within their implementation strategies but they could do more in providing explicit and comprehensive focus to the targeting of interventions at adolescent girls and young women, especially in cases where the outcomes to be achieved are directly linked to young people (e.g. reducing early and unintended pregnancy). Collaboration between technical teams are often based on personal working relationships among staff rather than as part of a strategic and institutionalized approach.

Conclusion 2. UNFPA support to adolescents and youth has positively contributed to each of the Strategy's dimensions (body, life, world), particularly in the areas where UNFPA has traditionally led. The Strategy also offers an opportunity to amplify support within UNFPA mandate areas by including youth economic empowerment or youth participation in climate action.

My Body

Links to findings: 4, 5, 6, 7

UNFPA has been a longstanding partner in the global efforts to support access to a wide range of high-quality adolescent SRHR services. For example, at the global level, UNFPA leads in several areas central to the “My Body” dimension of the Strategy, including the areas of adolescent sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights and delivering youth-responsive services. At the country level, UNFPA has helped to create enabling policy environments to advance adolescent and youth rights as well as build the capacity of national health institutions to become more youth-responsive and deliver high-quality adolescent sexual and reproductive health services. UNFPA has also contributed to reducing early and unintended pregnancy among young people through policy advocacy and technical assistance to ensure adolescents and youth have access to family planning information and services.

Some areas could be strengthened or expanded upon, including UNFPA work to enhance the uptake of services, menstrual health and self-care. While the organization's longer-term strategy is to make services more youth responsive, there are interim solutions that have yet to be leveraged. In particular, referrals and cross-linkages across services have yielded positive results in enhancing service uptake but have not been fully prioritized. Digital solutions and mobile clinics have also proven effective in improving service utilization, in both development and humanitarian contexts, but have not yet been fully embedded across interventions. Regarding menstrual health and self-care interventions, where efforts are evolving, UNFPA has the opportunity to strengthen its impact in both areas.

On HIV prevention and treatment, UNFPA has adapted its approach effectively, targeting and serving adolescents and youth as well as seeking to reach more marginalized and vulnerable groups, to ensure youth can access such services. UNFPA has also demonstrated its effectiveness and strong coordination between its programming on adolescent and youth and its thematic programming on gender, developing a multisectoral approach to gender-based violence prevention and response, as well as harmful practices such as female genital mutilation.

My Life

Links to findings: 1, 2, 7, 8, 14

UNFPA has shown important results and leadership in this area, including in in-school and out-of-school CSE, asset-building programmes for adolescent girls and addressing child marriage. UNFPA has long been seen as an effective and valued partner in CSE. UNFPA support at global and country levels to in-school CSE has been effective in providing a gender-sensitive CSE curriculum that aligns to international standards, adapts to the various contexts and, where possible, makes the link to service delivery. UNFPA has made significant strides in supporting the targeting of harder-to-reach groups in the out-of-school space through locally adapted interventions. In addition, the joint UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage clearly demonstrates the strength and advantage of multisectoral programming to contribute effectively and efficiently towards integrated and multisectoral positive youth outcomes and, ultimately, the three transformative results.

Amid such progress, there have also been challenges, including opposition to CSE, weaknesses of the education sector and the limits of out-of-school CSE scalability. In reaction to growing opposition to in-school CSE in some regions, pragmatic adaptations of CSE delivery were made so that the curricula, while not fully exhaustive of all topics, could still be delivered.

Scaling up out-of-school CSE interventions and embedding them in local or national structures remains a challenge, particularly in humanitarian contexts. Message-crafting and programmatic approaches that interweave out-of-school CSE, asset building, girls' empowerment and gender-based violence prevention, as well as including child marriage, could offer promising avenues. Other areas where further integration of gender-transformative approaches are needed include working with boys and young men on positive masculinities as well as with particularly marginalized groups and other youth populations left furthest behind.

There is a real opportunity to develop strategies to embed non-SRHR thematic work, such as mental health and psychosocial support as well as access to opportunities and economic empowerment, into UNFPA adolescent and youth programming,

particularly for adolescent girls. UNFPA has shown its effectiveness in expanding its adolescent and youth programming to respond to the linkages between SRHR and mental health and economic empowerment. This is particularly the case where mental health and psychosocial support became a more prominent focus in CSE during the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, UNFPA efforts in economic empowerment have leveraged its interventions in the areas of adolescent sexual and reproductive health, adolescent girls-centred programming and the demographic dividend. However, the lack of a clear corporate positioning on these emerging areas of work hinders the organization's ability to accelerate progress in these areas.

My World

Links to findings: 9, 10, 14, 16

UNFPA is recognized for being a leader in youth participation, including by creating enabling environments for youth participation, supporting young leaders in their national institutions as well as in international platforms such as the United Nations youth advisory panels, and investing in and strengthening the capacities of youth-led networks and movements. In addition, UNFPA has made strong efforts to adapt its approaches across regions and countries to enhance youth participation in a meaningful way.

However, the diverse adaptations of youth engagement across regional and country levels also pose some challenges. While UNFPA offices have adapted the “My World” dimension to their contexts with some success, it is not clear if their efforts respond to strategic and informed choices. Further, there is a risk that differing interpretations of what counts as meaningful youth participation will lead to inconsistencies. To this end, there could be more clarity on whether UNFPA considers youth participation a goal or a part of a process, or both. Finally, there is an opportunity for UNFPA to consolidate the lessons learned as well as good practices and promising approaches in youth engagement with the aim of establishing with a more coherent and strategic approach.

Conclusion 3. UNFPA has been responsive to humanitarian settings and emerging crises, including through strong and effective leadership in the development of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action. However, the roll-out of the Compact has only recently started to reach the country level. There are financial and capacity challenges to integrate adolescents and youth into the humanitarian response as well as limited assessments and data collections on the needs of youth to understand their vulnerabilities in humanitarian settings. Untapped avenues remain for UNFPA to expand its work around youth, peace and security; youth and climate resilience; and the humanitarian-development-peace continuum, in line with its mandate.

Links to findings: 5, 6

At the global level, UNFPA has demonstrated its strong commitment to supporting adolescents and youth in humanitarian settings through its leadership in the development of the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action – which includes Governments, United Nations entities, international and local non-governmental organizations, the private sector, major youth organizations and networks, its active role in adolescent and youth humanitarian cluster groups – and guidance on how to integrate adolescent and youth-responsive services in humanitarian response. However, at the country level, the roll-out of the Compact is still nascent. There are challenges in terms of funding and capacities as well as limited assessments and data collection on adolescents and youth in humanitarian contexts.

Across UNFPA offices, the integration of adolescents and youth into humanitarian response varies and is often dependent on the focus of UNFPA efforts in a country. In countries where humanitarian programming is the focus of its work, existing humanitarian interventions lend themselves to the integration of adolescent and youth aspects. However, in countries where the humanitarian response is not at the centre of UNFPA efforts, successful integration of adolescent and youth programming in humanitarian response has been mixed.

In some instances, youth, peace and security (YPS) initiatives are being rolled-out in a siloed manner and the linkages between YPS and the work with and for adolescents and youth in humanitarian settings remains fragile and unclear. Moreover, YPS is often framed as appropriate only for conflict-related settings, despite clear guidance from the Security Council resolutions on youth, peace and security. A more comprehensive understanding of YPS and how to integrate

adolescent and youth interventions across contexts, in line with the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025, could expand the organization's work in (and beyond) humanitarian settings or conflicts, with opportunities for linkages to its work on prevention.

While there are good examples of practical integration between UNFPA programming on development and humanitarian response programming, unexplored opportunities within YPS and youth and climate resilience remain.

Conclusion 4. The tenets of a human rights-based approach are evident in adolescent and youth programming, where it strongly emphasizes non-discrimination and participation measures. While this promotes the spirit of leaving no one behind, a deeper examination of underlying factors of discrimination, inequality, and exclusion would enable UNFPA to better target those left furthest behind first.

Links to findings: 3, 4, 5, 11, 12

In line with other UNFPA strategic frameworks, the Strategy embraces with a human rights-based approach and espouses the principles of “leaving no one behind”, gender equality and diversity. The human rights-based approach and the principles of leaving no one behind and gender equality are often well reflected across interventions of UNFPA support to adolescents and youth, primarily by adapting adolescent and youth interventions to local contexts and needs to address exclusion and support participation.

Reaching young people that are left furthest behind, however, is a resource-intensive task that requires strategic planning and design at the onset of projects. This is a particular challenge, given the limited resources available. Many country offices opt for maximizing programme reach versus the more resource-intensive task of purposefully targeting and reaching those most in need. These trade-offs risk UNFPA unintentionally leaving out the most marginalized adolescents and youth in its efforts.

Conclusion 5. UNFPA has assumed multiple leadership roles in the broader adolescents and youth agenda, becoming the de facto leading United Nations agency on youth. However, such leadership comes with costs as well as risks. Further institutional clarity is needed regarding which thematic areas UNFPA should lead on and which areas it should play a supporting role, and where it can leverage partnerships to galvanize additional funding and technical support.

Links to findings: 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17

At the global level, UNFPA has effectively taken on multiple leadership roles, filling a gap and becoming the de facto leading United Nations agency on youth, in both traditional (SRHR) and new areas of intervention (YPS, within its expertise). UNFPA has effectively contributed to the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth; the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action; the Global Coalition on YPS; and in areas of the Strategy, such as sexual and reproductive health, CSE, female genital mutilation, child marriage and meaningful youth participation. At the country level, however, UNFPA is at times stretched too thin to participate in and lead the adolescent and youth agenda across all thematic areas – particularly when the engagement extends beyond the focus of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 and the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth. In some regions, UNFPA has become the de facto leader in almost all United Nations agendas on adolescents and youth. This poses several risks to UNFPA, including the fragmentation of its specific contributions, diminishing its impact. To this end, UNFPA would benefit from more clarity on which thematic areas it should lead and in which areas it could engage in a supporting role.

Assuming a leadership role carries a high burden as it requires a certain level of human and financial investment. Often, UNFPA faces a trade-off between allocating more time and resources in building its leadership capacity and investing in the actual implementation of UNFPA adolescent and youth interventions. In countries with existing financial and staffing constraints, taking on a leadership role further exacerbates the fundamental challenge of working with limited resources, placing the effectiveness, sustainability and scalability of these adolescent and youth interventions at risk.

The innovative and diversified partnerships that UNFPA has established have proven strategic in addressing the challenge of limited resources as well as raising awareness and advocating for the agenda on adolescents and youth. However,

the UNFPA approach to partnerships, particularly innovative models to partnering (South-South cooperation and youth networks) has not been systematically applied across all contexts, leading to missed opportunities. Harnessing the complementarities among different types of partnerships as a strategic approach to addressing all dimensions of the Strategy has mostly been achieved through the initiative of individual country or regional offices; it has not yet been fully explored as an organization-wide approach.

Conclusion 6. Despite the clear case being made by UNFPA for investing in young people, there is limited measurement beyond the output level or the impact on individuals. In addition, there are opportunities for UNFPA to strengthen and leverage its population data and dynamics capabilities to enhance its policy advocacy for adolescent and youth, including through investment cases.

Links to findings: 9, 11

Overall, UNFPA has leveraged its population data component to inform adolescent and youth programming. To a lesser extent, UNFPA has also achieved results related to support governments in incorporating an adolescent and youth lens into national statistics and national reporting for the SDGs, even if this has been inconsistent across countries.

Although UNFPA is assessing its own youth interventions, this is mainly done at the output or individual level. Clear outcome and impact-level indicators are not in place, especially at societal levels. Currently, the analysis of population dynamics for adolescents and youth has mostly remained at the level of situational analysis; it is not accompanied by a strong body of evidence of the impact of the adolescent and youth programming contribution to the three transformative results or on causal linkages.

Not having a robust measurement framework poses a challenge to the UNFPA capability to provide strong data analytics and evidence to support its case for investing in youth and the resulting impacts and benefits to the whole of society.

Conclusion 7. The positioning of the adolescent and youth team within UNFPA, together with its limited staffing and capacities, pose challenges to the effective and efficient delivery of the adolescent and youth agenda.

Links to findings: 15, 16, 17

Even though UNFPA has allocated human resources to support adolescent and youth programming, challenges remain to effectively implementing its multisectoral Strategy and ensure the organization adequately leads and fulfils its mandate on adolescents and youth. The establishment of the adolescents and youth team has strengthened the organization's work on adolescents and youth across the different support areas, but challenges remain in terms of staffing, functional levels, supervisory lines and job descriptions.

In addition, the organizational setup and positioning of the adolescents and youth team within one of the branches of the Technical Division does not support multisectoral programming of all dimensions of the Strategy, including sexual and reproductive health, gender, youth participation, data on youth, humanitarian action, and youth, peace and security. Better positioning of the adolescents and youth team within UNFPA is important both in terms of functionality and efficiency.

The institutional setup for support to adolescents and youth in humanitarian settings is inadequate to ensure its effective delivery, which poses a potential risk in its growing portfolio of work in humanitarian response. At present, there is no dedicated adolescents and youth position in the Humanitarian Response Division; and beyond this, staff across business units are limited in their skills and capacities to integrate adolescent and youth interventions in humanitarian and emergency settings. At the country level, in most offices, there is a low visibility and prioritization of staff working on adolescents and youth, evidenced by the insufficient number of dedicated adolescents and youth staff as well as the more junior professional levels and temporary contractual arrangements for such staff.

These challenges, together with a high turnover and difficulty of retention of skilled staff, as well as limitations in existing staff skills and capacities to undertake adolescent and youth programming, continue to hinder UNFPA ability to not only implement its Strategy holistically and effectively, but also influence the adolescents and youth agenda in the global arena.

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Two friends residing in the AlSekka refugee camp in Idlib, Syria, look through the contents of their dignity kits.



5

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are linked to the evaluation's findings and conclusions and take into account consultations held with the Evaluation Reference Group as well as senior management.

Recommendation 1: Enhance the operationalization of the integrated and multisectoral nature of the strategy by ensuring the efficient roll-out, implementation and use of its operational guidance and by expanding corporate learning, experience sharing and cross-fertilization.

Priority: High

Directed to: Technical Division, Policy and Strategy Division

Linked to conclusions: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

To operationalize the integrated and multisectoral nature of the Strategy and strengthen internal capacities, UNFPA should invest in the roll-out of its operational guidance. The roll-out should consider strategies beyond the availability of online courses, such as relational strategies to foster in-depth experience sharing and cross-fertilization across regions and countries. This could include closer work between headquarters and regional offices to support country offices, with headquarters backstopping regional offices in contextualizing and disseminating the guidance. Cross-regional experience sharing should also be considered. While the evaluation recognizes UNFPA efforts in developing the operational guidance for the Strategy, it also identifies emerging areas that should be considered for enhancing the existing guidance or for providing additional guidance.

Potential actions to be taken

- Enhance the visibility and communication of the Strategy by incorporating how it should be rolled out in the various country contexts (e.g. low- or middle-income country status, protracted conflict, humanitarian crisis, among others.), including with examples of how enhanced communication can benefit programming. Promote the United Nations Youth Strategy (Youth2030) and articulate linkages between Youth2030 and the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth, so that UNFPA can become a leader for Youth2030
- Enhance the existing "My World" module by including a clear proposition for contributing to the long-term transformative goal of "My World" and providing a clear articulation of the UNFPA understanding of meaningful youth participation for both internal and external audiences
- Build a knowledge bank of good practices and lessons learned of the integrated, multisectoral approaches across the three dimensions of the Strategy (body, life, world) and demonstrate the conceptual linkages laid out in the Strategy through concrete examples.

Recommendation 2: Further enhance each of the three dimensions of the Strategy based on the evidence provided in this evaluation.

Priority: High

Directed to: Technical Division, regional and country offices, in cooperation with the Policy and Strategy Division

Linked to conclusions: 1, 2, 3, 4

Recommendation 2a: “My Body”: Revitalize efforts to support the delivery of youth-responsive SRHR and HIV services that are appropriate, accessible and adequate for young people.

Central to achieving the three transformative results is ensuring adolescents and youth have access to and utilize youth-responsive high-quality SRHR services. ‘My Body’ interventions are the cornerstone of the strategy; however, delivering evidence-based high-quality services that are youth-responsive continue to be a challenge. Innovative approaches to reducing barriers to access to care tested during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated new adaptive approaches to delivering for youth where they are needed the most. Where services were available, low uptake was observed, largely due to barriers to access, including a lack of confidentiality and anonymity, and prohibitive cost.

Potential actions to be taken

- Ensure country offices prioritize the delivery of youth-responsive services in the context of universal health care by assessing the effectiveness (including quality and use) of current strategies, such as stand-alone youth-friendly health services
- Reach the most vulnerable young people and those furthest left behind through innovative and targeted approaches, including by building on outreach efforts of mobile clinics and pharmacies, hotlines, peer approaches and community-based distribution networks (for condoms, HIV home-tests or other self-care measures)
- Reduce barriers to accessing and use of services that young people want, in ways that are appropriate for them. This may require working with ministries of health to ensure health care policies do not exclude adolescents and youth from accessing SRHR services, including due to financial barriers, and may also require financial investment or leveraging by UNFPA to ensure reproductive health commodity security.

Recommendation 2b: “My Life”: Continue to support the adaptation of CSE to specific country and regional contexts to remain relevant to adolescent and youth stakeholders, including youths themselves, while maintaining a focus on international standards.

UNFPA has been a recognized leader in both in-school and out-of-school CSE. While the curricula have largely followed international standards, a number of new, urgent issues have emerged as critical for young people. There is sufficient evidence that CSE approaches are most effective and relevant when they not only provide CSE but also address the economic needs of young people as well as their social and emotional challenges related to substance abuse, mental health, peace and security, and climate change, among others. Building on best practices of holistic programming, UNFPA should advocate that a broader range of thematic issues are included in the curriculum, including youth economic empowerment, reflecting the intersectional needs of young people. To address weaknesses in the education sector (teacher capacity and ability and motivation to deliver CSE that are aligned with international standards), UNFPA should advocate for quality assurance mechanisms in education systems.

Potential actions to be taken

- Support the expansion and implementation of in-school and out-of-school CSE, ensuring that the curriculum includes critical issues, such as economic empowerment, mental health, menstrual health, self-care, peace and climate change, using both traditional and innovative digital approaches

- Build on UNFPA efforts in mental health and psychosocial support as it relates to its comparative advantage in adolescent sexual and reproductive health. This includes piloting initiatives addressing mental health that will complement existing UNFPA interventions, exploring opportunities to partner with other United Nations organizations, and ensuring the human capacity and expertise required to implement these activities are in place
- Build on UNFPA efforts in economic empowerment as it relates to comparative advantage in adolescent sexual and reproductive health and the demographic dividend. This includes piloting initiatives addressing economic empowerment that will complement existing interventions, including by partnering with other United Nations organizations, and ensuring the human capacity and expertise required to implement these activities are in place
- Strengthen the global corporate vision and strategy on adolescent girls-centred programming, emphasizing particularly bodily autonomy and adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights, agency and empowerment, financial and economic empowerment, and connecting them to opportunities and future employability.

Recommendation 2c: “My World”: Ensure a common, uniform understanding of meaningful participation of young people, and enhance synergies among the three dimensions of the Strategy.

The evaluation observed a lack of common understanding at the country office level of what meaningful participation of young people entails. The forthcoming operational guidance on youth leadership and participation will help to address this issue if the focal points on adolescents and youth are supported to utilize the guidance. Towards this end, the guidance should be disseminated across the organization, along with capacity building support. It should include adolescent and youth participation and youth movement building, not just around SRHR, but also more broadly in development, humanitarian and peace efforts, focusing on accelerating achievement of the three transformative results.

Potential actions to be taken

- Ensure proper dissemination and roll-out of the new operational guidance on meaningful participation as a basis for capacity building among adolescents and youth focal points to create a common understanding across the organization of the UNFPA approach to engaging with young people
- Develop a bolder framework for meaningful youth participation that articulates the medium-term and long-term ambitions of UNFPA for strengthening its partnership with youth and youth-led and youth-serving organizations and provides a roadmap for the attainment of these goals
- Strengthen feedback mechanisms between young people and UNFPA, with young people given real-time opportunities to provide input to UNFPA decisions and to receive periodic updates on the work being done to meet their needs
- Compile and share lessons learned and good practices in supporting meaningful youth participation, to communicate the effectiveness and value of the adolescents and youth agenda both internally and with partners
- Streamline support for youth participation in voluntary national review and universal periodic review processes at the country level, to ensure alignment and consistent engagement of youth advocacy and accountability movements in channelling youth inputs to both review processes in every country
- Increase support and capacity building for youth advocacy and youth-led movements, initiatives and campaigns to mobilize on sexual and reproductive health and human rights, gender equality, humanitarian action, climate change, among other issues. This may include facilitating their access to decision-making mechanisms or establishing youth-led accountability mechanisms to measure duty-bearer progress on issues of concern to them
- Develop a corporate safeguarding policy for young activists and young people who engage with UNFPA.

Recommendation 3: Fully integrate adolescents and youth within the UNFPA humanitarian response and leverage YPS and climate resilience.

Priority: High

Directed to: Technical Division and Humanitarian Response Division

Linked to conclusions: 1, 2, 3, 4

To meet the global commitment to adolescent and youth in humanitarian setting and emerging conflict areas and to align its adolescents and youth programming with the Compact for Young People in Humanitarian Action and the Youth, Peace and Security agenda, UNFPA should strengthen its coordination and joint planning across thematic branches and the Humanitarian Response Division. Improving integrated and cross programming will also help to ensure adolescent and youth needs and interests are included in all UNFPA humanitarian response efforts and also reflected in YPS, climate resilience and development/humanitarian/peace programming.

Potential actions to be taken

- Increase systematic communication and coordination between Technical Division and the Humanitarian Response Division to strengthen the integration of adolescents and youth lens in all UNFPA humanitarian responses
- Work with partners to roll-out existing guidance such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Youth Guidelines and the Minimum Initial Service Package. This may require building staff capacities on development/humanitarian/peace programming, along with adequate resources to operationalize and contextualize the guidance, for it to be sustained
- Enhance and expand YPS and climate resilience programming as a core element of more sustainable and long-lasting peace and resilience-building efforts. This may require an assessment of the UNFPA investments needed to make a case for this agenda, support existing programming in these areas and expand the scope of work of adolescents and youth focal points to also include YPS and climate resilience
- Strengthen assessments and collection of disaggregated data as well as data on the needs of youth to understand their vulnerabilities in emergencies and humanitarian settings
- Support and strengthen country offices in the preparation of proposals under the Peacebuilding Fund to leverage the leadership and comparative advantage of UNFPA working in youth areas related to peacebuilding
- Support and strengthen country offices in the preparation of humanitarian and emergency appeals, ensuring the integration of dedicated interventions to address the humanitarian needs of adolescents and youth, helping to consolidate UNFPA leadership on this area of work.

Recommendation 4: Ensure all adolescent and youth interventions are grounded in human rights-based and gender-transformative approaches to ensure inclusion across all groups of adolescents and youth, and address the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination.

Priority: High

Directed to: Technical Division, Policy and Strategy Division, regional offices

Linked to conclusions: 1, 2, 3, 4

UNFPA country offices are committed to making programmes more accessible to all adolescents and youth by ensuring non-discrimination and often also through subgroup targeting. This is particularly the case for adolescent girls and young women, and notably adolescents and youth with disabilities, among other key populations. While these approaches are effective in including marginalized youth, they often miss those more disenfranchised due to the multiple, underlying factors of exclusion, inequality and discrimination.

Potential actions to be taken

- Guide country offices in conducting in-depth analysis of the specific exclusion factors that prevail in national contexts and how these affect different groups of adolescents and youth
- Employ learning from such research and studies to develop specific targeting strategies for the inclusion of adolescents and youth that do not have access to the desired programmes.

Recommendation 5: Identify the UNFPA corporate priorities and approaches for leadership, coordination and partnership within programming on adolescents and youth.

Priority: High

Directed to: Technical Division, Policy and Strategy Division, regional offices

Linked to conclusions: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6

In order to maximize efforts and resources dedicated to advancing the work on adolescents and youth, there needs to be clarity on how UNFPA intends to lead, coordinate and partner with others to deliver on the holistic nature of the UNFPA Strategy on Adolescents and Youth. UNFPA leadership should be assumed in its core areas of work and clarified in other areas. At the same time, UNFPA should invest in its capacity to coordinate with United Nations organizations and other partners in joint work and programmes on adolescents and youth as these offer strategic and catalytic programming and funding platforms.

Potential actions to be taken

- Prioritize areas for leadership. UNFPA should conduct a mapping of its leadership and participation in different coordination mechanisms at country, regional and global levels. From this, UNFPA should determine the optimal engagement level for different aspects of programmes on adolescents and youth, along with associated resourcing plans. Special attention should be paid to the UNFPA role in leading the implementation of Youth2030 within the United Nations country teams
- Leverage UNFPA capacity to broaden its partnership portfolio with youth-led and youth-serving organizations. At the global and regional levels, UNFPA should consider opportunities to join the youth-serving movements (such as the so-called "Big 6" youth organizations, among others) to benefit from more agile funding structures and broaden outreach as well as engage directly and provide support for local youth-led organizations that may not be eligible for funding from UNFPA due to the current risk-mitigating administrative and financial policies
- Further explore joint programming opportunities as a catalyst for funding. Joint and regional integrated youth programming across the pillars of Youth2030 offer an opportunity for new partnerships, innovation and leveraging across diverse country contexts and programme areas.

Recommendation 6: Leverage population data analytics in the adolescents and youth area to enhance policy advocacy capabilities, including through strong investment cases.

Priority: Medium

Directed to: Technical Division, Policy and Strategy Division

Linked to conclusions: 1, 6

In order to enhance policy advocacy and accountability, UNFPA should advance leveraging population data and a bolder measurement framework covering output, outcome and impact levels, tracking resource investments in adolescents and youth, and capturing lessons learned to inform future programming.

Potential actions to be taken

- Strengthen data analytics around adolescents and youth, including through evidence on the impact of adolescents and youth programming and its contribution to the three transformative results and causal linkages, to enhance UNFPA capability in evidence-based policy advocacy and financing, including through strong investment cases
- Develop a menu of indicators across a matrix of output/outcome indicators and across individual, community and societal-level intervention strategies, including for youth engagement
- Support national capacities to gather disaggregated data by age and sex, particularly on measures directly impacting the three transformative results. UNFPA should consider investing in partnerships with universities and with other United Nations entities to develop new impact-level indicators that reflect youth voices and their participation
- Invest in cross-fertilizing knowledge around innovative data methodologies on adolescents and youth that provide comprehensive evidence on the situation of adolescents and youth to support policy efforts.

Recommendation 7: Review the UNFPA corporate structure and the adolescents and youth staff capacities to ensure adequate capability to implement the UNFPA strategy on adolescents and youth.

Priority: High

Directed to: Technical Division, Humanitarian Response Division, Division for Human Resources, Policy and Strategy Division, regional offices

Linked to conclusions: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7

UNFPA is recognized for its leadership on adolescents and youth within the United Nations system, and globally in the SRHR space. UNFPA has taken up multiple leadership roles, demonstrating the coherence of UNFPA programming on adolescents and youth, including by successfully confirming UNFPA leadership on adolescents and youth issues in a variety of inter-agency and multi-stakeholder fora. However, the internal positioning of the adolescent and youth team poses a challenge to effectively and efficiently implementing the Strategy and realize its promise for advancing the larger UNFPA agenda of the three transformative results – all of which require attention and investment in adolescent and youth-focused programming. The adolescents and youth team coordinates the UNFPA global community of practice on adolescents and youth – bringing together the regional youth advisors around issues often outside of the SRHR realm – but does not extend to the other branches, which equally require a youth focus to achieve their goals. UNFPA leadership on adolescent sexual and reproductive health (and the full implementation of the Strategy) is further challenged by gaps related to staff capacity that can hinder its ability to effectively lead the adolescents and youth agenda in a particular thematic area, if not across thematic areas.

Potential actions to be taken

- Institutionalize the adolescents and youth team. Consider creating an adolescents and youth branch within the Technical Division to support integrated programming that better reflects the three dimensions of the Strategy and enhances the capacity to influence programming across all thematic areas
- Reinforce the adolescents and youth team capacities at headquarters. Review the terms of reference of staff supporting adolescents and youth to ensure cross-thematic programming can be coordinated by the team, especially related to SRHR, data on adolescents and youth, humanitarian action and YPS. Consider enhancing data and analytics within the adolescents and youth team to enhance investment cases informing evidence-based policy advocacy for financing policies on adolescents and youth and to provide support to monitoring and evaluation activities
- Review adolescent and youth staff profiles at the country office level. Conduct a thorough review of current adolescents and youth staff and focal points profiles at the country office level and define the staff skill-sets

required (in comparison to what is currently available). Strategically fill staffing gaps and create new positions as resources become available to complement the capacity of the existing team

- Streamline the adolescents and youth focal points in regional and country offices in terms of their mandate and professional levels to support an integrated programming and embed adolescents and youth into existing structures to enhance their capacity to influence adolescents and youth programming across all thematic areas
- Reinforce the capacities of adolescents and youth staff working in humanitarian response and youth, peace and security. Nominate a dedicated adolescents and youth focal point in the Humanitarian Response Division who can closely coordinate with the adolescents and youth team and support the integration of adolescents and youth programme interventions in the emergency response work. Support the capacity building of regional and country offices on providing emergency response for adolescents and youth and working on youth, peace and security. Conduct a review of the adolescents and youth surge profile and skill-sets required to fill those positions and develop the skills needed.

Recommendation 8: Within the framework of the recently launched “People Strategy”, develop a specific human resources workplan for the meaningful participation of young professionals in UNFPA, focused on enhancing recruitment and strengthening the career development of young professionals as well as creating an enabling environment for intergenerational leadership, learning and contribution.

Priority: Medium

Directed to: Human Resources Division, senior leadership

Linked to conclusions: 2, 7

The “My World” component of the Strategy places a strong emphasis on the meaningful participation of young people, including in decision-making, which applies both externally and internally to the organization. In order to “walk the talk,” UNFPA needs to deliver on creating opportunities and space for young professionals to participate in and lead development processes. While UNFPA has created opportunities for young professionals to contribute to institutional processes and the implementation of programmes, there are opportunities to further institutionalize participation and foster intergenerational leadership, learning and collaboration.

Potential actions to be taken

- Collect and analyse data (proportion, age, gender disaggregation) regularly on the workforce at UNFPA (staff and non-staff) as well as the types of functions and contractual modalities of young professionals. Identify any gaps and challenges in the acquisition, retention and management of young talent. Prepare annual reports to inform strategic decisions on meaningful involvement of young people at UNFPA
- Informed by the above analysis, undertake actions for an increased inclusion of young professionals within UNFPA staffing. This may include reviewing contractual arrangements and career paths, prioritizing young professionals for particular posts and strengthening career development paths for them to grow within the organization
- Leveraging existing mechanisms (i.e. the Tangerines network), enhance an enabling environment for young staff to meaningfully participate, contribute, learn, lead and be involved in decision-making, including through mechanisms that allow for intergenerational leadership as well as for creating opportunities for capable young staff to lead on specific projects or initiatives
- Leverage the already existing young professionals' network (i.e. the Tangerines) at UNFPA and enhance opportunities for their consultation and participation in decision-making processes. Also, explore other opportunities for leadership and contribution in more strategic discussions.

RECOMMENDATION FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN EVALUATIONS²⁸⁵

Recommendation 9: Increasingly engage young people in UNFPA evaluations and continue to advocate with partners for the meaningful engagement of young people in evaluation.

Priority: Medium

Directed to: Evaluation Office; regional offices

Linked to conclusions: 2, 5

UNFPA is committed to co-leading a global movement advocating for the meaningful youth engagement in evaluation. This includes evaluations led by UNFPA. Based on lessons learned and youth reflections of their engagement in this present evaluation on adolescents and youth, the following recommendation has been formulated.

Potential actions to be taken

- Continue to co-lead, together with EvalYouth, the “Youth in Evaluation” initiative. This includes facilitating the co-creation (by Eval4Action partners) of standards for meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation, involving different typologies of stakeholders; and co-facilitating initiatives to enhance the enabling environment, institutional and individual capacities for the meaningful engagement of youth in evaluation
- Develop clear guidelines for establishing youth steering committees (YSCs) for future UNFPA evaluations, as appropriate. Specifically, this means:
 - **For recruitment:** Dissemination of the vacancy announcement more widely through a clear social media strategy; clarity on whether recruitment is for young leaders or young evaluators; and improved diversity of youth profiles through a higher representation of developing countries
 - **For ongoing support:** Preparatory capacity building processes on the evaluation thematic area for selected YSC members; use of communication channels that are convenient to youth; and embracing a long-term strategy for YSCs and their members, including by linking former and new members, supporting the professional growth of YSC members by connecting them with country offices and supporting the dissemination of their experience
- Develop clear guidelines for engaging young evaluators. This may include clarifying the roles and ways of working and communication, including feedback sessions for young evaluators and young beneficiaries in programme countries on the outcomes of the evaluation.

²⁸⁵ While this evaluation did not assess UNFPA contribution to youth meaningful engagement in evaluation, the youth steering committee independently decided to develop recommendation 9 based on their experience in this evaluation. This recommendation is developed from a summary of recommendations made by youth steering committee members and young evaluators.



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