OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

META-SYNTHESIS OF EVALUATIONS CONDUCTED DURING THE PROGRAMMING CYCLE 2018-2023

January 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACRONYMS

1. AWP- Annual Work Plan
2. CCA- Common Country Assessment
3. CO- Country Office
4. CRSV- conflict-related sexual violence
5. ERTs- Emergency Response Teams
6. EYR- End of the Year Report
7. FP- Field Presences'
8. HRD- Human Rights Defender
9. HRO- Human Rights Office
10. HRPP- Human Rights Priorities Programme
11. IFP & MFP- Indigenous Fellowship Programme and Minority Fellowship Programme
12. INCHR- Independence National Commission on Human Rights
13. JIT- joint investigation teams
14. LGBTI
15. MENA Middle East and Northern Africa
16. OEAPs- Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans
17. OHCHR- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
18. OIOS- Office of Internal Oversight Services
19. OMP- OHCHR Management Plan
20. PMS- Performance Monitoring System
21. PPMES- Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service
22. ROL- Rule of Law
23. ROSA- Regional Office for Southern America
24. SARO- Southern Africa Regional Office
25. SEARO- Regional Office for South-East Asia
26. SGBV- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
27. SWOT- strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
28. SWPA- Senior Women Protection Advisor
29. TJ- Transitional Justice
30. UNAMI- United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq
31. UNCT- United Nations Country Team
32. UNJHRO- United Nations Joint Human Rights Office
33. UNSDCF - United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
34. UPR- Universal Periodic Review
35. WRGS- Women's Rights and Gender Section

Contents

INTRODUCTION

A) Background and Context

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is currently finalizing its overall direction for the establishment of the management plan for the 2024-2027 period. Since setting out the *OHCHR Management Plan (OMP) 2018 -2021* and the *extended OMP 2022-2023*, there have been significant shifts in the global context, bringing implications for the organizational operations and resources and, critically, for its global human rights impact. The OHCHR Management Plan 2024-2027 (OMP 2024-2027), therefore provides and important opportunity to develop a common understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the Office, and to define the results the office would like to achieve in the changing context. This also entails identifying necessary organizational changes, with the ultimate goal of advancing the promotion and protection of all human rights for all.

The OMP identifies six pillars[1]: Advance sustainable **development** through human rights; Enhance equality and **counter discrimination**; Enhance **participation** and protect civic space; Increase implementation of the outcomes of the international human rights **mechanisms**; Prevent violations and strengthen protection of human rights, including in situations of conflict and **insecurity** and; Strengthen the rule of law and **accountability** for human rights violations.

Building on the foundation of these thematic pillars, the extended OMP defined six shifts (called 'strategic directions' in the OMP 2024-2027), which are thematic priorities that respond to our changing world. Each shift is mainstreamed through every pillar, thereby supporting coherence across OHCHR's work. For the period 2018-2023, one of the shifts was composed of diverse frontier issues. Frontier issues were developing themes that OHCHR explored to better understand their impacts on human rights. The shifts were: Inequality; Global constituency for human rights; Leveraging data for human rights; Protect and expand civic space and Prevention of conflict, violence and insecurity; and the frontier issues are: climate change; corruption; digital space and emerging technologies; people on the move.

While OHCHR maintains its unequivocal commitment to combating all forms of discrimination, it also shined a spotlight on certain populations in the period 2018-2023. It engaged with specific groups who are constructive agents of change and seek to fulfil their potential. Thereby, OHCHR reinforced its contribution to the guiding principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda), to Leave No One Behind. The spotlight populations included Persons with disabilities; Women; Young people; People of African descent.

The OMP also reaffirms a commitment to continuous internal improvement for better programme delivery through its Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans (OEAPs). OEAPs enable OHCHR to operate more effectively and efficiently and, as a result, achieve more positive human rights outcomes. In the 2022-2023 OMP, ten areas were prioritized; Digital technology (new); Dynamic knowledge; External communications; Diversity and inclusion (previously Diversity and Gender);

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[1] Human Rights Mechanisms, Non-Discrimination, Sustainable Development, Accountability, Peace and Security and Participation

Innovation; Managing talent; Operations management; Resource mobilization; Strategic leadership and direction; Sustainable environmental management.

A) Evaluations at OHCHR

In 2014, OHCHR established an evaluation function as part of the Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Service (PPMES). Since then, PPMES has conducted more than 50 evaluations, and currently conducting approximately 10 evaluations per year.

There are three main types of evaluations in OHCHR;

- Internal evaluations: Evaluations conducted by OHCHR's evaluation function, such as thematic, project or programme evaluations;
- External evaluations: Evaluations conducted by external oversight bodies or other actors, such as the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) mandated evaluations and Donor evaluations.
- Evaluative exercise: Internal reviews, visioning exercises, lessons earned exercises and meta-synthesis/analysis.

PPMES is responsible for developing the evaluation plan for the OHCHR's programming cycle (usually four years), during the preparation of the OMP. At this stage, three types of assessments are considered: strategic or thematic evaluations of global crosscutting issues, evaluations of a particular project or programme (including regional and country programmes) and internal reviews visioning exercises. The selection of evaluations to be conducted is a collaborative process involving the Evaluation Focal Points Network, comprising representatives from various Divisions and Services.

> The final plan is endorsed by the PBRB, and subsequently the High Commissioner, using one or more of the following criteria:
>
> - Relevance to the OHCHR Management Plans and Strategic Frameworks for the period under review –including OHCHR's long-term expected accomplishments.
> - Strategic importance
> - Size of investment or coverage
> - Demand by stakeholders, triggering evaluations also at short notice.
> - Potential for the generation of knowledge
> - Flagship programmes, interventions, or strategies
> - Evaluability

All OHCHR evaluation reports are available in the evaluation portal on the intranet. Independent evaluations (conducted by external independent consultants or PPMES evaluation managers) are also uploaded to the evaluation section in the Office's website and the UN Evaluation Group portal, jointly with their respective management responses and actions plans for the implementation of their recommendations. The management responses are usually submitted to the PBRB and the status of implementation of the recommendations monitored every six months.

B) Purpose of the meta-synthesis

Following a Results-based Management (RBM) approach, the strategic planning process, led by PPMES for the development of the 2024-2027 OMP, comprises three primary phases:

- **Knowledge Generation and Option Building:** In this initial phase, information is gathered, and past experiences are evaluated to create room for creative and innovative thinking. This phase aims to generate knowledge and various options to serve as a foundation for strategic decision-making.
- **Strategic Decision-Making:** The second phase involves making strategic decisions based on the knowledge and options generated during the first phase. This step enables the selection of the most effective and suitable strategies.
- **Action Planning**: In the final phase, the selected strategies are translated into actionable plans. Detailed planning ensures that the strategies are implemented effectively, contributing to the achievement of the OMP's objectives.

Among a variety of means to gather inputs, a meta-synthesis of the evaluations is conducted, focusing on the findings from evaluations, reviews, lessons learned and audits of OHCHR's previous programme and projects.

The summary of the objectives of the meta-synthesis is to:

a. Summarize the findings of evaluations and reviews conducted during the OMP Cycle 2018-2023.
b. Identify trends and issues linked to the evaluation criteria and implementation of the Pillars, shifts and OEAPs in the programming cycle.
c. Synthesize key issues and insights from the analysis and make recommendations to provide further inputs for the preparation of the OMP 2024-2027.


METHODOLOGY

OHCHR conducts regular evaluations of its projects and programs to measure their effectiveness, efficiency, and impact, focusing on relevance, gender equality, disability inclusion, and human rights. All evaluations adhere to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and the UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work. In addition, the evaluations also take into account the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations, and the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Disability inclusion in evaluations.

These evaluations identify best practices and lessons learned, and make recommendations to improve the Office's performance and ensure the achievement of its objectives, underlining OHCHR's commitment to continuous learning. The meta-synthesis involved two main stages: data collection and analysis, employing both qualitative and quantitative methods. The PPMES team focused on refining the Office's monitoring and reporting database and improving this report's content, format, and relevance to contribute to the development of the 2024-2027 OMP.

[A new evaluation module](#) was recently launched in the Performance Monitoring System (PMS). This module presents the conclusions, good practices, lessons learned, and recommendations extracted from the evaluations. During the 2018-2023 cycle, a total of **48 evaluations**[2] were carried out. The meta-synthesis assesses all the evaluation reports included in the evaluation module on the PMS, which includes, 24 internal evaluations, 3 external evaluations and 4 evaluative exercises,[3] in total 31reports.[4] Specific information on these documents as well as their reference is provided with Annex 1.

To provide comprehensive insights from the evaluations, the meta-synthesis assesses all external and internal evaluation reports, including project, thematic, and geographical evaluations, as well as internal audits and reviews. It examines the performance of OHCHR's projects and programmes across the seven evaluation criteria, conclusions, lessons learned, best practices, and recommendations, and further highlights recurring and cross-cutting findings.
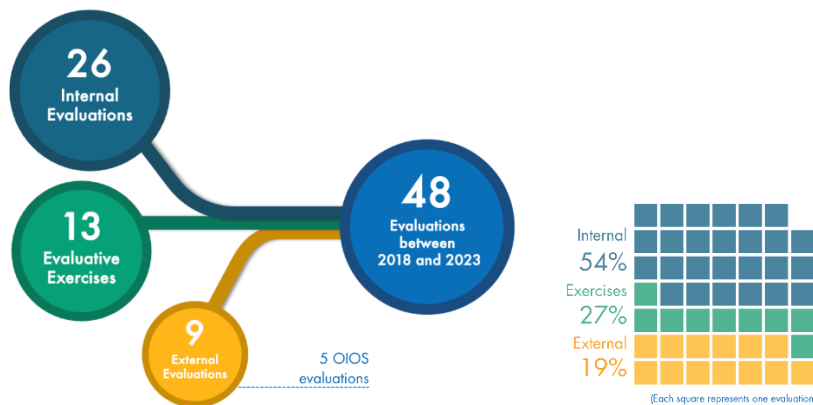
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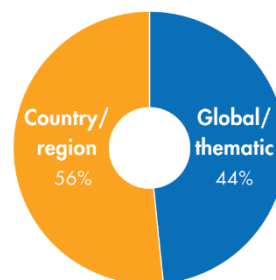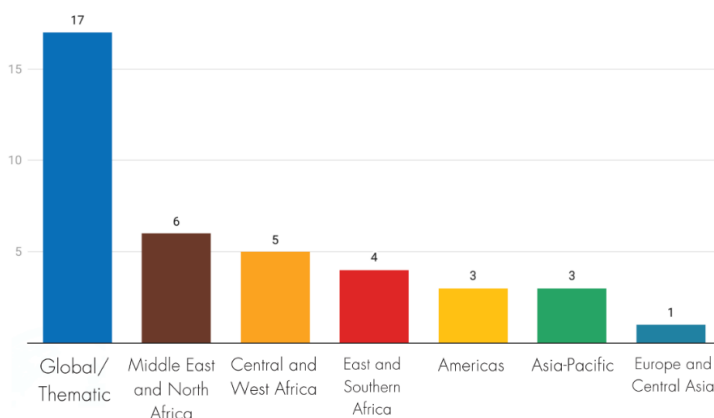
LIMITATIONS

This meta-synthesis covers the period from 2018 to 2023, and while it is important to draw lessons from the past, it is crucial to recognize that significant developments have occurred since then. Some recommendations may have been overtaken by events, and certain actions may have already been implemented. Nevertheless, as OHCHR begins a new programming cycle with the new OMP (2024-2027), this meta-synthesis serves as a valuable basis for reflecting on past achievements, challenges, best practices, and recommendations, significantly contributing to the strategic planning for the upcoming OMP.

Another limitation is that the meta-synthesis relies on the evaluation of some of the programmes and projects implemented within this specific time frame, which may limit the ability to capture the entirety of OHCHR's work. Nonetheless, the methodology adopted for this analysis will prioritize recurring and cross-cutting issues, allowing for a more comprehensive and insightful representation of the overall performance and impact of the Office.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section presents the key findings of the meta-synthesis of the OHCHR evaluations and reviews conducted between 2018-2023. The evaluation questions were informed by the OECD/DAC criteria[5], which ultimately led to the findings highlighted below.

a) Relevance and Coherence
"Is the intervention doing the right things?"[6] and "How well does the intervention fit?"[7]

Finding 1: OHCHR programmes and projects are relevant to the country/regional/global human rights situation and the needs of the stakeholders (right holders and duty bearers). Most evaluations have been consistently assessed as highly relevant in this regard.

The programmes and projects not only align with OHCHR's mandate and comparative advantages, but also demonstrate a strong understanding of the complex needs of both duty bearers and rights holders. For instance, the evaluation of the project on Democratic Space, Rule of Law and Human Rights in Thailand[8], revealed strong evidence that the project proficiently addressed the needs of the stakeholders in further empowering them and expanding their space to do human rights work. OHCHR also played a pivotal role by *building the capacity of rights holders and duty bearers*, *providing legal assistance to human rights defenders, and generating valuable knowledge resources t*hat raised awareness among beneficiaries.

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[5] The OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet) has defined six evaluation criteria – relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. These criteria provide a normative framework used to determine the merit or worth of an intervention (policy, strategy, programme, project or activity). They serve as the basis upon which evaluative judgements are made.
[6] Relevance
[7] Coherence
[8] Evaluation of the OHCHR project: "Widening Democratic Space, Strengthening the Rule of Law and Promoting Respect for and Protection of Human Rights in Thailand.

The evaluation of the Independence National Commission on Human Rights (INCHR) project in Liberia[9], emphasized that given OHCHR's global mandate to *support National Human Rights Institutions*, country presences such as the Liberia Country Office which works *on transitional justice*, and other human rights issues relevant to Liberia's post-conflict environment, are well-positioned and suited to address the ongoing human rights challenges in Liberia, through support to human rights institutions. The evaluation of OHCHR's support to legislation in conformity with international standards also revealed that the OHCHR has used a variety of techniques in both Headquarters (HQ) and the field to promote legislative change in countries of engagement. It does not, however, have a specific global strategy on promoting and supporting legislative change.

Another example is the evaluation of the Free and Equal project [10], where the campaign was considered very relevant particularly in areas where discrimination against LGBTI people is prevalent. The campaign has been successful in positively shaping public opinion about the rights of LGBTI people both nationally and globally, including through producing authoritative advocacy information that has been relevant to raise awareness, address misconceptions, and dispel stereotypes.

By comprehensively addressing the dynamic and emerging challenges of these countries, regions and global thematic issues, the programmes and projects have continued to demonstrate their relevance. For example, the Sudan Country Programme (prior to the current/ongoing crisis), was found to be relevant as it was designed during Sudan's transitional phase, and effectively aligned with the *institutional and legal reforms* that supported the transitional government's priorities and constitutional documents. In the DRC, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO)'s Civic Space and Senior Women Protection Advisor (SWPA) projects[11] were highly relevant within the *post-electoral* context, while the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) Programme[12] enhanced OHCHR's work and *engagement on SGBV and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)* issues by integrating a human rights-based approach. Another example is the accountability project in Iraq[13] which was highly relevant to the human rights situation in Iraq, as it focused on addressing the human rights violations and abuses, and enhanced the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) Human Rights Office (HRO)´s ability to base their public reporting and private engagement with authorities on comprehensive and credible data on abduction, torture and enforced disappearances. This was particularly important given the ongoing lack of accountability for serious human rights violations in Iraq, including those committed by armed groups commonly referred to as militia, had reinforced a lack of trust in the government and reduced public willingness to participate in democratic processes, with worrying implications for democracy and peace in Iraq.

In addition, OHCHR has demonstrated its strategic adaptability to the evolving landscape, while maintaining its unwavering commitment to its core objectives and the pressing concerns of all stakeholders. The evaluation in Colombia[14], for instance, emphasized the office's remarkable ability to uphold its reputation as an independent and reliable voice for all rights-holders, particularly victims of human rights violations and other vulnerable groups, even in highly politically sensitive contexts. In

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[9] Evaluation of the project Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights in Liberia
[10] Evaluation of the United Nations Free and Equal campaign
[11] Evaluation of the projects on Civic Space and Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in DRC
[12] Ibid
[13] Mid-term evaluation of the project Accountability for abduction, torture and enforced disappearance in Iraq
[14] Evaluation of the Colombia Country Programme 2017-2021

Doha[15], the significance of the Centre's work was evidenced by its consistent engagement with a wide array of partners in the region over the years, solidifying its reputation as a respected actor in the area and the demand for the Centre's services, which remains robust. The Syria evaluation[16] found that OHCHR's approach was sustainable despite the complex and volatile context in Syria. The evaluation highlighted that the OHCHR Syria office found an effective balance between trust building and expectation management, which laid the foundation for continued dialogue with victims' associations. This approach, along with facilitating access to spaces of power, *strengthened victims' voices and participation in policy* processes at all levels.

Despite challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic or social and political unrest, evaluation found that OHCHR managed to continue to deliver on its mandate. In the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) report on strengthening the role of evaluations[17], it was for instance highlighted that OHCHR's evaluations revealed that the shift to online work modalities was reasonably smooth in all cases, although it required rapid upskilling and adjustments for both staff and stakeholders.

The evaluation of the Indigenous Fellowship Programme and Minority Fellowship Programme (IFP & MFP) projects[18] also demonstrated OHCHR's adaptability during COVID-19. Funds initially foreseen for global induction meeting in Geneva, not possible during COVID-19, were re-allocated to create an expanded Senior Fellowship Programme, where former fellows were placed in UN country and regional offices. This adaptation provided an opportunity to gauge and address the impact of the pandemic on Indigenous and Minority communities, and provided an important link between the country offices and indigenous or minority communities. It also served several important purposes such as the provision of further practical training to former fellows and provision of national and regional offices with highly valued local expertise in indigenous people or minority issues, among others.

In the evaluation of the Emergency Response Teams (ERTs)[19], The ERTs have been involved in managing the impact of political instability, threats to pro-democracy movements, weaknesses in justice and rule of law systems, and the ongoing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, during the crackdown on pro-democracy movements and CSOs following the coup in Myanmar in 2021, the ERTs provided information management support to the OHCHR Myanmar Team which contributed significantly to public reporting, including to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC). They also convinced the Resident Coordinator (RC) to establish an inter-agency early warning system for the UN Country Team (UNCT), which provided an update on human rights developments at each monthly UNCT meeting (the first of its kind globally).

The evaluation of the Asia Pacific project[20] also demonstrated OHCHR's adaptability and effective planning in response to the pandemic, enabling work to continue in most areas through remote modalities, albeit with constraints due to the inability to travel and engage directly with partners and stakeholders in their respective contexts. In addition, the evaluation of the Youth and Human Rights

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[15] Doha Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region

[16] Evaluation of the Action: "Advancing Justice and Human Rights in Syria: promoting a more inclusive, victim-centric approach to Justice and Human Rights

[17] OIOS Report on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings.

[18] Indigenous Fellowship Programme and Minority Fellowship Programme

[19] Evaluation of the Emergency Response Teams Programme

[20] Evaluation of the OHCHR Project: Strengthening the Capacity of Regional Actors to Promote Human Rights, Accountability, Democratic Space and Gender in the Asia-Pacific Region

project[21] highlighted the office's agility in assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and shed light on existing and emerging human rights issues for young people, making it highly relevant in this global crisis.

Finding 2: OHCHR programmes and projects are relevant to, and are aligned with the Office's mandate, OHCHR's Management Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals. However, there is need to build capacity of OHCHR Staff on the OMP, in order to streamline the theory of change and results/logical frameworks, particularly of the projects, to ensure that they are aligned with the OMP pillar results/country programme results.

The projects and programmes are relevant for OHCHR's work under all thematic pillars, pillar results, OEAPs, and OHCHR's priorities including the shifts, frontier issues and spotlight populations, as defined in the 2018-2021 OHCHR Management Plan (OMP), and the extended OMP 2022-2023.

For instance, the Ethiopia Country Programme evaluation[22] aligned with the OMP 2018-2023 and played a proactive role in the development of the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2020-2025, thereby positioning itself strongly within the UN development system in Ethiopia.

In the Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador evaluation,[23] the country programmes were found to be significantly relevant to OHCHR's mandate as set out in the pillars of the OMP 2018 – 2021 and the equivalent thematic priorities of the former 2017 OMP. The Continuous dialogues with CSOs have been instrumental in identifying areas where OHCHR can add value, this includes strengthening the *capacity of rights holders and duty bearers*, *using its voice to advocate for change*, convening various stakeholders, and collaborating with partners to *advance human rights work.*

In the project in Thailand, it was relevant for OHCHR's work under all thematic pillars for 2018-2021 and the extended OMP 2022-2023, while contributing to *the shifts on prevention of conflict, violence and insecurity, expansion of civic space and global constituency.* This is also the case for the Asia pacific project, which also contributes to *'frontier' issues such as people on the move, climate change, digital space and emerging technologies, corruption, the shift on inequalities and all the spotlight populations* (women, persons with disabilities and youth).

Another example is the ERTs which have been a key element of the OMP since the 2014-17 OMP cycle (*through the thematic priority 'Early Warning and Protection of Human Rights in Situations of Conflict, Violence and Insecurity'*), and most recently the 2018-2023 OMP, under the *peace and security, development and participation pillars*. Subsequently, the ERTs internal programme monitoring framework aligns with the respective OMP pillar results. For example, under the Peace and Security Pillar, PS5, for the Southern Africa Regional Office (SARO) and Regional Office for South-East Asia (SEARO) teams and PS3 for the West and Central Africa, teams. Other teams like Regional Office for Southern America (ROSA), are aligned with the Participation pillar (strengthening participation and protecting civic space) and the Development pillar (integrating human rights into sustainable development).

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[21] Interim Evaluation of the OHCHR Youth and Human Rights Project
[22] Evaluation of the OHCHR Programme in Ethiopia
[23] Evaluation of the Guatemala and Honduras Country Programmes and the Subregional Programme in El Salvador

One recommendation that was frequently presented in the evaluation reports was the *need for capacity building of OHCHR staff members on the OMP* results and the need for improvement of the project's theory of change and results frameworks, particularly on *aligning project results with the OMP pillar results/country programme results*. (This is further discussed in effectiveness). For example, the evaluation in Colombia found that the OMP, with its pillars, "shifts" and "spotlight populations", is not necessarily very present in the minds and daily work of most OHCHR staff.

Finding 3: OHCHR programmes and projects are coherent with the National, Regional and Global policies, plans, programmes and priorities of stakeholders and partners at national, regional and global levels. However, while external coherence is rated positively, enhancing internal coherence within the office remains an area for improvement.

The evaluations have shown that, given OHCHR's comparative advantage and mandate on Human rights, the alignment of the projects/programmes with priorities of local stakeholders, partners, donors or other UN agencies has greatly contributed to the achievement of results, and that strong engagement and partnerships at National, Regional and Global has been one of OHCHR's successful strategies. For instance, the action in Syria was coherent and compatible with other interventions in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region. It complemented other programs and interventions, including those by UN programmes and mechanisms focused on investigation and prosecution of human rights violations.

The OHCHR Sudan[24] CO's efforts to build relationships resulted in solid partnerships that span different sectors. The CO is a member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and plays an active role in the Protection Cluster, and works bilaterally with individual UN agencies, including UNDP and UNITAMS on the Rule of Law (ROL) and Transitional Justice (TJ). The Office has also been working with UNICEF to support the release of children from detention and armed groups, UN Women and UNFPA on women's rights issues and FAO and UN-Habitat on land rights issues.

The project in Thailand aligned well with relevant policies, plans, and priorities at both regional and national levels, including Thailand's international human rights commitments. This project also stood out as one of the projects that demonstrated good internal coherence, in terms of coordination and synergies with other areas of OHCHR work and working relationships within OHCHR at all levels were positive and mutually supportive.

There is also a high degree of shared perception of OHCHR's comparative advantages over other international actors, based on its human rights mandate, expertise and long-standing presence and knowledge. The implementation of the programme and projects has shown that several strategies linked to these comparative advantages have been effectively applied, while at the same time there has been the capacity to adapt when strategies have proven unsuccessful.

However, while external coherence is assessed positive, internal coherence within the components of the programme/projects, as well as among the country/regional office(s) involved, and other units within OHCHR in terms of programmatic, financial and administrative issues remains an area to be improved. This is highlighted further under efficiency.

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[24] Evaluation of the Sudan Country Programme – Sudan Country Office

B) Effectiveness and efficiency

"Is the intervention achieving its objectives?"[25] "How well are resources used?"[26]

Finding 4: OHCHR largely achieves results and targets at both outcome and output levels. However, many evaluations cited an ambitious results framework, and inadequately formulated theory of change and results framework.

The evaluations provided evidence of success obtained by the programme and projects, and highlighted the extent to which the planned results were actually achieved Evidence showed that OHCHR delivered planned project outputs and contributed to intermediate outcomes, and in some instances, long-term outcomes. Nearly all evaluations reported that projects and programmes had largely achieved intended outputs and outcome results, while for those that did not achieve all results, many of the limitations were due to external circumstances.

For instance, the UN Free & Equal campaign[27] has been very effective in achieving planned results. The interviews and the evidence reviewed show that a significant majority of the planned results were achieved at the global and national level. These included; The acceptance of has increased in a number of the concerned countries through the production and dissemination of a range of communication products and tools aimed at countering prejudice and harmful stereotypes and the utilization of various platforms, including international days and public events, to raise awareness and promote acceptance. Engagement with the business sector and educational institutions which raised awareness about human rights responsibilities and contributed to more inclusive environments for LGBTI people. National campaigns also empowered LGBTI communities to engage with national authorities and build alliances with human rights organizations. The evaluation team concluded that the results achieved fully justified the resources invested in the UN Free & Equal campaign as both the global and national campaigns had achieved substantial results with limited resources.

In Liberia[28], the project contributes to greater visibility of the INCHR in Liberia and the support it offers to right holders, especially in the areas outside of Monrovia. There was a direct impact on pre-trial detainees as at least seventy-seven individuals were released as a result of INCHR's efforts related to the project. One of the key outcomes was the establishment of a human rights violation follow-up mechanism task force, that included representation from INCHR HQ, INCHR human rights monitors, CSOs, OHCHR Liberia CO, and members of the UN human rights working group. This taskforce led to the creation of guidelines for follow-up on human rights complaints, investigations, and documentation.

Another illustrative instance is the Youth and Human Rights evaluation, which found evidence of positive results that aligned with OHCHR areas of focus within the UN Youth Strategy. These positive results included: increased youth participation in political and public affairs; increased capacity of Youth organizations to integrate a human rights approach to their work; better mainstreaming of human rights concerns of young people into the work of the OHCHR and UN human rights

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[25] Effectiveness
[26] Efficiency
[27] Evaluation of the United Nations Free and Equal campaign
[28] Evaluation of the project Strengthening the Capacity of the Independent National Commission on Human Rights in Liberia

mechanisms; and heightened integration by governments of a human-rights based approach to the development of national youth policies, in response to the support received by OHCHR.

In Syria, the project was largely successful in applying a victim-centric approach and a human rights-based approach, emphasizing victims' participation in sharing their needs, perceptions, and aspirations. The action's strongest example of this is the support to the associations of families in promoting the Truth and Justice Charter, particularly their call for the establishment of mechanisms to explore the fate of those who have disappeared, and who have either passed away or are kept in detention centres. External factors, such as the limited civic space for CSOs in Syria and the rejection of the legitimacy of the OHCHR Syria office by the Syrian government and opposition groups, hampered its full implementation. Despite these challenges, the action contributed to strengthening the voices of victims in the international context and building the capacity of CSOs Syria.

Finding 5: OHCHR's projects and programmes employ available human and financial resources efficiently and transparently, including in demanding circumstances, such as conflict, political crisis, pandemics, among others. Effectiveness could be enhanced by continuing the enabling factors of success and putting in place strategic measures to mitigate challenges that hinder achievement of results.

Where positive results were found, the following enabling factors, approaches and successful practices were highlighted in the different evaluation reports:

The evaluations demonstrated OHCHR's comparative advantage in protecting and promoting human rights: For instance, in the Asia pacific project, OHCHR's comparative advantage was well demonstrated in the project implementation and was well recognized by stakeholders. This was evidenced through the '10 C's lens'[29], which included; Connecting - linking stakeholders, particularly CSOs and human rights and environmental defenders, with international human rights mechanisms and UN Special Procedures, including bringing cases to the attention of Special Rapporteurs and supporting wider stakeholder engagement in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) processes and Treaty Committee processes and follow-up, Capacitating - strong technical expertise and institutional and technical capacity development role based on global mandate and expertise on the development of national legislation and policies and strategies, to name a few.

In the DRC evaluation, part of the Office's good reputation is based on its presence and work across the country, e.g., the Field Presences' (FP) interventions such as 5 mobile courts and joint investigation teams (JIT) play a key safeguard role in addressing or preventing human rights violations in areas where State's presence is limited or not existing.

The ERTs demonstrate OHCHR's comparative advantage in bolstering OHCHR's capacity and the broader UN system to anticipate and respond to human rights crises. Their added value is also demonstrated by the fact that they enhance situational awareness both internally, (OHCHR HQ and field presences) and externally (in the broader UN system and among partners), by producing human rights risk analyses. These analyses help to identify trends that could lead to human rights violations

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[29]Centred (in the global human rights mandate of the Office); Convening; Catalyzing; Capacitating; Constituency building; Contextualized (within regional priorities and architecture); Consensus building; and Clarifying issues (through strategic research and communications).

and conflicts, providing the basis for timely, targeted preventive action, making important contribution to the UN´s prevention agenda.

In terms of the Youth and Human Rights project the creation of the Youth Office at HQ and the field offices was seen as a highly effective strategy to ensure a human rights approach to issues related to youth. "Although other UN agencies focus on youth, there is no other UN agency directly responsible for issues related to Youth Rights."

The evaluation of the Colombia Country programme revealed that the OHCHR Colombia Office is renowned for its reputation as an independent, neutral, trustworthy and reliable actor, and highly respected public voice of the Office and the High Commissioner. The Office has extraordinary access to key interlocutors including high-level policy makers (senior GoC officials, legislators etc), local communities (including those sometimes not easily accessible to government/state agencies and/or the judiciary) and privileged access to the media and international community (in Colombia and at international fora). The Office's broad and comprehensive human rights mandate, including on Special Procedures, UPR, Treaty Bodies and the Human Rights Council was also recognized by stakeholders. This comparative advantage enabled OHCHR to respond to Colombia's specific human rights context.

Strong partnerships and engagement with stakeholders and the political will and enabling environment: In Thailand for example, important strengths of the project have been the strong and diverse partnerships which have provided the foundations of implementation and strengthening cooperation between and among national and local CSOs. Additionally, the project's organizational arrangements generally functioned efficiently and gained strength through the project period, centred around the three core CSO partners who were part of the Steering Committee, and a small, dedicated Thailand team within SEARO.

In Cambodia, one good practice identified was how OHCHR integrated a participatory approach by coordinating and synergizing the programme at local, regional and HQ levels, including with the Special Procedures, and further supported engagement with UPR and Treaty Body processes, leading to the achievement of results.

In Sudan, the coordination and partnership between the designated Expert and the OHCHR Sudan Country Office was also considered very successful. For example, the contribution of the OHCHR Sudan CO to public reporting presented at the Human Rights Council 50th session, coupled with effective advocacy by the Designated Expert led to results including the lifting of the state of emergency. Peer to peer support through individual coaching and training was also identified as a successful approach to improving the capacity of national human rights institutions to monitor, investigate and document human rights violations. In the Youth and Human Rights project, partnership with other UN agencies, CSOs, and Youth networks; and supportive government structures was also an enabling factor.

The evaluations also showed the importance of trainings on specific human rights topics for CSOs, leading to increased coordination, information sharing and awareness raising, including through the dissemination of content to communities. In particular, facilitating follow up meetings is seen as a good practice to give participants the opportunity to share the impact of the training on practical actions.

The flexibility and adaptive approaches that were shown by OHCHR, the donors and core CSO partners: In Cambodia for instance, one adaptive approach was the engagement of an independent mediation service to support the resolution of a land dispute between indigenous communities and a foreign company in Cambodia was an innovative contribution to dispute resolution. OHCHR supported the mediation engaging a local CSO to empower community participation, promote women's leadership and develop the human rights knowledge and understandings of participants.

In Thailand, the flexibility of the EU, OHCHR and CSOs were key factors in maintaining project momentum and ensuring efficient use of resources, despite delays caused by the crisis. This flexibility allowed for the principal sub-grantees to develop activities according to their areas of expertise and emerging opportunities within the project's scope. Another positive illustration was in Ethiopia, where OHCHR is commended for its flexibility and adaptability to the fragile and volatile external context of Ethiopia.

The OIOS report on strengthening the role on Evaluations also recognized that some of OHCHR evaluations reported that programmes had repurposed funds to address the immediate impact of COVID-19 and formulated rapid assessments and other products that were instrumental in supplying national institutions and development partners with much-needed data for joint interventions aimed at alleviating the impact of the crisis, with focus on the most vulnerable groups and/or people at risk of being left behind.

The evaluations assessed the barriers that preventing the achievement of programme/project results. Below are the major constraints or challenges that impacted the programmes and projects and prevented them from reaching its full potential.

Poorly formulated and over ambitious results/logical framework and lack of clear monitoring and reporting structure for projects:

The RBM evaluation highlighted that the focus on planning, monitoring and reporting has led to an excess of plans and reports. Staff dedicate excessive time to creating documents that receive minimal attention, use, or feedback, ultimately undermining the intended goal of facilitating informed decision-making and learning through monitoring. The Performance Monitoring System (PMS), like many other such systems, was found as not a user-friendly tool. Although the system has the potential to be a valuable resource for information, analysis and knowledge, it is of limited use in practise as most staff only use it to the extent that their tasks require.

The evaluation also showed that from an RBM perspective, the OMP 2018-21 was less clear than its predecessor. The multitude of results and targets as well as the lack of clarity around the current OMP's Theory of Change and Results Framework, made it a less suitable framework for prioritisation, internal monitoring of the Office's contribution to achievements against objectives, subsequent adjustments, and reporting. It was perceived to be too vast and complex to provide the clarity needed.

In the DRC evaluation, efficiency in planning and reporting over results was limited. Despite the massive workload required for their preparation, the current Annual Work Plan (AWP) and End of the Year Report (EYR) templates and frameworks were not fully conducive to strategic analysis, thinking and planning. They also respond to internal accountability requirements, but they do not support or promote qualitative analysis such as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) or

adequately present the results achieved and support their visibility. Similarly, the project reports that the Evaluation team could analyse showed the same limitations: they focus on the planned activities and despite being very comprehensive and requiring an important amount of work, the information and analysis on impact and visibility of the results are limited.

In Uganda[30], the evaluation showed that there was a lack of understanding of OHCHR's theory of change in the Uganda CO. Rather than working towards the CO's objectives in a holistic way, the CO was working towards the different pillar results of the country programme in an isolated manner with little attention to interlinkages between the different results to be achieved. In Ethiopia, evidence showed that 18 months into the programme, the Human Rights Priorities Programme (HRPP) had not been able to achieve most of its intended results, partly because of pandemic-related restrictions, but also because the programme itself was overly ambitious, poorly conceived, and not grounded in robust analysis.

In terms of the scope and focus of the OHCHR Colombia Country Programme, available evidence for the period 2016-2021, suggested that the Office might be too ambitious when drawing up its Annual Work Plans, the current one consisting of 13 expected results, 37 outcomes and 136 activities. Another illustration is in Cambodia, where internal factors that continued to constrain programme effectiveness included insufficient attention (at least until 2020) to the impact and evaluation of training activities; variable application of RBM and development of a results culture; and an overall misalignment between the Office skill-base and the shifting strategic requirements of a rapidly evolving human rights context.

Financial, operational and coordination challenges within OHCHR:

In the Youth and Human Rights project, the evaluation indicated that the Youth officers could work more effectively if they had a budget for activities, allowing them to steer their own initiatives, and to be more responsive to needs that they identified. However, in the absence of such funding, the Youth Officers responded innovatively and appropriately to financial and budgetary challenges, and built alliances with other UN bodies and other stakeholders amidst all other difficulties and limitations. Despite the relevance of such approaches, they were unable to fully respond to the existing demand, mainly due to insufficient resources, capacities and collaboration (both internally and externally). In the Uganda CO, even though some of the problems could be mitigated by the new UN system wide rules, financial and procurement processes in the Uganda CO were not adapted to the context and needs of the office, and had caused several instances of friction with stakeholders.

In the Free and Equal Campaign, the national campaigns had delivered planned activities according to the approved proposals; however, most had been affected by long delays in the confirmation and transfer of funds. In Ethiopia, some of the project results were not achieved due to predictable staff shortages, and lacking sound project management and oversight processes. In the Free and Equal campaigns, the levels of staffing were inadequate for the level of coordination and support required by national campaigns and to facilitate the cross-regional sharing of experiences among national campaigns.

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[30] Evaluation of the Uganda Country Programme- Uganda Country Office

Challenges in Administration and Excessive Dependence on UNDP for administration and procurement:

The reliance on UNDP has administrative service provider has raised challenges. For instance, the Thailand evaluation highlighted that SEARO's efficiency was hampered by delays in grant disbursement from OHCHR HQ, placing a substantial burden on staff in terms of time and pressure. In Sudan, the effectiveness of operations was impacted by logistical hurdles, particularly in transportation, and a significant dependence on UNDP support. The evaluation in Uganda uncovered that, despite having strong financial and accountability frameworks, the OHCHR Country Office faced operational delays attributed to the broader UN bureaucratic processes and a reliance on UNDP for procurement. Similarly, the evaluation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) indicated that the UNJHRO's dependency on UNDP, especially for accessing cash swiftly or managing grants, led to a complex administrative process with multiple steps for approval and release of funds.

Communication and Visibility

In terms of communication, the Uganda evaluation revealed that the existing investment in communicating the office's work within the Uganda Country Office was inadequate. There is an opportunity for the office to enhance its communication efforts regarding its programs, fostering greater accountability to the citizens it serves.

C) Impact and Sustainability

"What difference does the intervention make?"[31] "Will the benefits last??"[32]

Finding 6: OHCHR's impact is often difficult to assess, given the long-term nature of the outcomes. However, it is clear that the strategic orientation of the programs and projects are making a significant contribution to the broader, long-term and sustainable enjoyment of rights.

Finding 7: OHCHR's projects and programmes are effectively building necessary capacity of stakeholders at the National, Regional and Global level, and the likelihood of the benefits and achievements to continue are very high, particularly where OHCHR's interventions continue.

The Thailand evaluation for instance found that, while achieving impact remains work in progress in the current country context, work undertaken under the project to date has both demonstrated impact in some key areas and laid important foundations for longer term impact. In the Asia Pacific evaluation, it was highlighted that the thematic area was work in progress, given the very limited timeframe. Additionally, the normative and facilitative role of OHCHR brought challenges to the assessment of impact at regional and country levels (e.g., in areas covered by project outputs such long-term capacity development, constituency building, strategic research, networking building and increasing public awareness). Overall, the evaluation found that work undertaken under the project to date has laid important foundations for impact across the five results areas.

The IFP & MFP evaluation[33] evidence showed that the Fellowship Programmes had contributed enormously to increased access to UN human rights mechanisms by indigenous peoples and

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[31] Impact

[32] Sustainability

[33] Evaluation of the Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship Programmes

minorities. Despite a lack of funding and serious limiting factors, the programmes are making a very significant contribution to both immediate and demonstrable improvement of indigenous peoples' and minorities' rights, and establishing conditions for broader and longer-term enjoyment of their rights. Capacity building of individuals leads to increased access to decision-making, and to the strengthening of networks at various levels. The evaluation found that follow-up support for networking and training would greatly contribute to these longer-term impacts.

In DRC, the positive impact was observed to be indirect, resulting in long-term structural changes through the amendment and strengthening of laws and adherence to human rights standards. For instance, armed groups are now more cognizant of the increased risks associated with potential arrests and prosecution for their crimes. The local population has witnessed evidence of justice processes through Mobile Courts and exhumations. The Office's efforts are actively contributing to the restoration of trust in the Rule of Law, which holds significant symbolic value in the context of the DRC.

In Liberia, evidence showed that the project had strengthened the capacity of both duty bearers and rights holders, especially in the areas outside of Montserrado county. Duty bearers such as prison staff and the staff of the Women and Children Protection Section of the Police acknowledged a shift in their attitude towards rights holders, which they attributed to the training and capacity building support and the constant presence of the INCHR human rights monitor in their areas. The evidence gathered also shows that with OHCHR's continued guidance and support, the INCHR can progressively move towards the full realization of human rights in Liberia. The sustainability of the project's results also relies heavily on the INCHR's commitment to continue building its capacity both at the headquarters and county levels.

The Thailand evaluation was found to be of good foundations for sustainability. Capacity-building efforts are contributing to positive personal and organizational changes that will support the continuation of benefits (e.g., the annual Human Rights Defender (HRD) School, awareness of and engagement with UN human rights mechanisms and Special Procedures among CSOs and HRDs), while knowledge and data generated through research reports and documentation will continue to inform future work of implementing partners, as well as government policy.

In the IFP & MFP evaluation, the results, achievements, and benefits that build upon the Fellowship programmes are likely not only to be durable, but also to accrue over time as former fellows continue to build upon their experiences, capacity, and skills gained from the fellowships, and to train others in their communities and countries. Sustainability would be enhanced through greater follow-up. The evaluation found, however, that sustainability is or could be greatly reduced by a lack of human resources, administrative complications related to the complexity of the programmes, and an overall lack of sufficient or predictable financing.

The Asia Pacific project evaluation also noted that this area was work in progress within a limited timeframe, and there was a close relationship between enabling factors for impact and for sustainability. It was further recommended that to ensure that the value-added of the project investment to date is maximized, it is imperative that these and other promising developments with respect to project impact and sustainability are explicitly built into OHCHR regional strategic and programmatic planning for carrying forward the work in the project's thematic areas.

In the youth and human rights evaluation, evidence indicated that achievements and benefits of the project are likely to be durable, provided that initiatives begun under this project are able to continue. In the Youth evaluation, the evaluators found that it was still early in the project to assess impact, but there is evidence emerging that the project has resulted in changes for the promotion and protection of the human rights for Youth. The Youth and Human Rights Project has played an integral role in promoting the category of Youth within the OHCHR, UNCTs, and governments. The project is already making a significant contribution to broader and long-term promotion and protection of the human rights of youth, through providing technical support, awareness raising, capacity building, and facilitating networks of a generation of youth leaders. Opportunities for impact are increasing and maintaining a focus on the human rights of youth will be crucial in the coming years.

C) Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Human Rights integration, and the overall Principle of leaving No One Behind.

Finding 8: OHCHR has consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to integrating Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion, and Human Rights, along with the overarching Principle of Leaving No One Behind, across its various programs and projects. While the degrees of success and identified good practices have naturally varied among individual programmes and projects, there have been consistent efforts to promote inclusion across all initiatives, particularly in the area of gender equality. To further strengthen these efforts in this regard, the OHCHR should reflect on the successful practices in the area of gender equality and adopt similar strategies to promote disability inclusion.

In the fellowships programme for instance, the evaluation found that the Indigenous and Minorities Fellowship programmes were filling an extremely important gap in global efforts to address human rights. The programmes provided access to, and training in how to engage with, UN human rights mechanisms addressing some of the most vulnerable segments of the global population – indigenous peoples and minorities, who are the target of some of the most severe and systematic human rights abuses in the world today. There are no other programmes that provide the type and level of training that the IFP and MFP offer to some of these sectors of the global population.

In the evaluation of OHCHR's support to legislation in conformity with international standards, it was found that in terms of gender mainstreaming, OHCHR FPs provided extensive, high-quality expert advice on gender-specific legislative bills, often in partnership with UN Women and UNFPA and were effectively supported in this by the Women's Rights and Gender Section (WRGS) at HQ. In the Asia Pacific project, it was highlighted that although attention is built into the project design to the mainstreaming of gender equality, disability inclusion and LNOB, constant and critical review is important to continue deepening this in all aspects of project implementation.

In the OIOS report on strengthening the role of evaluations, OHCHR was listed as part of the organizations that had good practices in good-quality reports, showing clear linkages between findings, conclusions and recommendations and including cross-cutting issues, for example, a thorough analysis of gender considerations, human rights issues and disability. For instance, one of the good practices highlighted was in the evaluation of the Cambodia country programme, where an excellent description of the human rights context was provided and gender, human rights and disability inclusion were added as specific evaluation criteria and explored as specific questions under

all core lines of enquiry with stakeholders. However, challenges remain in some areas. In the Colombia Country Program, while gender equality strategies were extensively included in the annual work plans, disability inclusion was not as prominently addressed, even though some activities were aimed at disability inclusion. In Liberia, awareness of gender and disability issues was evident, but more proactive measures, especially concerning discrimination against disabled children and the LGBTQI+ community, were recommended. In Ethiopia, despite expressions of intent, the extent to which OHCHR has successfully mainstreamed gender could not be determined. The HRPP had set itself several ambitious goals but had not conducted an analysis of the challenges, nor had it established baselines against which to assess progress. The absence of a sufficiently robust planning, monitoring and reporting system meant that relevant disaggregated data was not collected on a regular basis. Another illustration is the Free and Equal Campaign, where though the global and national campaigns had adequately represented women, youth and older persons as LGBTI people or allies, the campaign had limited connections to the larger women's rights and gender work and other intersecting issues like race, disability and climate justice.

The Office has conducted a separate meta-analysis focused on disability inclusion, and will conduct another on gender equality. These analyses will lead to a more comprehensive understanding and inform future strategic direction. The disability meta-analysis has been included as annex to this meta-synthesis.

Highlights of findings linked to Shifts and Organizational Effectiveness Action Plans (OEAPs)

The meta-synthesis has shown that OHCHR's shifts are closely interlinked and contributing to each other, and that OHCHR has added value in the main shifts below;

- Prevention of conflict, violence and insecurity
- Inequality
- Global constituency for human rights
- Protect and expand civic space

Additionally, the proactive integration of SDGs in the work of OHCHR was considered as a very effective approach which ensured the office leveraged the human rights dimensions of the SDGs in the work on all shifts.

Below are the key findings of the assessment.

Prevention	- Evaluations found that the shift on prevention was the most worked on- **Human rights has been mainstreamed into conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts**, both nationally and globally. - OHCHR's effectiveness in the work on prevention is evidenced through its leadership and added value in the *prevention of, and response to* human rights violations. OHCHR employs its **early warning mechanisms, such as human rights risk analyses,** which have been instrumental in identifying trends that may lead to

	human rights violations and conflicts, providing the basis for timely, targeted preventive action. • These efforts have substantially contributed UN´s prevention agenda, through the support to the NHRI, Governments, UNCTs and other partners to **anticipate and respond to human rights crises.**
Inequalities	• The evaluations found that OHCHR's efforts have significantly addressed inequalities, adhering to the **principle of "leaving no one behind."** This is particularly evident in our initiatives and strategic approaches on protecting the rights of minorities, including LGBT community, people with disabilities, women, youth, indigenous people, and religious and ethnic minorities. • OHCHR's effectiveness in eliminating discrimination and reducing inequalities, at both national and global levels was demonstrated by the **increased compliance with international human rights standards** in anti-discrimination, evidenced for instance by the NHRIs and judicial systems. • There was also **increased access to *UN human rights mechanisms*** by *the aforementioned minority groups*, with a number of successes in areas of *restorative justice, legal reforms, amendment and strengthening of laws and in addressing* human rights violations and abuses, among others.
Civic space	• *OHCHR effectiveness in the work on* the protection and expansion of civic space was recognized **through OHCHR's systematic human rights monitoring.** • This is also visible in the successful provision of technical support to governments, NHRIs, CSOs, etc. in the **development and use of human rights tools and methodologies**, and in **strengthening human rights monitoring**. • **The findings further showed that stakeholders also reported a shift in the duty bearers' attitude towards rights holders**, and enhanced and **enabling environment**, which was attributed to OHCHR's training and capacity building support and the constant presence of the INCHR human rights monitor in their areas. • **OHCHR's comparative advantage** has also proven successful in monitoring and reporting on human rights violations, establishing Transitional Justice, utilizing national and international human rights mechanisms, provision of legal assistance to human rights defenders, advocacy, and creating networks of victims, beneficiaries and other rights-holders.
Global Constituency for human rights	• OHCHR's relevance and effectiveness in building a global constituency has been realized through its pivotal role in **awareness-raising and capacity building** of rights holders and duty bearers, particularly on the knowledge of international human

	rights law, human rights mechanisms and in the promotion and defence of human rights.
	- Through this, **OHCHR has built strong strategic partnerships, networks and collaborations** with NHRIs, Government, CSOs, HRDs, local stakeholders, business/private sector, academic/educational institutions donors, UNCTs, among other partners. This has also enhanced the integration of Human Rights-based Approach into their work. - The strategy of **engaging spotlight populations** and their relevant networks/organizations was also found to be an effective approach to building global constituencies in HR. - This was further evidenced by the **increased participation in HR** awareness raising and advocacy forums, and in joint production and dissemination of HR communication products and tools.

Highlights of evaluation findings linked to OEAPs.	
Strategic leadership and direction	Strategic leadership and direction is the most emphasised OEAP in the evaluation findings, and with the highest number of recommendations aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of OHCHR in fulfilling its mandate. The evaluation findings illustrate OHCHR's strategic direction in **addressing global human rights challenges** and emphasize the following; - Effective Strategic Planning and need for an **improved conceptual framework** in OHCHR's thematic initiatives, particularly the theory of change and results framework. **Strategic alignment for presences**- Use the preparation of the new country notes to define future strategic direction, emphasizing partnership building within the UNCTs. - Strategic prioritization and **team strengthening**, regular team retreats - to discuss strategy and respond to developments impacting their work. - Provide **clarity on roles** and relationships between country presences and HQ, to improve their co-operation. - Continuous **reassessment of country presence strategies**, ensuring clarity of strategic purpose and recognizing local context and capacities. **Building a results-oriented culture** to emphasize commitment to results-based management. Results frameworks were found to be overly ambitious and not well-conceived, leading to implementation challenges and underachievement of results.
Partnerships	OHCHR has built **strong strategic partnerships**, networks and collaborations with NHRIs, Government, CSOs, HRDs, local stakeholders, business/private sector, academic/educational institutions donors, UNCTs, among other partners. This has enhanced their integration of Human Rights-based Approach into their work.
Dynamic Knowledge	The evaluation findings reflect the focus on building **strong technical capacity and knowledge**, continuous **learning and adaptation**, and the importance of building sustainable and collaborative relationships with different stakeholders.

	This is also reflected in the successful provision of technical assistance to governments, NHRIs, civil society organisations, etc. in the development and use of **human rights tools and methodologies** and in strengthening human rights monitoring. Partners and stakeholders **recognise the comparative advantages** of OHCHR, in particular its role in raising awareness and capacity building of right holders and duty bearers, especially with regard to **knowledge of international human rights law**, human rights mechanisms and the promotion and defence of human rights.
Operations management	OHCHR managers have demonstrated **effective resource management** through consistent support, capacity development, and innovative practices, while learning from challenges in programme implementation and administrative support. However, a number of administrative and operational challenges were evidenced. The incorporation of lesson learnt into future planning and operations can further enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of OHCHR's initiatives. Additional good practices; • **Staff capacity development** on a thorough planning process that contextualizes training to specific audiences ensures relevance and effectiveness. • **Recruitment and retention** of highly qualified national staff has been critical to understanding and navigating complex national legal frameworks. • Adapting a **results-based management approach** to a human rights-based approach has been a promising way to increase OHCHR's impact on the ground, despite challenges. • The adoption of **remote working models** has facilitated inclusion and accessibility, particularly for those who cannot work in traditional office settings. Lessons learned and recommendations • **Improved administrative and programmatic support** during the start-up phase of new presences is essential, including rapid deployments and more efficient project management and resource allocation. • OHCHR needs to ensure **adequate staff training, and resources** for administrative and operational tasks, especially in the area of project management and coordination of country presences. • A more **streamlined** approach to the disbursement and reporting of CSO grants is recommended to increase efficiency. • There is a need to address **delays in staff recruitment and an imbalance in resources**. Reliance on external agencies such as UNDP for service delivery has led to delays and administrative burden. • There is need for **better risk management** in the country presences, and systematic identification of opportunities.
Diversity and inclusion	The evaluation findings indicated efforts to enhance diversity, inclusivity, and equality within the work of OHCHR, with the focus on the principle of **"leaving no one behind."** This is particularly evident in OHCHR initiatives and strategic approaches on protecting the rights of minorities, including LGBT community, people with disabilities, women, youth, indigenous people, and religious and ethnic minorities. Challenges and areas needing improvement highlighted were

	linked to the overall gender mainstreaming within the office, and data disaggregation.
External Communications	The evaluation findings demonstrate that OHCHR has been effective in external communication by; • **Adapting advocacy messages and tools** to the local context - e.g., sharing highlights of annual report with communities. • Utilising the **added value of social media platforms** and visual tools to increase visibility and effectively communicate human rights crises. • **Coordination, synergy building and engagement** between OHCHR, UNCTs and other partners. However, there is a recurring theme of the need for improved communication and advocacy strategies to reach a **wider audience** (e.g., **paid advertising on social media, TV and radio spots)** and further strengthen the impact and visibility of OHCHR's work to position OHCHR as a global flagship for human rights.
Resource mobilization	The evaluations showed the need for **effective management and strategic use of resources**, better planning, **diversification of funding and strengthening of partnerships**. The evaluation findings also demonstrated how OHCHR has **adapted to challenges and capitalised on opportunities**, resulting in increased donor confidence and investment. Lessons learned and recommendations. • **Results-Based Management (RBM)-** the implementation of RBM at OHCHR has improved over the years, leading to more strategic decision-making and better articulation of results at global and national levels This approach has helped to attract more resources and thus strengthen operational capacity. • **Effective utilisation of limited resources** and creative responses in the face of budget constraints are commended. • **Proactive coordination with donors** to secure flexible funding and resources for the programme was recommended. • There is need for OHCHR to prioritize **longer-term resources** and the **use of non-earmarked funds**
Innovation	Evaluation findings demonstrated that OHCHR has incorporated **innovative practices** into its work by; • Development and use of effective and innovative HR advocacy and communication and tools and methodologies, • Innovation in the areas of **capacity building, education and network building initiatives** • Use of technology especially in **remote monitoring of human rights in closed contexts and changing environments** • Strategic planning and embracing technology for **monitoring and evaluation**
Talent management	The evaluation findings on talent management were primarily recommendations for improving talent management in order to increase the potential of our employees and ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of our work. The recommendations included; • Ensure **adequate staffing levels** for better coordination and support and to address staff capacity challenges that lead to excessive workloads for small teams.

	• **Fostering team-building** initiatives to ensure staff members feel ownership of their work. • Recognizing the **importance of staff skills and experience**, and regularizing staff appointments for continued stability.
Digital technology	The evaluation findings indicated the need for OHCHR to enhance security measures, better understanding and **managing data risks,** and **balancing digital and in-person methods** for effective human rights work. • It was also recommended that OHCHR **improve its security protocols** for the secure communication and storage of sensitive information collected online, through remote working and social media, with emphasises on the importance of robust **digital security measures when handling sensitive data.** • OHCHR needs a **better understanding of the risks associated with using non-traditional data sets and sources**. This includes aspects like quality, coverage, provenance, and construct validity. Standardised practise in the assessment and use of external datasets was proposed, along with improved data management to include these assessments in the associated metadata.

Summary of Recommendations

For every evaluation carried out within the Office, it is required that a management response and action plan are prepared. Subsequently, the status of implementation of evaluation recommendations is closely monitored on a biannual basis. Among the 260 recommendations, 15 recommendations were partially accepted.[34] This partial acceptance often stems from two primary factors: firstly, some recommendations were already in the process of being implemented through ongoing, similar processes, and secondly, certain recommendations were contingent upon the availability of funds for implementation.

Below are the key recommendations;

A. Results based management (under the OEAP on Strategic leadership and direction)

Key recommendation: OHCHR should strengthen the development of theories of change for programmes and projects, that include thorough context and risk analysis and value-added identification. In addition, there is a need for improvement in the formulation of logical frameworks, activities, outputs, outcomes, and indicators. Below are the specific recommendations from the evaluations;

1. **Development and Understanding of Theories of Change (ToCs): Support in Formulating Logical Frameworks and Identifying Measurable Results:**
   • Programmes, particularly those focusing on legislative change, should develop ToCs that account for external factors and risk analyses, ensuring these are explicitly included.

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- There's a need for OHCHR staff to thoroughly understand and embrace the organization's ToC, promoting a culture of strategic thinking across all processes (planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation).
- Coordination between different OHCHR departments is crucial for supporting field presences (FPs) in formulating logical frameworks or ToCs and identifying measurable results with precise indicators, crucial for future sustainability.

2. **Enhanced Reporting and Communication:**
   - Producing consolidated reports that focus on objectives, outcomes, and impact, presented in an analytical, results-oriented and more visually attractive manner, can improve the communication of program results, possibly replacing or supplementing individual narrative reports on the activities and outputs.

3. **Strengthening Results-Based Management (RBM) and alignment with the OMP**
   - OHCHR should continue to reinforce RBM approaches, capacities and application within Country Office work plans and daily work, with support from OHCHR HQ. Include the concepts and formulation of theories of change; needs assessment; identification and assessment of risks and assumptions; and programme/activity monitoring, evaluation and learning.

4. **RBM as a tool for better risk management: Systematic Risk Management in Programme and Project orientation:**

   - OHCHR should strengthen the future orientation of programmes through systematic identification of opportunities, and better risk management. This involves making elements of the risk management cycle (response, prevention, and mitigation) more explicit in the programmes and projects and integrating them within a comprehensive, inclusive risk framework.
   - This also involves incorporating risk assessment as a fundamental element in the formulation of theories of change, needs assessment, and programme planning. This includes prioritizing prevention strategies to address the intensified challenges to human rights and long-term development objectives.
   - Importance of relying on local stakeholders for guidance and conducting careful risk assessments to understand the potential impact of programme/project activities at the national level, particularly in sensitive contexts.

B. **Administrative, Financial and internal coordination (under the OEAP Operations management)**

> Key recommendation: OHCHR should improve its administrative procedures in terms of recruitment processes and fund transfers/disbursements. It also needs to improve internal coordination and streamline interaction between country presences and headquarters. Below are the specific recommendations from the evaluations;

1. **Improving and Streamlining Programme/ Project Administrative Procedures:**

- HQ, in particular DEXREL, Finance and the Front Office should enhance and streamline administrative procedures, to prevent delays in project approvals, especially concerning fund transfers and staff recruitment. Such delays can adversely impact the timely implementation of projects.

2. **Enhancing Involvement of Desk Officers in Programme/project Activities:**

- OHCHR should strengthen the role of FOTCD desk officers in the implementation of activities so as to enhance internal coherence and relevance and effectiveness of these initiatives.

3. **Strengthening Collaboration Between Country presences and Headquarters:**

- There is a need for improved two-way collaboration between Country presences and Headquarters. This includes sharing information about all portfolio components, aligning financial resources with operational needs, providing programmatic assistance for country programme strategy development, and improving evidence-based planning, reporting, and learning.
- Regular Inter-departmental Meetings should be encouraged to support and guide country presences, ensuring they receive necessary guidance and assistance.

Resource mobilization (under the OEAP on Resource mobilization)

Key recommendation: To enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of programmes and projects, there is need to mobilize more resources at both HQ and Country/Regional levels. To strengthen the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of OHCHR programmes and projects, it is imperative that OHCHR increases resource mobilization efforts, both at the HQ and at the country presences. This means actively seeking diverse funding sources, partnerships, and strategic collaborations and by diversifying our resource base. Below are the specific recommendations from the evaluations;

1. **Long-term Sustainability through HQ Commitment:**

- OHCHR headquarters should commit to long-term resources for the work in in the Country presences. The use of unearmarked extra-budgetary funding is suggested, due to its flexibility, which is crucial for sustainability.
- It is recommended to utilize the Regular Program for Technical Cooperation (RPTC) of the Secretary-General, to ensure more stable and predictable funding streams.

2. **Strengthening Local Fundraising Capacity:**

- DEXREL should enhance the fundraising abilities of the Country presences, so as to diversify funding sources.
- It is important to ensure achievement of projects/programme results as defined in the logical frameworks and theories of change. This approach not only improves the

sustainability of projects and programmes, but also often makes a compelling case to donors.

3. **Proactive Coordination with Donors:**

- Proactive coordination with and between donors is essential. This implies not only seeking funds but also aligning the donor interests with programme/project needs and ensuring that donor conditions do not overly restrict program implementation.
- OHCHR should proactively engage the donors during the key/high-level programme/project activities. This direct engagement not only re-enforces transparency and accountability, but also leads to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the project's impact, which in turn may lead to increased and continued funding.

Communication and visibility (under the OEAP on External Communication)

Key recommendation: OHCHR has at times exhibited inconsistency in communicating the results of programmes and projects, although effective communication is an essential component of results. Therefore, there is need to strengthen external communication strategies. Improving communication efforts will not only increase the visibility of OHCHR impactful work but will also have a cascading effect on other important factors such as resource mobilization and partnerships. Below are the specific recommendations from the evaluations;

1. **Improving Communication with National Partners and Stakeholders:**

- Enhance external communication at the national level to clarify positions, obtain feedback, and better identify gaps and needs. This includes communication with national partners, donors, and United Nations Resident Coordinator Offices (UN-RCOs) to discuss collaboration, accountability, and harmonize efforts and messages.

2. **Developing Comprehensive Media Engagement and Dissemination Plans and strategies:**

- Create and implement media engagement and dissemination plans and strategies at National level, to ensure that communication materials reach broader audiences. This should include the use of both social media and traditional media platforms, like TV ads, radio, and outdoor advertising, to target specific audiences effectively.
- Enhance external communication with a strong focus on learning, knowledge, and participatory processes for accountability. This includes through multi-sectoral dialogues, and networks.

3. **Increasing Visibility of OHCHR Activities and Offices:**

- Improve the visibility of OHCHR's offices, working methods, and thematic priorities which is essential for building awareness, fostering collaboration, and effectively conveying the impact of OHCHR's work in human rights promotion and protection.

This will ensure better familiarization with the OHCHR mandate and thematic priorities.

Strategic partnerships (under the OEAP on Partnerships)

> Key recommendation: Strategic partnerships have played a critical role in the success of OHCHR programmes and projects. It is imperative that the office continue to leverage these valuable collaborations, in line with its comparative advantage of its mandate. Below are the specific recommendations from the evaluations;

1. **Systematic Engagement with Parliamentarians:**
   - OHCHR Field Presences (FPs) are recommended to establish ongoing contacts with parliamentarians, particularly those in committees relevant to human rights. This engagement should be systematically incorporated as a task in the design of legislative support models tailored for each country. Such continuous interaction can facilitate better advocacy and influence on human rights legislation.

2. **Establishing Long-term Cooperation Frameworks:**
   - It is recommended that OHCHR establishes longer-term cooperation frameworks (spanning 3-5 years) with selected strategic partners, including government bodies, judicial entities, and CSOs. These frameworks would not restrict themselves to the typical MoU 2-year duration, and would inter-alia specify agreed-upon priorities and objectives to ensure alignment and focused collaboration, allowing for the development of more substantial and impactful partnerships.

Gender Equality, Disability Inclusion and Human Rights integration. (Under OEAP on Inclusion)

> Key recommendation: The Office has demonstrated commendable effectiveness in integrating gender equality, particularly through the successful implementation of the Gender Accreditation Program in the country presences. This has greatly enhanced staff capacity to incorporate gender considerations into programmes and projects. Although there has been notable progress in disability inclusion in selected projects and programs, there is still room for further integration. Leveraging the successes and best practices of the Gender Accreditation Program can serve as a valuable example to advance OHCHR's efforts to integrate disability inclusion more fully. Below are the specific recommendations from the evaluations;

1. **Strengthening Gender Equality and Women Empowerment:**

   - Building on the successes of the Gender Accreditation Programme, with a recommendation for a follow-up gender audit to assess progress and establish future action priorities.

2. **Enhancing Data Collection and Reporting on Disability Inclusion:**

- Focusing on improving data collection and reporting related to the rights of persons with disabilities and incorporating disability inclusion into project indicators and targets.

3. **Coordination with Regional Gender Advisers:**

- Improving communication and coordination with regional offices and Regional Gender Advisers to ensure their input into national campaign plans, particularly regarding gender equality.

4. **Gender and Disability in Programmes/Projects**

- Maintaining and enhancing focus on gender and disability issues within programs, including the active recruitment of people with disabilities and sexual and gender minorities.
- Continuing to develop a capacity for multi-factor analysis of exclusion, using evidence and disaggregated data to capture diverse dimensions of discrimination.
- Including gender equality, disability inclusion, and other markers in results frameworks and planning documents, linking them to relevant SDG and national indicators.
- Incorporating LNOB Principles in Assessments and Reporting by ensuring that needs assessments and monitoring and evaluation reports identify specific barriers and strengths of women and vulnerable groups.
- Building on the successes of the Gender Accreditation Programme, including a follow-up gender audit to assess progress and establish future action priorities.

5. **Prioritizing Inclusion in Programme/project Fundraising and Planning:**

- Ensuring funding for inclusion, particularly for youth from diverse backgrounds, and considering specific needs like travel support for participation in activities.