



Formative Evaluation of the Regional Program for Latin America and the Caribbean 2022-2025

Final Report

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Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
(LACRO)



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Acronyms¹

CPR	Contraceptive prevalence rate
CO	Country Offices
CPD	Country Program Document
CSE	Integral Sexual Education
EM	Responsible for the Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
EQ	Evaluation Question
EQAA	Quality assurance and evaluation
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FP	Family planning
GBSS	Gender biased sex selection
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HQ	Headquarters
HDP	Humanitarian, Development and Peace
HMIC	Middle and High Income Countries
HRD	Humanitarian Response Division
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LACRO	Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean
LNOB	Leave no one behind
MCO	Multi-Country Office
MIC	Middle Income Countries
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MTR	Mid-Term Review
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OEE	Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency
P&D	Population and Development
RO	Regional Office
RPAP	Regional Program Action Plan
RPE	Regional Program Evaluation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UNS	United Nations System
SP	Strategic Plan
SPE	Evaluation of the Strategic Plan
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRO	Subregional Office
TEFA	Adolescent Fertility Specific Fertility Rate
TFR	Fertility rate
ToR	Terms of Reference
TR	Transformer results
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

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¹ All acronyms correspond to acronyms in English.

Executive summary

The primary goal of the formative evaluation of the UNFPA Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) 2022-2025 was to provide evidence aimed at enhancing organizational learning and accelerating progress towards achieving the Three Transformative Results (3TRs): (i) zero unmet need for family planning, (ii) zero preventable maternal deaths, and (iii) zero gender-based violence and harmful practices.

The evaluation spanned the period from 2022 to 2024, adopting a forward-looking approach to guide the formulation of the upcoming Regional Program for 2026-2029. It was also aligned with the UNFPA's Global Strategic Plan for 2022-2025 and its regional evaluations.

A participatory approach utilizing mixed methods was employed, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data sources:

- Documentary review of more than 120 strategic and operational documents.
- Country missions to Brazil, Dominican Republic and the Caribbean.
- Focus groups with key populations, such as Afro-descendant communities, feminist networks and youth.
- Semi-structured interviews with 148 key stakeholders from a variety of UNFPA institutions, other UN partner agencies, national and decentralized governments, civil society, academia, among others.
- Virtual surveys directed to country offices with an 85% response rate.

Information triangulation and analysis matrices were used to ensure the quality and validity of the findings. Limitations were considered and mitigation measures applied.

Key Findings

1. Looking forward and the role of LACRO

- The three transformative results of the current Strategic Plan effectively conceptualize the purpose of UNFPA, are communicatively effective, and remain relevant for Latin America and the Caribbean. Although progress has been made in recent years at the aggregate level in Latin America regarding the 3TRs, this progress has been uneven among and within countries due to the region's inequality. The 3TRs have positioned UNFPA as a leader in sexual and reproductive health (SRH) but have obscured its contributions in other important areas such as population and development (P&D) and youth.
- While the three transformative results are relevant to Latin America, the 3TR framework is limiting for some countries with low maternal mortality and fertility rates. These countries, which exhibit demographic convergence characteristics, present a scenario for initiating and testing policies towards a maternal care and well-being agenda. Additionally, the concept of the life course mentioned in the UNFPA Strategic Plan has not been sufficiently developed or operationalized.
- The UNFPA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has strengthened its capacity and oversight function through the development and use of the regional performance indicator dashboard, quarterly performance reports of the COs, and mid-year meetings. Furthermore, it has reinforced its support function to the COs through the technical assistance platform and at the intergovernmental level for the development of the Regional Conference and the ICPD Agenda. However, there is room for improving internal coordination within LACRO and strengthening the capacities of the COs.

2. Accelerators

- The accelerators proposed in the Regional Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean 2022-2025 are relevant for advancing towards the achievement of the 3TRs. Although the selection of the accelerators in the Regional Programme does not fully coincide with those in the Strategic Plan and has not been implemented systematically, some promising experiences have been identified in areas such as communication, data generation, analysis and use of evidence-based interventions, and knowledge management; partnerships, coordination, and funding; and innovation and digitalization. The Regional Office has developed a method to define and operationalize the concept of an accelerator, aiming for its adoption by the COs. Additionally, clusters have been initiated for specific issues, considering multi-country strategies to address topics such as high maternal mortality rates and adolescent pregnancy.

3. Strategic Shifts and Megatrends

- The Regional Programme has incorporated the effects of so-called megatrends, although not systematically, and with room for improvement. In some COs, experiences have begun to develop to address the challenges of aging and care systems, and efforts have been articulated to address migration and the effects of climate change. These are trends whose responses need to consider different sociodemographic contexts.
- **Leave No One Behind (LNOB):** The UNFPA Regional Programme has managed to integrate the principle of leaving no one behind through multi-country strategic programmes, data generation, and evidence support to civil society networks and organizations. However, there is still no common and homogeneous vision on how to operationalize LNOB at the UNFPA level.
- **Scaling up services:** The Action Plan has enabled the expansion of the provision of comprehensive, high-quality SRH information and services by improving the capacities of public institutions to access contraceptives competitively and establishing multisectoral responses to gender-based violence and harmful practices in the region. However, there is room for increased SRH service coverage, the integration of SRH into humanitarian coordination mechanisms, and the strengthening of logistical capacities for the repositioning of kits.
- **Data and evidence:** The Regional Programme has contributed to the expansion of data and the generation of evidence, not only for decision-making but also for the design of political advocacy and communication strategies. However, there are still difficulties in disseminating and highlighting achievements to various audiences and in the different languages of the region.
- **Humanitarian Response:** UNFPA has established itself as a relevant humanitarian actor in the region due to the growing number of emergencies and rapidly emerging crises affecting almost all countries. The minimum package of GBV and SRH services in humanitarian response is a great achievement of UNFPA, positioning these issues in traditionally unaddressed spaces. The UNFPA Regional Programme has allowed for some improvement in humanitarian programming and presence in interagency coordination instances. Humanitarian preparedness and response capacity and humanitarian-development nexus programming have been expanded.
- **Social norms and gender:** The UNFPA Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean 2022-2025 has successfully integrated social and gender norms and structural inequalities into Theories of Change and programme design. Efforts have been identified to address the effects of perceptions, attitudes, and practices that limit the scope of

comprehensive sexual education work, mainly in schools and communities, one of the main challenges along with voluntary termination of pregnancy, in a highly changing and volatile regional environment.

- **Normative role:** UNFPA's normative role in Latin America and the Caribbean has been reinforced, although not comprehensively or uniformly. While in some national contexts, it has contributed to strengthening women's advancement mechanisms through technical assistance in strategy design and strategic planning, it is important to consider the role of interagency work with other UN system agencies with related mandates and areas of work. LACRO has developed the concept by adapting it to the regional context, promoting its appropriation by COs and partners.
- **Financing:** Although promising regional and national experiences have been identified, UNFPA's capacities in Latin America and the Caribbean face serious limitations in resource mobilization with an integral, proactive, strategic, and long-term perspective.

4. Enabling factors

- **Strategic Communication, Resource Mobilization, and Partnerships:** Strategic communication, resource mobilization, and partnership experiences have been mainly identified at the national level and, in recent years, at the Regional Programme level. This offers room for improvement to enhance the impact and strategic nature of these resources. LACRO has reinforced the team and is developing strategies to equip the Office with the capacity to shift from funding to funding and financing. In terms of communications, there is a conscious effort to strengthen coherence and strategy, manifested in a shift mainly focusing on resource mobilization and partnership generation.
- **Financial and Human Resources:** The LACRO Regional Office has strengthened its capacity by incorporating various professional profiles in programmatic areas, resource mobilization, human resources management, and communication. Several lines of work in these areas are starting to be developed. Key actors value the high capacity, professionalism, and availability of LACRO staff.
- LACRO maintains a balance in the configuration of its HR staff in terms of age and gender. The distribution of HR across countries shows significant variability without a clear logic based on country tiers or size. The Regional Office has mapped regular staff contracts in the region but lacks detailed information on non-regular staff contracts, representing a gap in consolidated regional data. Finally, the need to improve staff well-being has been expressed, and the importance of strengthening HR focal points in COs has been highlighted.
- **Business Model:** UNFPA's added value lies in its widely recognized technical expertise, the quality of its professionals, and a shared horizontal decision-making approach with strategic and implementing partners. Evidence shows the importance of a flexible and collaborative approach, with the significance of the Fund's presence in countries, adjusted to the diverse realities of ALC countries, maximizing regional cooperation and leveraging the strengths of country offices and governments. However, funding limitations, especially for middle-income or upper-middle-income countries, require specific adaptations in the business model design, with a greater emphasis on innovation, data generation, evidence, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Conclusions

The evaluation highlights that the 3TRs remain relevant in a region marked by deep inequalities. However, a flexible and adaptive approach is required to address both persistent challenges and emerging megatrends, ensuring that no one is left behind on the path to 2030.

The UNFPA Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean adopts a 3TRs-based approach, suitable for addressing inequalities and advancing towards the SDGs and ICPD. While the region has made progress in the three transformative results of UNFPA, they remain relevant. Adolescent pregnancy is a priority, and LACRO has positioned it at the center of its Theory of Change. However, it is necessary to better highlight UNFPA's contributions in areas such as population and development, youth, gender, and HIV.

The LACRO Regional Office has strengthened its capacity by incorporating various professional profiles in programmatic areas, resource mobilization, human resources management, and communication. Several lines of work in these areas are being reinforced. Key actors value the high capacity, professionalism, and availability of LACRO staff. UNFPA's regional actions require a delicate balance between ambitious goals, limited resources, and priorities.

The accelerators proposed in the Regional Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean 2022-2025 are relevant for advancing towards the achievement of the 3TRs. While the accelerators have not been implemented systematically, some promising experiences have been identified in data generation, analysis, use of evidence-based interventions, knowledge management, partnerships, coordination, funding, and innovation and adaptation. LACRO correctly identified the need to conceptually develop the accelerators and has made progress towards their conceptualization and operationalization.

UNFPA's added value in the region lies in its recognized technical expertise, professional quality, and horizontal and collaborative approach. Evidence indicates the importance of a flexible and collaborative approach, as well as the relevance of the Fund's presence in countries, adjusted to the diverse realities of ALC countries, maximizing regional cooperation and leveraging the strengths of country offices and governments. However, funding limitations, especially in middle- and high-income countries, require specific adaptations in the business model, emphasizing innovation, data generation, evidence, and multi-stakeholder partnerships..

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Enhance the focus on accelerating progress towards the three transformative results in the next Regional Programme, ensuring that strategies are aligned with the regional context, using an LNOB approach and the normative role of UNFPA. At the same time, capture and communicate advancements and outcomes in key areas not visible in the 3TRs..

Recommendation 2: Operationalize the concept of an accelerator by strengthening the links between concepts and programmatic approaches of the SP and the RP, and between the accelerators and strategic shifts.

Recommendation 3: Advance the Resource Mobilization Strategy using a proactive, comprehensive, and multi-level approach.

Recommendation 4: Enhance organizational capacity in operational, human, and financial terms.

Recommendation 5: Develop a business model adapted to the specific context of the Region.

1. Introduction

1. The evaluation report aims to present the results of the evaluation of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, along with the main conclusions and corresponding recommendations. The document's structure, in accordance with UNFPA's Evaluation Policy guidelines², is as follows: this section outlines the purpose and scope of the evaluation, identifying its objectives as well as the subject of the evaluation. Chapter 2 explores the evaluation context and UNFPA's response. The following chapter explains the methodology applied in the framework of the evaluation. Chapter 4 presents the findings organized by evaluation components: future perspectives, accelerators, strategic shifts, and enablers. Chapter 5 details the conclusions and the recommendations proposed in the following chapter. Finally, the bibliography used and the annexes, including various supporting materials such as the evaluation matrix and data collection tools, are included.

1.1. Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

2. **The objective** of this formative evaluation³ is to provide evidence to support UNFPA's learning on what works and what does not work to accelerate progress **towards achieving the three Transformative Results** (3TRs) in the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region: Zero Unmet Need for Family Planning, Zero Preventable Maternal Deaths, and Zero Gender-Based Violence and Harmful Practices. This effort will inform the design of the next Strategic Plan (SP) and Regional Program 2026-2029.
3. This evaluation seeks to **assess the organization's readiness and strategic positioning** to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the 3TRs, taking into account the results of the recent Mid-Term Review of the Regional Program⁴, the Tenth Anniversary of the Montevideo Consensus and the 30th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).
4. The evaluation focused on the current **Regional Programme** period, **from 2022 to mid-2024**, when data collection was completed. A **forward-looking perspective** has been maintained so that the evaluation results will benefit the remainder of the current Regional Programme cycle and the design of the next one. In addition, the regional Programme evaluation is synchronized with and feeds into the evaluation of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan and the regional Programme evaluations in each of the 6 UNFPA regions⁵
5. **Key priorities** for the LAC region were evaluated, namely, adolescent pregnancy, maternal mortality, family planning, gender-based violence and other harmful practices. The key **strategic changes** proposed in the current SP⁶ were also evaluated, in particular, five strategic priorities identified by

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² United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2019). *UNFPA Evaluation Policy*. New York: UNFPA.

³ Evaluation methodology aimed at improving the design and implementation of a program while it is in progress.

⁴ UNFPA (2023a) LACRO Regional Programme 2022-2025 Mid-Term Review Report

⁵ The UNFPA regions are: Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO - East and Southern Africa Regional Office), West and Central Africa (WCARO - West and Central Africa Regional Office), Asia and the Pacific (APRO - Asia and the Pacific Regional Office), Arab States (ASRO - Arab States Regional Office), Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECARO - Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LACRO - Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office).

⁶ The strategic shifts proposed in the current SP are: i. UNFPA's normative role; ii. Social and gender norms and structural inequalities; iii. Scaling up data and evidence for decision making; iv. Scaling up comprehensive sexual and reproductive health; v. Incorporating resilience, disaster preparedness and response; vi. Integration of the effects of megatrends; vii. Increasing focus on "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB); viii. Humanitarian response (Nexus approach); ix. Strengthening humanitarian response capacities; x. funding to funding and financing.

LACRO, such as the effects of megatrends⁷, the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) strategy, humanitarian response and the nexus.

6. The **accelerators**⁸ that the Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean (LACRO) identified in the Regional Programme are: a) partnerships, financing and United Nations coordination; b) communication and advocacy; c) innovation and adaptation; d) generation, analysis and use of evidence-based interventions and knowledge management; e) efficient management and agility in operational processes.
7. Finally, special attention was given to the analysis of the **added value of UNFPA** in a region of mostly middle-income countries (MICs). Special emphasis was also placed on its oversight and support role to Country Offices (COs), **its normative and intergovernmental role**, support in the design and implementation of public policies, advocacy and political incidence, as well as capacity building of the Country Offices themselves and of the Subregional Office for the Caribbean (SRO).
8. The main users of the Regional Programme Evaluation (RPE) are: (i) the UNFPA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean; (ii) UNFPA Country Offices (COs) and the Caribbean Sub-Regional Office (SRO); and (iii) UNFPA Headquarters Divisions, especially the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). The evaluation results should also be of interest to a wider group of stakeholders, such as UNFPA national partners, sub-regional organizations, governments, civil society organizations, private sector, academia and other UN organizations.

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⁷ The megatrends considered in particular were the demographic dividend, human mobility, aging and climate change.

⁸ The SP identified six accelerators: (i) Transformative Approaches; (ii) Innovation and digitalization; (iii) Partnerships, South-South and Triangular Cooperation, and financing; (iv) Data and evidence; (v) "Leaving no one behind" and "reaching the furthest behind first"; (vi) Resilience and adaptation, and complementarity between development, humanitarian and peace efforts.

2. Background and context

2.1. Context

9. Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the most diverse regions, including more than 134 million people who self-identify as Afro-descendants, 58 million as indigenous and more than 85 million people with disabilities, according to ECLAC data for 2024⁹. In addition, the region continues to be the most unequal in the world, with a population of 670 million¹⁰, close to 201 million live in poverty (32.1 percent of the total population) of which 82 million (13.1 percent) live in extreme poverty. Composed mainly of middle and upper middle-income countries (HMICs), the region is characterized by persistent and intersectional inequalities marked by age, gender, race/ethnicity, disability, income and geographic location, among other variables, which are reflected in key indicators related to the ICPD and the Montevideo Consensus.¹¹
10. Poverty and extreme poverty disproportionately affect children and adolescents, especially among indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples and the population rural. Poverty rates among Afro-descendants exceed those of non-Afro-descendants in most countries, with significant disparities in Colombia, Ecuador, Uruguay and Brazil. The gender gap in poverty is also notable, with women more likely to live in poverty than men, especially in rural areas.
11. In this region, mortality has declined since the first half of the 20th century and fertility has fallen rapidly since the 1960s. This has led to an increase in life expectancy, which in 2022 reaches 73.8 years, and a fertility rate of 1.85 children per woman. Overall, women live longer than men in the region, with an average life expectancy of 80.15 years for girls born in 2023, compared to 74.5 years for boys. However, the lowest life expectancy rates are found in Haiti, Bolivia and Guyana, with higher mortality rates among men, leading to a higher proportion of older women at risk of health problems associated with aging. As a result, population growth in Latin America and the Caribbean has declined from 2.6% in the mid-20th century to 0.67% in 2022.
12. This demographic transition is causing two key phenomena: population aging and the end of the demographic dividend. Latin America and the Caribbean is now one of the fastest aging regions, indicating that the window of demographic opportunity is closing.
13. In the current decade, the number of inhabitants under 25 years of age is projected to decrease and the adult population is expected to grow, especially those over 65 years of age. If the projections are fulfilled, by 2047 the working-age population will begin to decrease and the group of people aged 65 and over will be the only one that will continue to grow, marking the beginning of the period of the aging society. By the end of this century, the only population group that will continue to increase at the regional level will be those aged 80 and over.
14. Coexistence among countries, at the subnational level and in different sectors of the population, shows significant demographic diversity. There are countries in an advanced stage of aging, such as Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Costa Rica and Uruguay. On the other hand, countries such as Haiti, Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua are at a very early stage, below the regional average.

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⁹ ECLAC (2024) Population, development and rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (LC/CRPD.5/3); cited in UNFPA (2024) Informe de actividades del UNFPA, Quinta Reunión de la Conferencia Regional sobre Población y Desarrollo. Cartagena, Colombia.

¹⁰ United Nations Population Fund. State of World Population 2024. Intertwined lives, threads of hope: eliminating inequalities in sexual and reproductive health and rights; cited in UNFPA (2024) UNFPA Activity Report, Fifth Session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development. Cartagena, Colombia.

¹¹ UNFPA (2024) UNFPA Activity Report, Fifth Meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development. Cartagena, Colombia

15. According to ECLAC data¹² the countries with the highest proportions of older people of African descent are Argentina, Cuba, Panama, Uruguay and Venezuela, where they exceed 10% of the total population of African descent, reaching 15.2% in Cuba. In contrast, in Bolivia and Ecuador, the relative weight of older people of African descent is less than 7%. However, in most countries, these populations are relatively younger than the rest of the population. This is clearly observed, for example, in Cuba and Uruguay, countries that are already in a stage of general aging, but where their Afro-descendant populations are less aged.
16. On the other hand, in Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and Venezuela, the opposite is true: Afro-descendant populations are older than the rest of the population. Indigenous peoples are also beginning to experience aging trends, especially in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay.¹³
17. Approximately 73.5 million international migrants and 22.1 million forcibly displaced persons are in need of international protection or humanitarian assistance. Migration flows increasingly include women and girls, driven by a variety of factors, including violence, crime, poverty and natural disasters and climate change. The challenges faced by migrants, including those related to health, education and integration, require comprehensive and coordinated policy responses across the region to ensure the protection of their rights and well-being. This diversity in migratory movements generates significant changes in migration balances and age structures in receiving countries, as well as in countries of origin. This trend is more pronounced in areas with negative net migration, as it not only decreases the population, but also reduces the reproductive potential of the society of origin, given that the population migrant tends to be younger.

Political Context

18. Between 2022 and 2025, Latin America and the Caribbean have undergone an intense electoral cycle with several presidential elections. So far, elections have been held in countries such as Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Honduras, Paraguay, Guatemala, Argentina, and Mexico, among others. According to the trends observed, some results reflect a shift towards more conservative positions, while others have strengthened left or center-left leaderships.¹⁴
19. An analysis of the elections until 2023¹⁵ shows that at least five of the presidential contests were won by candidates with conservative or right-wing tendencies. Examples of this include the victories of Guillermo Lasso in Ecuador (2021), Luis Lacalle Pou in Uruguay (2020), and Santiago Peña in Paraguay (2023), as well as the dominance of conservative movements in Guatemala and other countries. However, the region continues to be heterogeneous, as there have also been significant advances of left-wing coalitions, such as the triumph of Gustavo Petro in Colombia and Gabriel Boric in Chile, which mark contrasts in regional political dynamics.
20. The resurgence of conservatism that has directly impacted sexual and reproductive rights (SRR). This phenomenon has manifested itself in legislative setbacks, limitations on access to abortion, restrictions on comprehensive sexuality education, and an increase in the influence of narratives that promote traditional values and reject gender approaches¹⁶. In several countries, conservative

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¹² ECLAC (2023). *Panorama del envejecimiento: Tendencias demográficas en América Latina y el Caribe*. Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). <https://www.cepal.org/es/enfoques/panorama-envejecimiento-tendencias-demograficas-america-latina-caribe>

¹³ Idem.

¹⁴ Elcano Royal Institute (2023). A fragmented and polarized Latin America faces an intense electoral cycle (2021-2024). Retrieved from <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/una-america-latina-fragmentada-y-polarizada-afronta-un-intenso-ciclo-electoral-2021-2024/>

¹⁵ Idem.

¹⁶ UN Women (2023). Regional report on women's rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. New York: UN Women.

political and religious groups have gained power, generating a context of polarization that hinders progress on SRHR.

21. The implementation of progressive SRHR policies has faced multiple obstacles, including budgetary constraints, domestic opposition and legal reinterpretations. In addition, conservative international networks have funded initiatives that seek to erode achievements in this area, while tensions in international fora reflect the fragmentation of positions within the region. However, some countries, such as Argentina, Mexico and Colombia, have made significant advances, mainly in the decriminalization of abortion and the expansion of sexual and reproductive health services, driven by feminist movements and civil society organizations.¹⁷
22. In this polarized context, advances and setbacks on SRHR have coexisted, showing a region in constant contention between conservative and progressive forces. Advocacy for SRHR remains a critical challenge for actors committed to human rights and gender equality, especially in a political climate that favors traditional narratives.

Unmet Need for Family Planning

23. There are different factors driving population aging. The main reason is that half of the countries in the region have fertility below replacement level. Of the 50 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, 29 have fertility rates below the regional average of 1.84 births per woman. In addition, LAC is the region with the fastest fertility decline in the world.¹⁸
24. The constitutions of seven countries in the region have provisions related to sexual and reproductive health care and access: Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and the Plurinational State of Bolivia. In the case of Guatemala, similar provisions exist in the 2001 Social Development Law. Five countries have specific laws-Panama (1999), Honduras (2000), Peru (2007), Nicaragua (2008), and El Salvador (2011)-while ten countries have provisions related to sexual and reproductive health care and access, either in their health or gender equality laws.¹⁹
25. There have also been debates on reproductive rights, including the decriminalization of abortion in several countries such as Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Mexico and Uruguay, and the guarantee of access to sexual and reproductive health services. Although some countries have made progress in the protection of these rights, challenges persist in the implementation of policies that guarantee equitable access to sexual and reproductive health care.²⁰
26. Women, adolescents and youth still have a high unmet need for modern contraceptives, particularly among the most left behind populations such as indigenous, Afro-descendant and migrant women. In countries where disaggregated data are available, we observed that adolescents and youth, particularly among the Afro-descendant and indigenous populations, and people living in rural and underserved areas, have a higher unmet need for family planning (FP) than other population groups. For their part, women, adolescents and young girls have limited access to comprehensive sexuality education in and out of school and limited knowledge of their sexual and reproductive rights, often associated with limited contraceptive use and timely seeking of sexual and reproductive health care. These trends were further exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which, according

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¹⁷ UN Women (2023). Regional report on women's rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. New York: UN Women.

¹⁸ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Población, desarrollo y derechos en América Latina y el Caribe: propuesta de segundo informe regional sobre la implementación del Consenso de Montevideo sobre Población y Desarrollo (LC/MDP.5/4/Rev.1), Santiago, 2024.

¹⁹ ECLAC, UNFPA, Gender Equality Observatory, November 2021. Sexual and Reproductive Health Laws in Latin America, 2021. <https://oig.>

²⁰ UNFPA (2024) UNFPA Activity Report, Fifth Meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development. Cartagena, Colombia.

to a 2020 UNFPA study on the impact of the pandemic on contraceptive access, resulted in a 30-year reversal in unmet need for FP.²¹

Adolescent pregnancy

27. In terms of fertility, significant discrepancies exist at the subnational level and among various population groups. These differences are influenced by a variety of factors, including geographic location, socioeconomic status, cultural norms, and access to health care and education. Bimodal fertility is observed in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay²². In lower socioeconomic sectors, fertility is highest around age 20. In contrast, in sectors with higher levels of education, fertility is delayed until after age 30. Although the trends have similar patterns, there are clear differences in fertility levels by socioeconomic level.
28. Adolescent fertility remains high, particularly among Afro-descendant and indigenous populations, and factors such as limited access to sexual and reproductive health services, including modern contraceptives, poverty, and cultural norms contribute to high rates of adolescent pregnancy.
29. The Adolescent Specific Fertility Rate (ASFR) is a particularly critical indicator in the Latin American and Caribbean region because of its magnitude (second in the world, after Sub-Saharan Africa) and because it interferes with the fulfillment of the human rights of girls and adolescents. Nineteen percent of all births are to adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age. In addition, in recent years, there has been increasing attention and relevance given to pregnancy in children under 14 years of age, which in most cases are the result of sexual violence²³, however, according to ECLAC statistics there is a trend of reduction from 3.4 per 1000 girls in 2014 to 2.3 in 2024, although the trend of reduction is less accelerated than in the group of 15-19 years.²⁴
30. Currently in the region there are advances in legal and political frameworks that enable women, adolescents and young people in the region to have greater bodily autonomy and make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health. However, these advances are unequal and pending in terms of effective equal access and financing, as detailed by the fact that 21 out of 33 countries do not have a public access budget line on the funds allocated and spent on the procurement of contraceptives by the public sector, concluding that 26 out of 33 countries in the region need to develop user-friendly government-run websites to inform their citizens about contraceptive availability, and 21 countries do not have a publicly accessible budget line on funds allocated and spent on contraceptive procurement by the public sector.^{25,26}

Preventable Maternal Deaths

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 - ²¹ UNFPA. The Impact of COVID on Access to Modern Contraceptives in Latin America and the Caribbean. <https://lac.unfpa.org/es/publications/el-impacto-de-covid-19-en-el-acceso-los-anticonceptivos-en-am%C3%A9rica-latina-y-el-caribe>.
 - ²² Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Población, desarrollo y derechos en América Latina y el Caribe: propuesta de segundo informe regional sobre la implementación del Consenso de Montevideo sobre Población y Desarrollo (LC/MDP.5/4/Rev.1), Santiago, 2024.
 - ²³ UNFPA (2024) UNFPA Activity Report, Fifth Meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development. Cartagena, Colombia.
 - ²⁴ UN Women (2023). Regional report on women's rights in Latin America and the Caribbean. New York: UN Women.
 - ²⁵ Latin American and Caribbean Parliament (2023). Atlas of Contraceptive Policies in Latin America and the Caribbean. European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF), Fòs Feminista and IPPF Americas and the Caribbean.
 - ²⁶ 21 out of 33 countries do not have a publicly available budget line on funds allocated and spent on contraceptive procurement by the public sector.

31. In 20 years, Latin America and the Caribbean has maintained a constant maternal mortality ratio (MMR), despite the fact that in all other regions of the world it has decreased. According to the latest available data, in 2020 the MMR in the region was 88 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, these data had a small decrease between 2000 and 2015 (from 86 to 75 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births), but after 2015 the MMR showed an increasing trend. Ten countries account for 90% of the number of maternal deaths in the region: Argentina 3.4%, Bolivia (Plurinational State of) 5%, Brazil 23.9%, Colombia 6.5%, Guatemala 4.3%, Haiti 11.3%, Mexico 13.7%, Peru 5.8%, Dominican Republic 2.6%, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela 14.3%.²⁷
32. Childbirth and postpartum complications are among the three leading causes of death in adolescents between 15 and 19 years of age. In girls between 10 and 14 years of age, the risk of dying from pregnancy-related causes is up to 3 times higher than in women over 20 years of age. It is estimated that around 6.5 million unsafe abortions are performed each year in Latin America and the Caribbean, of which 1.4 million are performed on adolescents.²⁸
33. World Health Organization (WHO) reports present statistics that speak for themselves: almost half of all pregnancies in Latin America and the Caribbean are unintended and access to modern contraceptive methods has increased by only 9.3% from 2000 to 2023; inequalities in access to contraception persist, with lower rates among unmarried women, adolescents, youth, indigenous women, women of African descent, women with disabilities, low-income women, and women living in rural areas; nine countries in this region are among the 60 countries with the highest adolescent fertility rate for 15-19 year olds in the world; maternal mortality has increased by 46 percent between 2020 and 2022; one in three women suffer violence throughout their lives in multiple forms; and femicide rates make daily headlines in several countries in the region.²⁹

Gender-based violence and other harmful practices

34. Gender-based violence (GBV) is widespread in Latin America and the Caribbean, where two out of every three women between the ages of 15 and 49 suffer some type of violence in their lifetime. In fact, 14 of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide are in the LAC region. Sexual violence is also a serious problem; one in four women has been a victim of physical, psychological and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner.
35. In 2022, femicides reached at least 4,050, which is 12 femicides every day or 1 femicide every 2 hours. Of the 19 Latin American countries³⁰ that reported to the Observatory for Gender Equality (OIG), the number of femicides, feminicides or gender-based violent deaths of women in 2022, femicide rates are alarmingly high, especially in countries such as Honduras (6 per 100,000 women), Dominican Republic (2.9), El Salvador and Uruguay (1.6 in both countries). Women and girls with disabilities face higher risks of violence, as do LGBTIQ+ people, who suffer physical aggression, sexual violence and expulsion from the community due to discrimination.
36. According to the UNFPA Activity Report for the Fifth Meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development, notable progress has been made in the region in the development of laws and public policies to address gender-based violence. All Latin American and Caribbean countries have adopted the main international human rights agreements related to gender equality

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²⁷ WHO. Prepared by the authors based on "Trends in maternal mortality 2000 to 2020. Cited in UNFPA (2024) Informe de actividades del UNFPA, Quinta Reunión de la Conferencia Regional de Población y Desarrollo. Cartagena, Colombia.

²⁸ UNFPA (2024) UNFPA Activity Report, Fifth Meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development. Cartagena, Colombia.

²⁹ WHO (2022). Actions and critical considerations for achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health in the context of universal health coverage through a primary health care approach, Geneva, cited in UNFPA (2024) UNFPA Activity Report, Fifth Meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development. Cartagena, Colombia.

³⁰ Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil. Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica. Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela, Puerto Rico.

and the prevention of gender-based violence, both at the global level and within the Inter-American framework. In addition, key progress has been made in terms of legislation, including the recognition of the fundamental right of women to live free of violence, the enactment of comprehensive laws to prevent and combat gender-based violence, and the criminalization of femicide in 18 countries in the region³¹. Of these, 13 countries have implemented laws that comprehensively address violence against women, incorporating specific provisions on data collection, records, statistics, observatories, information systems or reports on gender-based violence against women and girls.

37. Other legislation that has been developed in order to protect women and girls include laws that include the prohibition of child marriage and early unions without exceptions in 12 countries, the criminalization of marital rape in 19 countries, laws that address the problem of obstetric violence in 12 countries, the inclusion of digital violence in regulatory frameworks in 3 countries, comprehensive plans to respond to gender-based violence in force in 15 countries and the creation of institutions to respond to gender-based violence in most countries.³²
38. Early unions are a predominant harmful practice in the region, being strongly correlated with the intergenerational reproduction of gender-based violence. It is a frequent practice, especially in rural areas and among the poorest households. Despite a slow decline over the past 25 years, the region is projected to have one of the highest levels of child marriage globally in 2030. Girls married before the age of 18 often face significant socioeconomic disadvantages, such as lower educational attainment and early entry into precarious jobs, which perpetuate cycles of poverty and violence.

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³¹ Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) Venezuela. in UNFPA (2024) UNFPA Activity Report, Fifth Meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development. Cartagena, Colombia

³² UNFPA (2024) UNFPA Activity Report, Fifth Meeting of the Regional Conference on Population and Development. Cartagena, Colombia

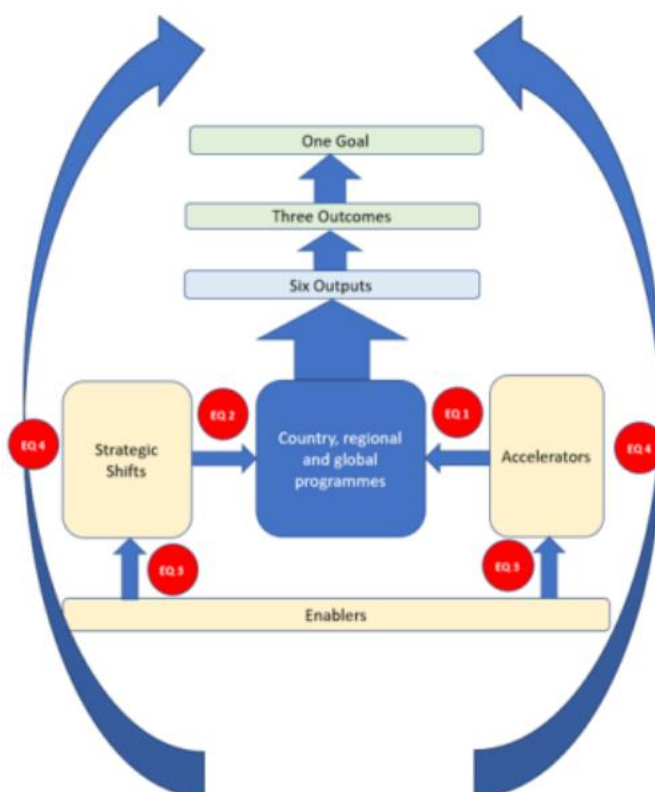
2.2. UNFPA Response

Global Strategic Plan 2022- 2025

39. The UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 is the second in a series of three strategic plans aimed at laying the foundation and accelerating progress toward achieving the 3TRs and, ultimately, universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. The strategic plans in this series are aligned with General Assembly resolution 70/1 on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals. These strategic plans also respond to other global frameworks that underpin the 2030 Agenda, including:

- Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 of the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015).
- Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (2015).

Illustration1 Conceptual Framework of the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan Evaluation



40. The SP 2022-2025 is fully aligned with the objectives of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and includes the implementation of its Plan of Action as one of the overall objectives of the Organization. It also builds on the momentum of the ICPD's 25th anniversary, which calls for accelerating the Action Plan.

41. The 2022-2025 Strategic Plan focuses on three transformative results: (1) accelerating the reduction of unmet family planning needs; (2) accelerating the reduction of preventable maternal deaths; and (3) accelerating the reduction of gender-based violence and harmful practices. These are reflected in six outputs: 1. Policy and accountability: aimed at strengthening national policies and accountability frameworks in reproductive health and rights. 2. Quality care and services: ensuring that people, especially women and girls, have access to comprehensive, high-quality sexual and reproductive health services. 3. Gender equality and empowerment: promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls by ending gender-based violence and harmful practices. 4. Youth potential: empowering young people to realize their potential, particularly through education and access to sexual and reproductive health services. 5. Population data: strengthening the collection, analysis, and use of population data for better policy formulation and program

implementation. 6. Humanitarian preparedness and response: improving preparedness and response to humanitarian crises with a focus on sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence.

42. In addition, it outlines 6 accelerators designed to enhance the achievement of the six SP outputs organized into 12 key strategic shifts³³ that reflect UNFPA's intention to adopt new action strategies for implementing the SP 2022- 2025. Finally, it names the "enablers" that would enable the strategic shifts and accelerators to be implemented.
43. The inception report prepared by the SP evaluation team brings these elements together in a logical framework that illustrates how these factors come into play to achieve the desired objective of accelerating progress in achieving the 3Rs (see Annex 8). This framework is presented schematically in Figure 1.

The Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean (2022-2025)

44. The RP for Latin America and the Caribbean 2022-2025³⁴ aims to support the programmatic efforts of COs to accelerate the achievement of the 3TRs. At the core of the Regional Programme is the principle of "leaving no one behind", focusing on women, adolescents and youth from the most vulnerable population groups in the region, in particular the indigenous population, Afro-descendants, people with disabilities, people living in rural areas, people in situations of human mobility and people with humanitarian needs.
45. The Regional Programme contributes with its own outputs to the six outputs of the global Strategic Plan 2022-2025:
46. Output 1. Policy and accountability: By 2025, sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, as well as the prevention of and response to gender-based violence and harmful practices, are better integrated into relevant national policies, plans, legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms.
47. Output 2. Quality of care and services: By 2025, the capacity of systems, institutions and communities is strengthened to increase coverage and ensure access for the most underserved groups to high-quality, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services, including commodities, as well as essential services to address gender-based violence and harmful practices.
48. Output 3. Gender and social norms: By 2025, mechanisms and capacities of actors and institutions are strengthened to eliminate social norms that underpin gender and intersectional discrimination

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³³ Align the organizational approach to achieve the 3TRs. Integrate the effects of megatrends, such as climate change, demographic shifts, inequalities, and digitization, into programming. 3. Increase focus on "populations left behind" and emphasize "reaching those left furthest behind." 4. Expand the provision of high-quality comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services as part of universal health coverage plans. 5. Expand humanitarian response capacity to better safeguard the lives of women, adolescents and youth, especially adolescent girls, while also addressing mental health and psychosocial issues. 6. Integrate resilience, prevention, preparedness and early action, emphasizing complementarity between humanitarian, development and peace interventions. 7. Mainstream the multisectoral needs of women, adolescents and youth, and address structural inequalities, such as discriminatory gender and social norms, that hinder the achievement of transformative results. 8. Tailor programmatic and technical assistance to better respond to local contexts through a country office-led process, "within the UN family on the ground". 9. Strengthen UNFPA's normative role in all countries where UNFPA is present. 10. Shift the focus from funding the ICPD agenda to funding the ICPD agenda. 11. Strengthen and expand partnerships, including those with the private sector, civil society organizations, international financial institutions, academia and the media, as well as partnerships through South-South and triangular cooperation. 12. Increase focus on joint accountability, in line with UN reforms, principles and practices.

³⁴ UNFPA (2023d). Annex 4: Implementation of global and regional programmes, 2022. Implementation of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025.

and to promote sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, gender equality and women's decision-making.

49. **Output 4. Demographic change and data:** By 2025, there are fully disaggregated and strengthened data and evidence systems that take into account demographic changes and regional megatrends (including the demographic bonus, human mobility, aging, and climate change) for use in policy and Programme formulation, especially those related to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, reaching those furthest behind first.
50. **Outcome 5: Humanitarian action:** By 2025, the capacity of actors and systems, including UNFPA country offices and partners, is strengthened for emergency preparedness, early action and the development of life-saving interventions in sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence that are timely, integrated and conflict- and climate-sensitive.
51. **Output 6. Adolescents and youth:** By 2025, the empowerment of women, adolescents and youth is strengthened through increased leadership, knowledge, participation and expanded opportunities and decision-making capacities, especially for women, adolescents and girls who are furthest behind.

Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Regional Programme 2022-2025

52. The UNFPA LACRO conducted a Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the Regional Programme and Integrated Budget, assessing progress towards the 3TRs and identifying ways to accelerate the implementation of the 2022-2025 Programme in its final two years.
53. The Mid-Term Review Report of the Regional Programme 2022-2025³⁵ highlights significant progress in several key areas. In the realm of public policy, roadmaps were established to prevent teenage pregnancies across six countries, integrating human rights issues into regional agreements. Regarding service quality, the provision of sexual and reproductive health care was enhanced, and the Essential Services Package for survivors of gender-based violence was implemented in eleven countries.
54. In the area of population and development, LACRO supported censuses and the creation of observatories for Afro-descendants, while in humanitarian action, sexual health and gender violence components were integrated into response plans. In addition, more than 70 youth networks participated in activities related to the follow-up of the International Conference on Population and Development, processes were promoted to strengthen youth leadership in the region, and comprehensive sexuality education was promoted with new guides and courses.
55. The Mid-Term Review (MTR) of the UNFPA Regional Programme for 2022 and 2023 has identified several key areas for improvement, including strengthening the Regional Office's oversight and support to country offices for more effective planning. It highlights the need to expand strategic partnerships, especially with the private sector and civil society, and to strengthen strategic communication to better position the ICPD Agenda and address discriminatory social norms. It is also suggested to improve the generation of disaggregated data and the integration of megatrends such as climate change into programming. Finally, the importance of strengthening humanitarian capacities and ensuring that the principle of "Leave No One Behind" is integrated into all interventions is emphasized.

Theories of change revisited

56. Between February and July 2023, LACRO evaluated the theories of change underpinning the Regional Programme (RP) 2022-2025 for Latin America and the Caribbean. This process aimed to

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³⁵ UNFPA (2023). *Mid-term review report of the regional program 2022-2025*. UNFPA Latin America and the Caribbean.

analyze the continued relevance of the proposed priorities and strategic interventions, addressing the challenges encountered in the first year of implementation of the RP.

57. The analysis of the regional context underlying the theories of change reviewed reiterated the relevance of regional priorities and strategic interventions, indicating that addressing adolescent pregnancy, maternal mortality, gender-based violence and other harmful practices remains crucial to accelerate progress towards the three transformative results and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 in Latin America and the Caribbean. However, the exacerbation of existing structural challenges, such as poverty and inequalities, along with emerging issues and megatrends, such as the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, aging, climate change and migration, require a different or greater emphasis on specific aspects. Further details of the revised ToC can be found in Annex 3.
58. As a result, based on the desk review and consultations conducted during the MTR process, the findings of the internal audit, the ToC review and the analysis of emerging opportunities and challenges in the region, LACRO has outlined the following five strategic priorities for the remaining two years of Regional Programme implementation:
 - Strengthen the Regional Office's oversight of POs' programmatic and operational performance to accelerate the achievement of the three transformative results.
 - Accelerate the transition "from funding to funding and financing". This implies fostering partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms involving new partners, such as international financial institutions (IFIs), multilateral development banks, the private sector and other relevant actors.
 - Strengthen UNFPA's strategic communications capabilities to ensure a strong and coherent narrative, thereby enhancing the positioning and revitalization of the ICPD agenda. This includes taking advantage of opportunities provided by events such as the 10th anniversary of the Montevideo Consensus and the 30th anniversary of ICPD.
 - Expand efforts to generate, analyze and use disaggregated data and evidence on sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, population dynamics and emerging megatrends, with a particular focus on aging and human mobility. This data and evidence is vital to support advocacy efforts and informed policy and Programme development, using tools such as MILENA, MEMI and country investment cases.
 - Strengthen humanitarian preparedness, response and programming capacities at the humanitarian-development nexus, ensuring a coordinated and effective approach to addressing humanitarian crises and their long-term implications.

3. Methodology

59. This section outlines the details of how the evaluation was conducted, including the overall design, evaluation questions, data collection methods, sampling, analytical framework, constraints, and mitigation strategies. The evaluation adhered to the Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and the Standards for Evaluation of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), encompassing the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations, as well as the UNFPA Evaluation Policy and Guidelines. Additionally, the evaluation was informed by the document "Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation - Towards UNEG Guidance".
60. The evaluation used a participatory approach with qualitative and quantitative methods to provide evidence-based findings, conclusions, and recommendations. It aimed to inform the next regional Programme 2026-2029 by focusing on learning and development. The evaluation assumed that

accelerators and strategic shifts would enhance UNFPA's contribution to: (a) ending unmet need for family planning, (b) ending preventable maternal deaths, and (c) ending gender-based violence and harmful practices.

61. The Strategic Plan's theory of change provided a detailed overview of the causal conditions and enabling factors required to achieve the three transformative results (3TRs) that UNFPA has committed to by 2030. Particular emphasis was placed on analyzing UNFPA's added value in middle-income countries (MICs) within the region, as well as the Regional Office's oversight and support role to country offices, its intergovernmental and normative functions, and its advocacy efforts, among other responsibilities.
62. The conceptual framework outlined in the Evaluation Inception Report of the Strategic Plan was considered to frame the relationship between accelerators, strategic changes and enabling factors. Based on that framework and adjusting the assessment matrix to the LACRO context, data collection tools were developed³⁶ to ensure consistency in the information collected. The latter were recorded in a database, from which the evaluation team extracted information for analysis, triangulation and verification, providing solid evidence to answer each evaluation question and serving as the basis for rigorous conclusions and functional recommendations.

3.1.Evaluation questions

63. The formative evaluation addressed a series of key questions (see table 1 below), framed by evaluation criteria such as relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency. The evaluation matrix³⁷ provides a more detailed analysis of the questions, sources of verification, as well as information on the missions carried out in the countries.³⁸
64. The evaluation questions were oriented to address the evaluation objectives with a formative approach and were adapted from the questions proposed in the evaluation ToR (Annex 7) and framed in the conceptual analysis developed in Chapter 3 of the Evaluation Inception Report (Annex 8). The evaluation questions were organized into four levels of analysis related to accelerators, strategic changes proposed by the SP, enabling factors and future perspective.

Table1 Evaluation Questions

Evaluation questions	Criteria			
	Relevance	Consistency	Efficiency	Efficiency
<i>Future outlook</i>				
i. To what extent and how should UNFPA adjust the next Regional Programme taking into account the status of progress made towards the SDGs, the 3Rs and the ICPD in the region and taking into account internal and external challenges and opportunities?	X			
ii. To what extent have the main roles of the Regional Office (oversight and support to Country Offices, policy, advocacy and intergovernmental policy dialogue, etc.) contributed to accelerating the 3TRs in the LAC region ?	x		x	

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³⁶ Annex 4 contains the semi-structured interview guidelines for each type of stakeholder and the survey sent to the country offices.

³⁷ In Annex 3

³⁸ More information on the missions carried out can be found in Annex 6

Accelerators				
iii. To what extent has each of the accelerators been relevant, clearly defined and applied to improve programming for the achievement of the 3Rs in the region?	X	X	X	
Strategic changes				
iv. To what extent are the effects of megatrends , in particular aging, migration and climate change, incorporated into the Regional Programme?		X		
v. To what extent does UNFPA programming in the region focus on " populations left behind " and emphasize "reaching the furthest behind"?			X	
vi. To what extent has the Regional Programme enhanced the provision of comprehensive and high quality HRH information and services , as well as the multisectoral response to gender-based violence and harmful practices in the Latin America and the Caribbean region?			X	
vii. To what extent has the Regional Programme enhanced data and evidence for decision making ?			X	
viii. To what extent has UNFPA expanded humanitarian preparedness and response capacity and HPD nexus programming in the LAC region?			X	
ix. To what extent does the regional Programme address discriminatory social and gender norms and structural inequalities ?			X	
x. To what extent has UNFPA's normative role been strengthened in the LAC region?	X		X	
xi. To what extent has the Regional Programme's focus shifted from providing funding to transitioning "from funding to funding and financing" the ICPD agenda?			X	

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Facilitators				
xii. To what extent have UNFPA's accelerated progress on the 3Rs and the ICPD Programme of Action in the region?strategic communication, resource mobilization and partnerships	X			
xiii. To what extent have been financial and human resources sufficient, adequately allocated and managed to facilitate effective implementation? efficient and coherent Regional Programme?			X	
xiv. What has been (and should be in the future) the business model and value added of UNFPA in a region of middle-income countries (MICs)?			X	

3.2. Data collection and stakeholder consultation methods

65. The evaluation employed a mixed methods approach to address descriptive and normative issues, using methodological triangulation through a variety of data collection methods and consultations with various stakeholders. The methodology integrated qualitative and quantitative data collection tools:
66. **Desk review and in-depth analysis:** The review was based on strategic, operational, thematic and budget documents of the UNFPA LACRO, as well as previous evaluation exercises, the mid-term review and theories of change. It included recent audits, planning and implementation documents from different Country Offices, and other strategic documents, such as Annual Reports and Country and Thematic Evaluations (CPEs). The desk review covered 120 documents including reports, strategic documents, UNFPA publications and background documentation. However, for the in-depth analysis, a sample of 22 documents was taken (including 6 annual results reports, 4 strategic documents and 11 UNFPA strategic publications), from which key quotations and references were extracted and systematized in a matrix according to their contributions to the evaluation questions.

67. **Country missions:** Evaluation missions were conducted in the country offices of Brazil, the Dominican Republic, and the Caribbean Subregional Office in Barbados and Jamaica. The purpose of these missions was to analyze in depth the evaluation variables related to accelerators and strategic shifts at the country level. The selection criteria for the visited countries considered factors such as geographic subregion, type of office, and their respective portfolios. Brazil, which represents over one-third of the region's population, was chosen due to its significant issues related to the LNOB principle, South-South cooperation, and migration. The Caribbean was selected for its sub-regional office approach with a specific business model. The Dominican Republic was chosen due to its high adolescent pregnancy rates, ongoing demographic transition, and complex border dynamics with Haiti. Annex 6 provides further details on the context of these countries. During the missions in Brazil and the Dominican Republic, observations and visits were made to key sites where UNFPA was implementing interventions in coordination with civil society, government, and UNS actors.
68. **Focus group discussions (FGDs):** Within the framework of the country missions, the evaluation team facilitated two-hour sessions using a participatory methodology. The target groups included 6-8 representatives of local networks, focusing on the humanitarian beneficiary population, Afro-descendant population, feminist networks and young people. During the visit to Brazil, 2 focus groups were conducted and in the Dominican Republic, 3 virtual focus groups and one face-to-face focus group were conducted. An online discussion group was also held with some members of the Evaluation Reference Group.
69. **Semi-structured interviews:** Once the stakeholder analysis was completed, one-hour (approximately) semi-structured interviews were conducted, both virtually with the UNFPA Regional Office and other key informants in the region and country offices, and in person in the countries where specific missions were carried out³⁹. These interviews were guided by detailed guidelines according to each type of stakeholder⁴⁰. Sixty-six interviews and 64 virtual interviews were conducted - 46 of which were with regional stakeholders.
70. **Virtual survey:** A virtual survey was designed and implemented through the Kobo Toolbox system, widely used by the United Nations system. This survey was oriented to UNFPA country offices, with the objective of addressing the main challenges and lessons learned, with a focus on the regional, national and sub-regional levels. The survey was sent in September 2024 to 20 countries in Latin America and to the Caribbean Subregional Office (English and Dutch speaking countries). It is important to note that the survey also had variations in length and depth compared to the instrument proposed in the initial report. At the end of the period for receiving responses in October, a total of 18 responses were received, representing an 85.71% response rate.⁴¹

Stakeholder and geographic sampling

71. The stakeholders to be consulted were selected based on the stakeholder mapping analysis using a purposive sampling for the interviews and focus groups, considering the following criteria: type of stakeholder, and their involvement in different products (*outputs*) of the Regional Programme, as well as their incidence to inquire into the four levels of analysis. In the case of the survey, all Country Offices were invited. For the focus groups, UNFPA staff in the countries visited assisted in the identification of participants. The evaluation adopted a participatory, inclusive and gender and

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³⁹ See Annex 5 for a complete list of stakeholders interviewed.

⁴⁰ See Annex 4.a for interview guidelines.

⁴¹ The responses from this survey complemented the evidence collected for the evaluation, so some of its graphs and data are included in the findings and the full report is attached in the annexes.

human rights sensitive approach, ensuring that the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including those often left out of the conversation, were taken into account. The sample of people consulted included representatives of people with disabilities, humanitarian beneficiaries, Afro-descendants, feminist networks and young people. As mentioned, two countries (Brazil and the Dominican Republic) and the Caribbean Sub-Regional Office were selected for primary data collection. As shown in Figure 2, a considerable number of the Programme's different stakeholders were consulted, thus ensuring different points of view. A total of 148 people representing different stakeholders were consulted so far, as shown in Table 2. The main stakeholder consulted were members of UNFPA country offices in a wide range of countries (31), followed by representatives of the United Nations System (26), national government stakeholders (24) and civil society organizations (20).

Table2 Key informants broken down by type of actor

Type of actor	Total
UNFPA LACRO	15
UNFPA - Caribbean Subregional Office	9
UNFPA Country Offices	31
United Nations System	26
International organizations and donors	10
Civil society networks and organizations	20
Academy	2
Reference group	11
National Government Partners	24
Total	148

Source: Own elaboration, 2024

3.3.Data analysis and synthesis

72. Different stages were planned for data processing.
 73. The qualitative information was analyzed using test matrices, which organized the inputs into tables to facilitate categorization by evaluation questions. These tables showed the level of analysis, data source, themes addressed, approach, and primary analytical categories. The evaluation matrix served as the main analytical tool.
 74. Quantitative data were systematized in appropriate formats based on various sources. They were processed using templates to allow data aggregation, analysis and the generation of graphs, which facilitated their interpretation and understanding. Special attention was paid to the quantitative indicators of the evaluation matrix, as well as other relevant data, such as the evolution of the 3TRs indicators in the region.
 75. Visualization of large data sets was also considered. An evidence synthesis matrix was prepared to facilitate comprehensive and simplified visualization and analysis. This matrix ensured comparability of data across priority themes, with qualitative and quantitative data informing and reinforcing each other. It detailed the main findings and conclusions from the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative information from primary and secondary sources.
- Following the creation of this matrix, narrative analysis was developed in the evaluation report to answer the evaluation questions. Triangulation of information helped to reduce the margin of error in causal interpretations and to identify potential negative outcomes. It also reduced informant bias

by contrasting data from various sources. Data analysis began with the findings from the desk review, which were triangulated through consultations and an additional literature review. This desk review served to complete the methodological assessment tools. Fieldwork was then conducted in the three selected countries and key informant data were analyzed as the assessment progressed. Subsequent interviews with LACRO staff, surveys of COs, and interviews and focus groups with civil society organizations (CSOs) and other regional stakeholders were intended to provide a cumulative effect to answer the evaluation questions and reinforce key findings. All information was consolidated in a matrix by method used and key question. Additional information was solicited through meetings and e-mails to clarify aspects of the findings

3.4. Ethical Considerations and Quality Control

76. The evaluation was conducted in accordance with the UNEG principles of evaluation ethics (integrity, accountability, respect, and beneficence)⁴², as well as the procedures on ethical standards for research and evaluation, and data collection and analysis. UNFPA criteria were used as part of internal quality control.⁴³ The evaluation team has no conflict of interest and a reference group has been formed as a mechanism for quality control and accountability, as well as to ensure transparency of the evaluation process.
77. The design and implementation of the evaluation considered ethical safeguards when necessary, including the protection of confidentiality, the dignity, rights, and welfare of human beings, especially children and adolescents, and respect for local community values. Data collection and analysis followed the procedure of ethical standards in research and evaluations to ensure impartiality and independence. The common guiding principles used to ensure ethical safety during the evaluation were: (i) Privacy and confidentiality, (ii) Informed consent, (iii) Harm and benefit, and (iv) Conflict of interest.

3.5. Risks and limitations

78. The assessment faced several risks and limitations. The complexity of the evaluation, which spanned multiple levels (global, regional, national and subnational), made it difficult to capture information by level. To this end, the evaluation team expanded the evidence base and conducted stakeholder interviews during the design phase. The simultaneous execution of SP evaluation processes and the need to coordinate timing and content implied adjustments in the evaluation implementation process, so permanent contact was maintained with the LACRO Regional Programme evaluation manager and constant communication and mutual sharing of key information was maintained between the evaluation teams.
79. The loss of key informants could compromise the completeness and accuracy of the data, while the management and analysis of large volumes of data required careful attention and robust frameworks. To mitigate these risks, the assessment team proactively addressed them and triangulated data sources to ensure the success and integrity of the process.

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⁴² UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation, 2020.

⁴³ As well as other documents mentioned in the ToR such as UN SWAP Evaluation Performance Indicator (2018), UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation (2014), and UNEG Evaluation Report Standards (2017).

4. Findings

4.1. Forward looking

To what extent and in what ways should UNFPA adjust the next Regional Programme considering the status of progress towards the SDGs, 3Rs and ICPD in the region and taking into account internal and external challenges and opportunities?

4.1.1. Relevance of the 3 Transforming Results (3TRs)

Finding #1: The three transformative results of the current Strategic Plan effectively conceptualize UNFPA's purpose, are communicatively effective, and remain relevant for Latin America and the Caribbean. Although progress has been made at an aggregate level in recent years in relation to the three transformative results (3TRs), this progress has varied in degree both between and within countries due to regional inequality. The 3TRs have positioned UNFPA as a leader in sexual and reproductive health (SRH), yet have hindered the visibility of its contributions in other important areas such as population and development (P&D) and youth.

69. The three transformative results (3TRs) defined by the UNFPA Strategic Plan remain highly relevant for Latin America. Although significant progress has been made at an aggregate level in recent years, this progress has varied in degree between countries, within territorial levels, and among the most marginalized groups—especially women, adolescents, girls, rural areas, and Afro-descendant and indigenous communities—due to the persistent inequality in the region. An added value of the 3TRs' conceptualization is their communicative effectiveness. According to key informants, there was previously a lack of a strategic approach that clearly defined UNFPA's role. Consequently, the focus on the 3TRs positively impacted relationships with donors, although it also came at a cost. Some informants perceive that the Fund has become primarily seen as a leading agency in sexual and reproductive health (SRH), despite its much broader mandate under the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). This shift has made it challenging to highlight UNFPA's contributions in other significant areas, particularly population and development (P&D) and youth.

70. **Maternal mortality** has declined steadily in recent years in the region, although it has been significantly slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which increased maternal deaths. There is a notable disparity in maternal mortality between and within countries in the region, with eight countries exceeding the

Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)

Last value and year availability



Country	mmr_value	mmr_year	Country	mmr_value	mmr_year
Anguilla	No Data		Grenada	21.1	2020
Antigua and Barbuda	21.2	2020	Guatemala	95.5	2020
Argentina	44.9	2020	Guyana	111.9	2020
Aruba	No Data		Haiti	350.4	2020
Bahamas	77.1	2020	Honduras	71.8	2020
Barbados	39.1	2020	Jamaica	98.9	2020
Belize	129.8	2020	Mexico	59.1	2020
Bermuda	No Data		Montserrat	No Data	
Bolivia	160.9	2020	Nicaragua	77.9	2020
Brazil	72.1	2020	Panama	49.5	2020
British Virgin Islands	No Data		Paraguay	71.1	2020
Cayman Islands	No Data		Peru	68.5	2020
Chile	15.0	2020	Saint Kitts and Nevis	No Data	
Colombia	74.8	2020	Saint Lucia	73.3	2020
Costa Rica	22.0	2020	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	61.8	2020
Cuba	39.3	2020	Suriname	95.5	2020
Curaçao	No Data		Trinidad and Tobago	25.6	2020
Dominica	No Data		Turks and Caicos Islands	No Data	
Dominican Republic	107.3	2020	Uruguay	18.6	2020
Ecuador	65.7	2020	Venezuela	259.2	2020
El Salvador	42.6	2020			

Graph1 Maternal Mortality
Source: UNFPA, June 2023

regional average⁴⁴. Specifically, countries and regions with large indigenous or Afro-descendant populations exhibit the highest rates of maternal mortality

71. Most of these deaths are preventable, the most common causes being hemorrhage, pregnancy-induced hypertension, complications due to unsafe abortion, and sepsis. Abortion, particularly in unsafe conditions, is one of the main causes of maternal mortality in the region. In addition, pregnancies in girls under 15 years of age continue to be high, with a higher risk of dying from pregnancy-related causes. Women, adolescents and girls in situations of greater vulnerability often face discrimination and mistreatment when accessing reproductive and maternal health services, which is aggravated by the lack of an intercultural and intersectional approach in the design and delivery of these services. All of this makes it still relevant for most countries to focus on this transformative outcome

72. Women, adolescents and youth still have a high **unmet need for family planning**, particularly among the most left-behind populations such as indigenous, Afro-

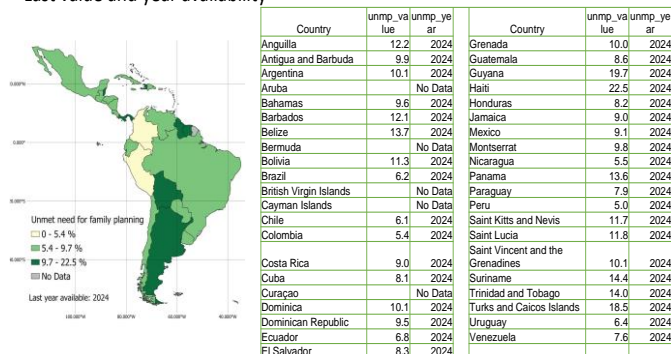
descendant, migrant or disabled women. For their part, women, adolescents and youth have limited access to comprehensive sexuality education in and out of school and limited knowledge of their sexual and reproductive rights, often associated with limited contraceptive use and timely seeking of sexual and reproductive health care. Comprehensive sexuality education is often contested by conservative and anti-rights groups that oppose the ICPD agenda. Weak health information systems and lack of disaggregated data limit the ability to measure unmet need for family planning. In this context, the relevance of this outcome for the region and the opportunity to expand the use of modern methods and make these methods more accessible to women of reproductive age, especially LARCs within the framework of free and informed choice and according to WHO medical eligibility criteria, remains. The Latin American and Caribbean region is home to 14 of the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicide worldwide, a fact that demonstrates the relevance of working to reduce **gender-based violence (GBV)** and other harmful practices, especially child marriage and early unions. Although it is a generalized problem throughout the region, differentiated rates of gender-based violence are observed, which may also have to do with the quality of the records. One

Graph2 Unmet Demand for Family Planning

Source: UNFPA, June 2024

Unmet need for family planning,

Last value and year availability

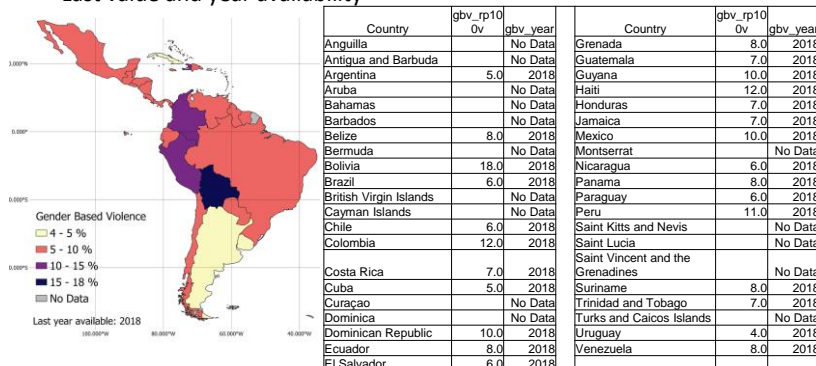


Graph3 Gender-based violence

Source: UNFPA, June 2024

Gender Based Violence

Last value and year availability

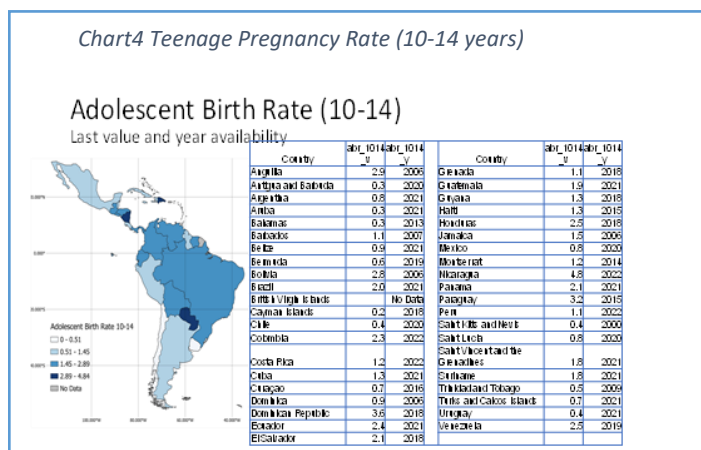


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⁴⁴ Haiti, Guyana, Bolivia, Guatemala, Surinam, Honduras, Paraguay and Nicaragua.

in four women has been a victim of physical, psychological and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner. Sexual violence is also a serious problem, especially among girls under 15 years of age, most of whom become pregnant as a result of abuse and sexual violence

73. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gender inequality and undermined women's autonomy, affecting their sexual and reproductive rights and their right to a life free of violence. Early unions are a predominant harmful practice in the region, being strongly correlated with the intergenerational reproduction of gender-based violence. Women and girls in vulnerable conditions , including indigenous, rural, Afro-descendant, migrant, disabled, or poor women, face a greater reproductive and caregiving burden, fewer economic opportunities, and greater vulnerability to gender-based violence and harmful practices. In addition, they are more exposed to the risk of suffering different forms of gender-based violence and sexual exploitation in situations of migration and displacement
74. The 3TRs do not make visible so clearly a concern in most Latin American and Caribbean countries, such as **adolescent pregnancy**. Adolescent pregnancy is a serious public health problem in Latin America and the Caribbean, which has the second highest adolescent fertility rate in the world. Approximately 18% of births in the region are to women under 20 years of age, showing the slowest drop in the world despite progress in recent years. While overall fertility rates have declined, teenage pregnancies have remained stable and have declined less rapidly in girls under 15 than in other age groups
75. Key stakeholders underscored the importance of elevating its prominence, recognizing its integral role in advancing transformative results in the region. However, for other stakeholders consulted, adolescent pregnancy is on the axis of the 3 zeros. The central role of adolescent pregnancy in UNFPA's strategy in the region has been reinforced in the Theory of Change developed by the Regional Office, placing adolescent pregnancy at the center. Preventing and responding to adolescent pregnancy is a key regional priority to achieve substantial improvements, including reducing maternal mortality and combating gender-based violence and early unions.

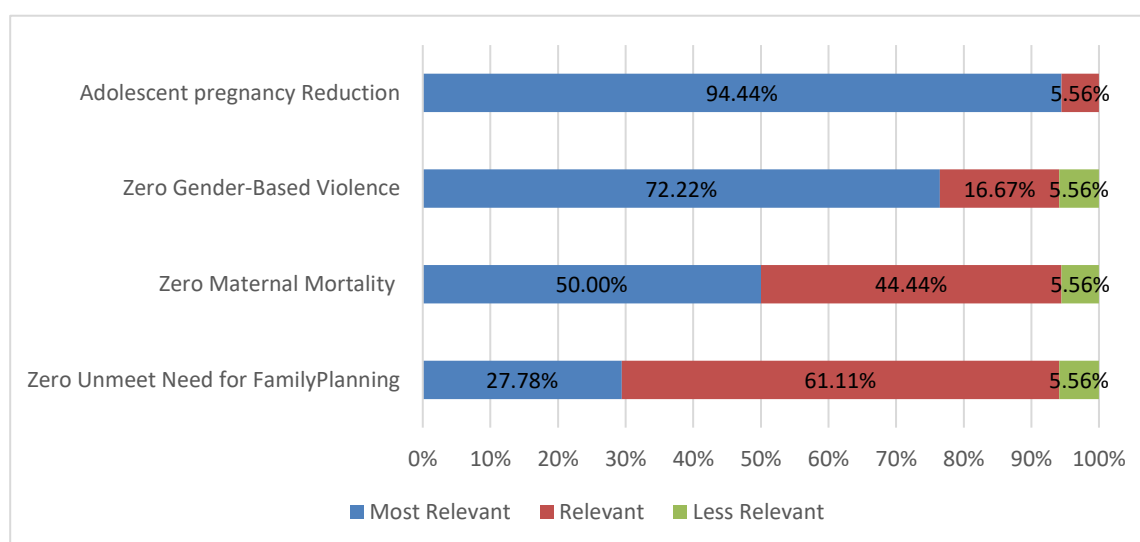


76. UNFPA has a potential in its *core* mission as an expert agency in **Population and Development**, in which it is a leader within the UNS. Therefore, this area is considered relevant at the national and regional level to work within the framework of the 3Rs in an LNOB and inequality perspective, which is critical for Latin America. From a P&D perspective, the focus on the three transformative results, while effective in communicating and attracting donor support, has narrowed the broad mandate of the ICPD. According to key informants, focusing on the 3TRs has detracted from the cross-cutting and specific role of P&D, which goes beyond data collection or analysis. P&D is essential to address complex dynamics such as aging and low fertility, especially in countries in advanced demographic transition such as Uruguay, Chile and Costa Rica. Its richness lies in the recognition that sustainable development requires a comprehensive and multidimensional approach that considers demographic, geographic, temporal, structural, sociocultural, financial and political aspects, placing people as subjects of rights. In this sense, the interrelationship between the different programmatic

components is key to better understand their dynamics. To remain relevant, UNFPA must integrate these demographic dimensions into its strategy, adapting to new national priorities

77. The 3TRs approach in the area of **youth** has presented certain difficulties in terms of positioning, despite the growing demand to prioritize this group due to its demographic relevance for the region. The Offices are asked to adopt a specific focus while also being asked to maintain a broad agenda, which is a challenge in terms of intersectionality with issues such as environment, migration, peace and urbanization. From ICPD's perspective, it is consistent to have a broader agenda. Some key stakeholders perceive that the 3TRs do not clearly establish the relationship between SRH and other areas related to youth, such as employability or education. Thus, there should be a positioning exercise at the regional agenda level that strikes a balance between focusing on the 3Rs and addressing the broader Cairo agenda.
78. Finally, from a future perspective, the survey responses show a scale of relevance, from most to least, in this order: teenage pregnancy, gender-based violence, maternal mortality, and family planning needs.

Graph4 Relevance of the 3TRs for the next cycle



Source: COs survey

Finding #2: The 3TRs are still relevant for Latin America, but countries with low maternal mortality and fertility rates find the framework limiting. These countries, characterized by demographic convergence, present an opportunity to initiate and test policies aimed at a maternal care and well-being agenda. Moreover, the life course concept mentioned in the UNFPA Strategic Plan has not been sufficiently developed or operationalized.

79. In some countries -especially those close to meeting the targets established in the 3Rs or in the demographic transition phase, such as Uruguay, Chile or Costa Rica- the focus on the three zeros is perceived as a limiting framework. These countries are beginning to have other priorities, such as low fertility and aging, and are focusing their efforts on a care-oriented agenda. These countries, for which the 3 zeros agenda is no longer so relevant, may become experimental spaces for defining the future UNFPA agenda.

80. Consequently, the communication strategy of the zero unmet need for family planning agenda requires a differentiated approach in contexts where fertility is low, or equally so when maternal mortality from preventable causes is practically nil, as in Uruguay. This generates the need to articulate a future UNFPA strategy in the region and highlights the need for greater flexibility in the entry points of the UNFPA strategy, reflecting the diverse demographic realities in the region.
81. The life course concept is mentioned in the UNFPA Strategic Plan, but has only been partially developed and operationalized at the global, regional or country level, and could be a very valid approach to address challenges related to adolescent pregnancy, aging and SRH needs related to different life stages. Stakeholders emphasize the opportunity to further recognize its potential to comprehensively address multifaceted challenges at different life stages.
82. As a consequence, there is a need for a new strategy, not only linked to SRH or FP (there is consensus that the third zero is far from being achieved). Thus, some countries are moving from a sphere of maternal mortality to a vision of maternal wellbeing in the context of broader maternal and child health policies; and from a family planning approach to comprehensive policies for families throughout their life cycle. This ties in with the undeveloped concept of life course. UNFPA has an important role as the United Nations agency with the capacity to produce data and analyze population dynamics, with the capacity to incorporate them into development agendas, as well as to make inequalities visible and focus or prioritize strategies to address these inequalities.
83. Thus, in countries where there are scenarios of demographic convergence⁴⁵, future work is aimed at building comprehensive care systems in three clear areas such as (i) maternity, (ii) transition to adulthood, and (iii) active aging and protection against loss of autonomy.
84. To the above scenario, we must add the six major transitions to achieve the SDGs promoted by the United Nations Panel for Sustainable Development⁴⁶: energy, food, urban, health, water, digital. These transitions require an integrated and collaborative approach. Development agencies must adapt their strategies and approaches to effectively address these changes. This includes promoting innovations, building strategic partnerships, mobilizing resources and enhancing technical capacities. In addition, agencies must also focus on inclusion and equity to ensure that the benefits of these transitions are accessible to all, including vulnerable and marginalized groups, and in that regard, because of its capacity in data and evidence generation, UNFPA can play an important role.

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⁴⁵ Demographic convergence refers to the process by which the mortality and fertility rates of different regions or population groups tend to equalize over time (Theories and measures of demographic convergence: an application at the subnational level in Latin America - ECLAC).

⁴⁶(i) Energy transition: Involves shifting to renewable and clean energy sources to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and minimize greenhouse gas emissions. (ii) Food transition: Focuses on sustainable food systems that are resilient to climate change, improve nutrition, and support sustainable livelihoods. (iii) Urban transition: Involves the sustainable planning and management of cities and human settlements to achieve sustainable cities and communities. (iv) Health transition: Refers to ensuring healthy living and promoting wellness for all at all ages. (v) Water transition: Encompasses the sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. (vi) Digital transition: Refers to the adoption of digital technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of development services and solutions. (vii) Water transition: Refers to the adoption of digital technologies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of development services and solutions.

LACRO's role and contribution to the 3TRs

PE2: To what extent have the main roles of the Regional Office (oversight and support to Country Offices, policy, advocacy and intergovernmental policy dialogue, etc.) contributed to accelerating the 3TRs in the LAC region?

Finding No. 3: The UNFPA LACRO has strengthened its oversight capacity through the development and use of the regional performance indicators dashboard, quarterly performance reports of the COs, and mid-year meetings. Additionally, it has bolstered the support function for the COs through the technical assistance platform and at the intergovernmental level for the development of the Regional Conference and the ICPD Agenda. However, there is room for improvement in coordination within LACRO and in strengthening the capacities of the COs.

85. The Mid-Term Review of the Regional Programme identified the need to strengthen support and supervision strategies and mechanisms. The internal audit conducted during the period highlighted the lack of a dedicated Programme Coordination unit, as well as limited integration between programmatic and technical functions. As a result, in May 2023, LACRO established a *Programme Coordination Core Team*, composed of the Deputy Regional Director, the Programme Coordinator a.i.⁴⁷ and the Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor, to ensure more effective coordination of the Regional Programme and country Programmes. This has been appreciated by key informants from the COs indicating a perception of greater coherence and communication with them.
86. According to different evidence obtained, there has been an increase in the supervision capacity of the COs, such as the mid-year meetings or the use of the Dashboard 2.0 of performance indicators. These tools have strengthened LACRO's supervisory role to the offices for a more effective planning, monitoring and supervision of the Regional Programme and country Programmes.
87. Beyond supervision, a key role of LACRO is to support COs in advancing their national development agenda in the area of UNFPA's mandate. Among the experiences promoted during the period is the technical assistance platform⁴⁸, which aims to optimize and streamline the process of registration and certification of consultants and centers of excellence.
88. The Regional Office has reinforced the cluster approach, which has proved to be functional, allowing the offices to support each other, not only in terms of size but above all in terms of the thematic capacities of each office, thus creating a kind of collaborative work. An example of good practice highlighted by different informants has been the census cluster, which has made it possible to identify the key thematic areas with the greatest demand, and to align the response capacity of the Country Offices. For some key informants from COs, there is still room to improve and strengthen the tools that generate demand from Country Offices. From the regional office, there is a willingness to work more efficiently to avoid unnecessary repetition of actions. An example of this is the Regional Project "Leaving No One Behind: Reducing Adolescent Pregnancy in Afro-descendant, Creole, Garifuna and Miskito Communities in Selected Municipalities of the Central American Caribbean Coast" financed with funds from the Duchy of Luxembourg and implemented in six countries⁴⁹. This project is being coordinated by LACRO to ensure programmatic coherence and

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⁴⁷ In the MTR and revision of the *Integrated Budget*, the position of *Regional Program Coordinator* was recovered, approved by the Executive Board in June, with entry into the office in November 2024.

⁴⁸ <https://sites.google.com/unfpa.org/regionalsupport/home>

⁴⁹ Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Belize and Guatemala.

maximize resources. The stakeholders consulted mention the relevance of this type of subregional action.

89. Country Offices have limited resources and depending on the opportunities presented through LACRO channels, these resources may increase. In order to increase the capacity to generate resources, some key informants indicate the need for this relationship to be dynamic, rapid and timely. In this sense, there is room for improving mechanisms for rapid receipt of information and rapid response capacity.
90. The COs' focal points by thematic area meet with LACRO advisors at different intervals and play an important role, providing an opportunity to exchange information and keep training opportunities up to date, which is considered important for the growth and continuous improvement of the COs' personnel.
91. In addition to virtual meetings, face-to-face meetings of focal points are also held. These meetings are equally important, as they allow for a deeper and more detailed dialogue on specific topics. In parallel, meetings are also held on specific issues, such as, for example, the initiatives that are replicated in several countries, such as the Reference Centers for training health professionals on family planning supplies. Although these meetings are not so frequent, whenever they are requested, the Country Offices generally receive a prompt and effective response, which is appreciated.
92. The COs appreciate LACRO's invitation to hold meetings on specific topics with the participation of national partners. An example of this is the Southern Cone meeting focused on adolescent pregnancy. In 2023, this meeting was convened for the fifth time, and the Southern Cone countries of Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay were invited. According to key informants consulted, these subregional meetings work very well, as they allow for an exchange of ideas and strategies at a more localized level, which can be beneficial for addressing specific problems in each subregion, something linked to operationalizing the accelerator approach.
93. The support provided by LACRO, as well as the professionalism of the staff, who are up to date and knowledgeable about the organization's agenda, are highly valued by the COs. Key informants from the COs have appreciated LACRO's openness and flexibility in guiding some of the resources mobilized, such as the High-Level Conference on the Census of the Americas (CAC), for example. Thus, while providing support, they also provide autonomy to enhance what is to be done, without arriving with a pre-established agenda. However, the capacities and strengthening strategies vary according to the programmatic area.
94. Socioeconomic studies that provide regional and national data, such as MILENA, are highly valued by the offices. Sometimes, they even get ministerial authorities to co-sign high-level declarations, which translates into political support and mobilization of national institutions for the ICPD agenda, as was the case with the ministerial authorities of Uruguay or Argentina. Thus, the creation of subregional or regional political moments is very beneficial. They are opportunities to highlight important issues and mobilize political support at this level.
95. UNFPA has been a very committed partner in the search for a strategic approach to leave no one behind (LNOB) in Latin America, especially towards persons with disabilities, indigenous and afro-descendants. They have supported COs in the elaboration of documents, such as the Regional LNOB Strategy, sharing information and experiences from other countries.
96. Finally, a notable change during the current Programme was the hiring of program specialists to support the regional advisors. This change has generated varied opinions among the country offices, some questioning the volume of resources required, while others value its operation positively for its contribution to a more efficient organization of work.

4.2. Accelerators

PE3: To what extent has each of the accelerators⁵⁰ been relevant, clearly defined and applied to improve programming towards achieving the 3TRs in the region?

Finding No.4 The accelerators proposed in the 2022-2025 Regional Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean are relevant for advancing the achievement of the 3TRs. Although the selection of accelerators in the Regional Programme does not entirely align with those in the Strategic Plan and has not been systematically implemented, some promising experiences have been identified in areas such as communication, data generation, analysis and use of evidence-based interventions, and knowledge management; partnerships, coordination, and financing; and innovation and digitalization. The Regional Office has developed a method to define and operationalize the accelerator concept, seeking its appropriation by the COs. Additionally, clusters have been initiated for specific issues, considering multi-country strategies to address topics such as high maternal mortality rates and teenage pregnancy.

97. Aligned with the SP, the Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean 2022-2025 aims to support the programmatic efforts of Country Offices to accelerate the achievement of the three transformative results and advance the ICPD agenda and the Montevideo Consensus in the region. The 2022-2025 Regional Programme proposes five accelerators: (a) partnerships, UN coordination and financing; (b) communication and advocacy; (c) innovation and adaptation; (d) data generation, analysis and use of evidence-based interventions and knowledge management; (e) efficient management and streamlined operational processes.
98. As mentioned above, the Strategic Plan proposes six accelerators that are not exactly the same as those included in the Regional Programme. According to key informants at the country level, this has led to some confusion in the understanding and alignment of both strategic frameworks. A document explaining the alignment of both levels of accelerators would have been appropriate for a better understanding and greater ability to operationalize them.
99. Accelerators, within the framework of the Strategic Plan, are concepts that are often misunderstood and not yet fully understood. These elements, which encompass an amalgam of approaches, products and strategies, are often understood differently due to their ambiguous nature. However, they share a common denominator: their purpose is to address the structural causes that hinder the achievement of transformative results. To unravel these critical nodes, a more detailed examination is required, going beyond the Theory of Change (ToC), to identify the causes that hinder progress and the achievement of established goals.
100. Initiatives and projects are often identified that are beneficial to the population with actions related to the accelerator themes but do not qualify as accelerators because they do not address a problem critical to the achievement of the three transformative results. The Regional Office has initiated work to ensure that accelerators incorporate initiatives designed to accelerate progress toward specific global objectives. For example, in the area of innovation, initiatives have been identified as novel software, or in LNOB with projects with this approach with limited population coverage, which are relevant and effective in their scale, but cannot be considered accelerators. In this line, the effort and development of a method for the definition of the concept of accelerator and its operationalization by the Regional Office is appreciated. Operationalization implies an in-

1. ⁵⁰ a) partnerships, UN coordination and funding; b) communication and advocacy; c) innovation and adaptation; d) generation, analysis and use of evidence-based interventions and knowledge management; e) efficient management and agility in operational processes.

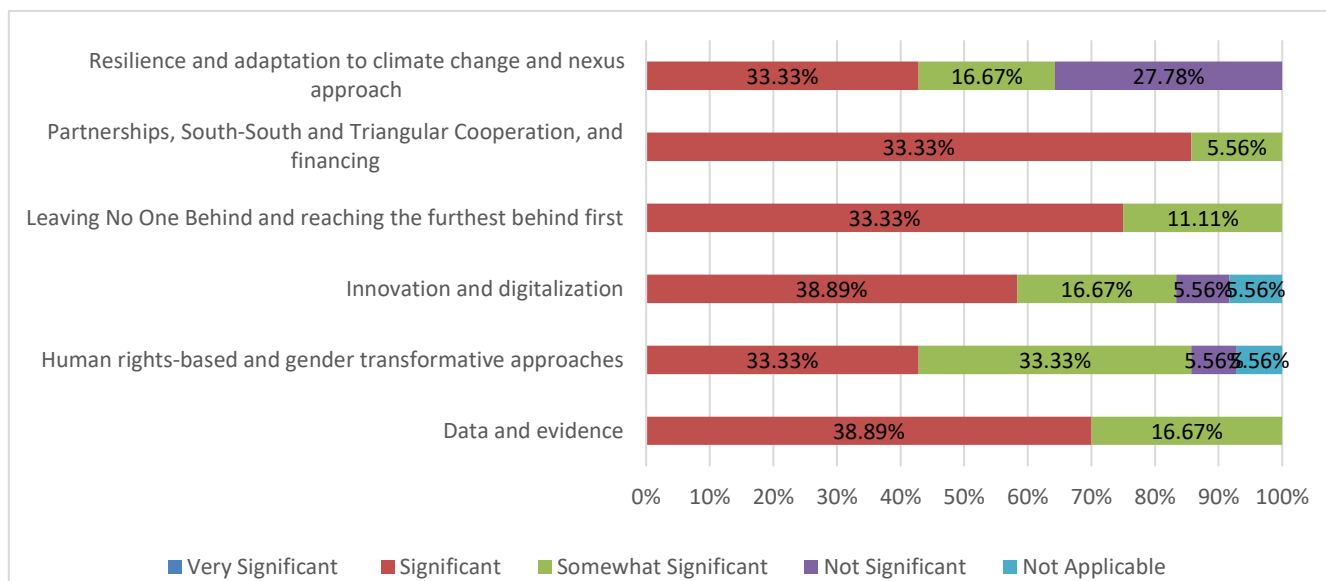
depth discussion on the concept of accelerators to ensure its appropriation by the country offices. Secondly, these analyses have been initiated by Offices, generating clusters by problems such as high rates of MM or teenage pregnancy, carrying out root cause analyses and, based on these, considering what should be the strategy to be followed. If possible, it is considered relevant to generate a multi-country strategy to gain scale. Finally, the technical assistance platform should be reconsidered in light of the accelerator concepts so that it can be used to advance implementation processes.

101. Although communication is not expressly considered an accelerator in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, it is for the Regional Programme and has been a priority, identifying certain advances during the period. On the one hand, several key informants highlighted the success of UNFPA's communication strategies in a volatile and complex context, even more so in relation to agendas with highly politically sensitive issues that the agency has been able to manage with flexibility and caution, which has allowed them to strengthen the frameworks for working with ministerial authorities of various political stripes. However, there is a greater demand in this area, which focuses on UNFPA's strategic role in advocacy and defense of sexual and reproductive health rights and its articulation with social movements and feminist networks. This is related to the growing importance of anti-rights groups and the need to generate spaces and communication strategies with greater impact, making use of languages and narratives with greater audiovisual components, and with greater outreach to adolescents and young people, who do not make use of traditional channels.
102. In relation to the generation, analysis and use of evidence-based interventions and knowledge management, important advances have been made, such as the development of innovative socioeconomic costing methodologies (such as MILENA and MEMI, investment cases), and their use in the design of public policies and advocacy strategies to achieve social, institutional and financing changes. However, several key informants have pointed out the importance of enhancing the visibility, dissemination and translation of the materials produced, as well as deepening the analysis, systematization, evaluation and scaling up of some pilot experiences and data produced in the region. Furthermore, LACRO is in a privileged position to act as a facilitating node for the exchange of experiences among the countries of the region and between sub-regions, such as, for example, with the Caribbean countries . This work is almost unanimously highly valued and could be strengthened. On the other hand, there are still some difficulties in the interoperability of data produced at the regional, national and local levels, which presents limitations for this area to function as an accelerator. However, as mentioned later in this document, there have been interventions by LACRO together with regional partners to advance the interoperability of information systems that manage key data for the UNFPA agenda.
103. The work of UNFPA and ECLAC, together with other partners, CSOs and donors, for the development of the virtual platform dedicated to the regional follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus marked a significant achievement for the advancement of the accelerators, especially those linked to LNOB and data generation. This platform serves as an essential tool for assessing and tracking progress on key Consensus commitments. The platform's emphasis on the rights of people of African descent and the fight against racism and racial discrimination aligns directly with the broader objectives of the principle of leaving no one behind. It serves as an effective means to raise awareness and advocate for these critical issues. There has been work to bring statistical visibility to populations left behind. For example, a selection of 18 demographic and social indicators were processed, with a focus on disaggregation by racial-ethnic conditions. This approach enhances understanding of the specific challenges and circumstances faced by diverse ethnic and racial groups.
104. In relation to innovation, different experiences have been identified. In the first place, it is worth mentioning the existence of a Regional Innovation Strategy developed in a participatory manner,

although it is mainly focused on the development of the skills of technical teams and work methodologies rather than on organizational processes or the challenges of digitalization. From the consultations carried out, informants point out the innovative nature of many of UNFPA's initiatives, which, however, fail to be widely communicated. The situation certainly varies in each subregion or country.

105. Progress has been made, but it is necessary to expand the capacity to innovate at different levels, such as partnerships with non-traditional partners. Traditional alliances continue to predominate, at the central government level, and to a lesser extent, with networks and civil society organizations. Some of these organizations argue that they have seen less support for the articulation of their actions at the regional level.
106. In relation to the establishment of alliances, promising experiences have been identified, where alliances have been established with the private sector, for example, in the Dominican Republic, for the implementation of pilot experiences in strategies for the care of the elderly and maternal mortality. In countries such as Mexico and Brazil, progress is being made in *individual giving* methods, although the organization is still far from offering a favorable environment to make them operational. Alliances have also been established with the academic sector from a South-South cooperation perspective, with the Universities of Chile and Antioquia as implementing partners, within the framework of strategies to strengthen the capacities of health personnel. These experiences come in addition to the strategic and implementation partnerships traditionally articulated with the state and civil society, while, at the regional level, a recent alliance with the private sector on adolescent pregnancy opens a new chapter, which requires a comprehensive approach, linked not only to financing, but also to the establishment of long-term relationships with partners.
107. Some regional events, as well as some governments willing to move forward in the areas of 'mandateUNFPA', have the potential to be an enabling space for the development and consolidation of partnerships, as well as the positioning of UNFPA's regional agenda. For example, UNFPA offers support for Brazil to place key issues on the G-20 Roundtables during the month of July 2024. These are expected to serve as a platform to position UNFPA's issues of interest at the regional and global level (next year COP-30 will be held in this country). We are working on influencing an agenda beyond Brazil, supporting to conduct this high-level political dialogue, being very well positioned in youth issues.
69. Efficient management and streamlined operational processes have not been an accelerator during the period under review; on the contrary, despite efforts to improve coordination, there are still significant obstacles to progress on the agenda. This is discussed later in the document in the section on facilitators.
70. Finally, from the perspective of the COs and their view of the SP accelerators, it is observed that all accelerators are relevant to their offices. They highlight the relevance of the accelerators in this order: Partnerships, South-South Cooperation and Financing; LNOB; Data and Evidence, Innovation and Digitization; Human Rights and Gender-based Approaches; and Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Change.

Graph5 Relevance of Accelerators from the perspective of COs



Source: UNFPA Country Office Survey, 2024.

4.3.Strategic Shifts

4.3.1. Megatrends

PE4: To what extent are the effects of megatrends, in particular aging, migration and climate change, incorporated into the Regional Programme?

Finding N°5: The Regional Programme has incorporated the effects of the so-called megatrends, albeit in a non-systematic manner, and with room for improvement. Consequently, while some COs have begun to develop initiatives to address the challenges of aging and care systems, as well as articulate efforts to address migration and the effects of climate change, these trends require responses that consider the different sociodemographic contexts.

71. Evidence shows the trend of significant changes at the global and regional levels. The countries of the region are undergoing a wide range of transformations, with migration, climate change, population aging and low fertility being intensifying phenomena. Although these changes are most noticeable in only a few countries, it is anticipated that they will become important issues for more countries in the future. In this context, the question arises as to what role UNFPA should play in the face of these challenges. The issue of demographic change has been mentioned in multiple contexts, including Brazil, the Caribbean, Uruguay, Chile, Argentina and countries in the Andean region. However, key informants indicate that there is still a lack of conceptual clarity on how to approach these issues.

Aging

72. The Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development contains specific measures on aging, social protection and socioeconomic challenges. These measures include the formulation of public policies at different levels; the eradication of multiple forms of discrimination against older persons; giving them the highest priority in the prevention and response to humanitarian and disaster situations; and taking advantage of the demographic dividend to formulate education, health and employment generation policies based on intergenerational solidarity.
73. The Montevideo Consensus has been highlighted as a differential and distinctive factor in Latin America and the Caribbean as it provides a specific roadmap, to which must be added the existence of a unique normative framework in the world, constituted by the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons. The UNFPA Regional Programme has prioritized the strengthening of regional civil society networks such as the CORV Network for advocacy work and work on population aging issues. It has also provided technical support in the design and implementation of pilot experiences focused on strengthening the care system, as in the case of the Dominican Republic.
74. There is agreement that the strategic conception of the Regional Programme still presents certain weaknesses in the approach to megatrends, since it needs to take into account long-term perspectives regarding demographic dynamics. It is also important to strengthen the technical capacities of public institutions and, in turn, to strengthen care and social protection systems based on demographic dynamics. Countries such as Brazil, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Chile and the Dominican Republic are already experiencing the effects of demographic change, while its socioeconomic effects need to be studied in order to generate evidence for the planning and formulation of specific public policies.
75. Population aging is a significant demographic trend in several Latin American countries, including Brazil, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Chile, Argentina and the Dominican Republic. In Uruguay, the population over 65 years of age represents approximately 14% of the total, making it one of the countries with the highest proportion of older adults in the region. Costa Rica and Chile also show accelerated aging, with sustained growth in the number of older people, driven by improvements in life expectancy and declining birth rates. Argentina, similarly, faces challenges related to aging, such as the need to adapt its health and social security systems to serve an increasingly long-lived population. On the other hand, the Dominican Republic, although it still has a relatively younger population in comparison, is beginning to experience an increase in its proportion of older people, anticipating future challenges in infrastructure and social services. In Brazil, population aging has been evidenced by the 2023 Census. The CO has tried to advance the positioning of the issue on the national agenda, but it needs to be expanded to be perceived as a priority issue in the country and to attract investments. As a whole, these countries are adapting their public policies and socioeconomic structures to face the implications of population aging, seeking to ensure the well-being and inclusion of their elders.

Migration

76. Migration and humanitarian response are closely linked. As an organization, UNFPA has shifted its focus from looking solely at development contexts to becoming a key organization in humanitarian preparedness and response. One of the challenges during the period was country responsiveness and the need for greater internal definition and capacity on this issue. For their part, UNFPA's partners in humanitarian response value very positively the coordination capacity, ease of articulating joint responses and the role of capacity development in the area of GBV and SRH in

these contexts. This does not preclude mentioning the lack of sustainable resources or the changes in referent persons that have occurred in recent years.

77. Migration dynamics are not systematically and strategically integrated into the design and implementation of the Regional Programme, taking into account the complexity of the regional scenario. Although technical support has been offered in the framework of humanitarian action with migrant and refugee populations at the regional level, and linked to the Venezuelan crisis, the different Country Offices have implemented specific programmatic strategies to address migration issues within the framework of their Programmes, such as, for example, in the prevention of maternal mortality. This is a highly politically sensitive agenda item, especially in countries that share a border, such as the Dominican Republic and Haiti, where UNFPA has managed to promote specific actions in an articulated and interagency manner with people seeking nationality solutions (Dominican Republic), or in Venezuela, with access to sexual and reproductive health services for women in a context of strong disruption of health care services. In Chile, the implementation of a humanitarian approach from a Nexus approach acquires vital importance.
78. On the other hand, in the Caribbean countries and territories, the double profile that many of these countries have, of being recipients of migrant population -as in the case of Trinidad and Tobago- and at the same time, country of origin of many qualified professionals who emigrate to the United States, Canada or the United Kingdom, requires specific and contextualized adaptations that the Regional Programme has not been able to offer in a comprehensive manner so far.
79. Finally, and in relation to the way in which humanitarian action contemplates human mobility issues, there is room for improvement in the integration of sexual and reproductive health in the design of the humanitarian response for migrants, especially women and young people at high risk of being victims of sexual violence, and, above all, prevention, care and information along the migration routes in Central America. It should be noted that UNFPA plays an important role in humanitarian coordination mechanisms and inter-agency work within the UNS, especially in the GBV Sub-group. Some informants even maintain that there is room for strengthening this role and in the deployment of advocacy actions to improve access to sexual and reproductive health services for migrant women.

Climate Change

80. The mega-trend where UNFPA's role is less clear is in relation to climate change adaptation. The effects of climate change have been shown to be very severe in different countries of the region, increasing the exposure to risks of the most vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, especially the youngest ones, in Brazil. Initiatives have been identified at both regional and national levels. Some relevant experiences include the intervention developed with the Prefeitura de Teresina in Brazil, and the development of a comprehensive review of the 2020-2024 Nationally Determined Contributions in Latin America and the Caribbean on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights and rights-based approaches in national climate documents. The review found 10 references to SRHR and gender-based violence (GBV) issues in climate action documents, although no mentions of harmful practices were found. Some countries mention aspects of SRHR and GBV in their situational analyses, while others acknowledge the impacts of climate change on these issues without proposing concrete interventions. A small number of countries suggest substantial interventions to address these impacts. The report proposed a call to action for organizations such as UNFPA and other related actors to strengthen their engagement with climate change mechanisms and promote greater understanding of the interrelationships between climate action, SRHR and GBV. With the upcoming submission of NDCs in 2025, opportunities exist to integrate these issues into national climate policies, promoting people-centered, rights-based and gender-transformative approaches.

Meaningful civil society participation and public consultation are essential to ensure that the data collected is reflected in the NDCs. In addition, the report seeks to open spaces for dialogue at global, regional and national levels on how climate change, SRHR, GBV and harmful practices intersect, offering opportunities to improve the integration of these aspects into climate policies and ensure more inclusive and equitable action.

81. Notwithstanding the above, there is a need for greater momentum and dissemination of clear positions. There is a strategic work niche in the climate agenda based on the synergies between youth, SRH and climate change, even more so based on the Pact for the Future. Although some government partners emphasize that it is something that can be addressed not in isolation but from the strategy of working with youth or prevention and emergency preparedness, there is agreement that the definition of a clear positioning of the agency in this area, anchored in its capabilities and mission, is lacking. UNFPA⁵¹ recognizes that climate change is experienced differently in countries that are diverse in terms of average age of the population, income level, and geography. Some models suggest that young people will increasingly migrate away from areas vulnerable to the effects of climate change, many of which are in rural regions, while older people will be left behind.

4.3.2. Leave No One Behind (LNOB)

PE5: To what extent does UNFPA programming in the region focus on "populations left behind" and emphasize "reaching the furthest behind"?

Finding Nº 6: The UNFPA Regional Programme has successfully integrated the principle of LNOB through strategic multi-country programs, data generation and evidence, and support for civil society networks and organizations. However, there is still no common and homogeneous vision of how to operationalize LNOB within UNFPA.

82. The LNOB approach is present in the COs' work. In LACRO, a strategy focused on the use of data and evidence was applied to make the most vulnerable populations visible and contribute to the design of relevant interventions to achieve transformative results. LNOB's strategic approach in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) faces challenges in fully reflecting this analysis in programming. It has been relevant in aligning with enabling country contexts and addressing politically sensitive agendas. The approach has accelerated the achievement of UNFPA's three transformative results, especially in addressing structural inequalities, but despite advances in the visibility of marginalized groups, challenges remain in the production and analysis of disaggregated data. UNFPA has worked with civil society to foster institutional accountability and has responded in humanitarian contexts, although a clear strategy for integrating LNOB from a Nexus approach and more broadly within the organization is lacking⁵². In this line, and although a Regional Strategy has been developed, there is agreement on the difficulties to operationalize in a standardized and sustained way the principle of Leave No One Behind and the risks of fragmenting the strategic and impact messages with the various social movements and networks of feminist civil society, indigenous peoples, and afro-descendants, which can also translate into a decrease in the financial resources allocated to the advocacy work of these networks, and how this has been translated into concrete changes in the regional agenda.

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⁵¹ UNFPA (2024) Advancing ICPD in the modern world. Policy Brief and UNFPA (2024) ICPD and the climate crisis. Policy brief

⁵² Euro Health Group (2024) Formative evaluation of UNFPA support to the integration of the principles of 'Leave No One Behind' and 'Reaching the Furthest Behind' Latin America and the Caribbean Case Study Report.

83. The UNFPA Regional Programme has shown significant progress in the integration of Afro-descendant populations in regional programming and country Programmes (CPD), mainly through: (i) technical and financial support to networks of civil society organizations; (ii) National Racial and Ethnic Self-Perception Surveys⁵³; (iii) Deployment of social and community awareness actions, such as the experience of Dialogue of Drums⁵⁴ in the Dominican Republic; (iv) Regional Programmes to support the Afro-descendant population such as the "Regional Project Leave No One Behind: Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in Afrodescendant, Creole, Garifuna and Misquito communities in selected municipalities of the Central American Caribbean Coast".
84. The work with indigenous peoples operated at various levels. In terms of political advocacy, in addition to promoting the participation of indigenous representatives in population and SRH forums, the coordination work with FILAC has focused on planning the implementation of General Recommendation No. 39 of the CEDAW on violence against indigenous women and girls, although with some difficulties in reaching the level of local action. To the above, actions for capacity building were added, as in the case of FILAC's Intercultural Indigenous University, which offers accredited Programmes and collaborations with institutions such as UNAM and the Carlos III University of Madrid, for the leadership of indigenous women. Here UNFPA supported the processes with teaching and scholarships, promoting a dialogue of knowledge and the use of external tools in capacity building in addressing gender violence. In Colombia, traditional midwives played a key role in Afro-descendant and indigenous communities in reducing maternal mortality. UNFPA, along with other organizations, provided support for their training and the integration of their ancestral knowledge into the health system to improve maternal care.
85. More than 70 regional and national networks and organizations led by youth of diversity and representing LNOB populations (indigenous, migrants, Afro-descendants, people with disabilities, people living with HIV, LGBTIQ+, rural youth, peace builders, etc.) were involved, trained and supported by UNFPA in activities related to the follow-up of the ICPD, the Montevideo Consensus, the 3TRs and youth rights, including the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda. In addition, the Regional Office developed several technical tools, guidelines and briefing notes to improve the statistical visibility of the "Leave No One Behind" initiative. This includes material on refugee, internally displaced and stateless populations, as well as webinars and guidelines on various aspects of data collection and analysis, such as census assessment, intersectional vulnerabilities, etc.⁵⁵
86. This strategy was shared with the countries by supporting initiatives such as the "Exchange of experiences on the incorporation of the Washington Group's short set of Disability Statistics in administrative records" between Guatemala and Costa Rica. In Panama, the strengthening of disability surveys and the development of fact sheets contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and needs faced by persons with disabilities, enabling policy makers to make informed decisions based on more accurate and detailed data collection mechanisms.⁵⁶
87. In the Caribbean, the LNOB approach in Jamaica incorporated work with transgender and other gender non-conforming people (TGNC) through the Transgender Health Strategy and Advocacy Strategy development processes for the implementation of the Transgender Health Strategy.⁵⁷

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⁵³ <https://dominicanrepublic.unfpa.org/es/publications/breve-encuesta-nacional-de-autopercepcion-racial-y-etnica-en-republica-dominicana>

⁵⁴ UNFPA (2023). *Drum Dialogue: a space to promote the diversity of our roots among youth* <https://dominicanrepublic.un.org/es/255518-di%C3%A1logo-de-tambores-un-espacio-para-promover-en-la-juventud-la-diversidad-de-nuestras-ra%C3%ADces>

⁵⁵ UNFPA. Annual Report 2022.

⁵⁶ UNFPA. Annual Report 2023.

⁵⁷ UNFPA. Annual Report 2022.

4.3.3. Service scaling

PE6: To what extent has the Regional Programme **scaled up** the provision of comprehensive and high quality **HRH information and services**, as well as **multisectoral response to gender-based violence** and harmful practices in the LAC region?

Finding #7: The Action Plan has enabled the expansion of high-quality comprehensive SRH information and services, by enhancing the capacities of public institutions to access contraceptives competitively, and by establishing multisectoral responses to gender-based violence and harmful practices in the region. However, there is room for increasing SRH service coverage, integrating SRH into humanitarian coordination mechanisms, and strengthening logistical capacities for the repositioning of kits.

126. From the country visits, UNFPA's contribution to capacity building and complementarity of efforts with governments in the provision of high quality comprehensive SRH information and services has become clear, especially through improved negotiation and pricing capacities with suppliers of FP commodities and methods, which became evident in the framework of interviews with strategic partners and also within previous regional assessments. Efforts to improve access to contraceptives were identified through the use of evidence to promote public investment, as in the case of the MILENA studies in different countries, and improved availability.
127. Likewise, the work of multisectoral response to gender violence and harmful practices in Latin America and the Caribbean has found in the *Spotlight* Initiative a multi-actor and interagency framework that has generated important impacts at different levels, but has not yet generated the necessary appropriation in public institutions to continue with the implementation work, having promoted important protocols, norms and tools.
128. UNFPA's participation in the Spotlight Programme with the European Union and other agencies of the United Nations system, and civil society networks, has been very positively valued, and has made it possible to generate more solid public policies, norms and institutions in the prevention and attention to gender-based violence, contributing to the elaboration of action protocols, as in the case of Jamaica⁵⁸. The termination of the Programme and the limited sources of funding for its continuation affect to a certain extent the processes of appropriation of the results, which requires a long-term perspective and the design of more concrete exit strategies that also take into account masculinities and various types of violence that particularly affect young people. Even so, the work at multiple levels and with multiple actors has been able to translate into improvements in local capacities.
129. At the normative level, UNFPA LACRO has participated in the development of key instruments to study and report on gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive rights. UNFPA's actions are broken down into several areas: the generation of studies on the consequences of gender-based violence, the generation of evidence on the state of the situation of GBV levels and sexual and reproductive rights, the creation of protocols for victim care and training of health and care providers -including midwives-, as well as the provision of MISP (Minimum Essential Services Package) and kits.
130. In this regard, the alliance between LACRO and MESECVI is very important in advancing the response to gender-based violence in the region. The support that UNFPA provides to this mechanism is key in the generation of hemispheric reports and specific recommendations on different manifestations

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⁵⁸ Choose a Better Way. A Jamaica Constabulary Force Domestic Violence Intervention Brochure.

of violence, such as violence against Afro-descendant women, women with disabilities or harmful practices.⁵⁹

131. In emergency situations, the actions to provide life-saving sexual and reproductive health services, with emphasis on family planning and maternal health, stand out, an example of which are the dignity KITs. On this last point, it has been verified the need to strengthen logistical capacities to ensure a humanitarian response in a timely manner. Although, as highlighted in previous evaluations⁶⁰ and interviews, UNFPA has comparative advantages in the region for commodity security with a supply chain approach to long-term contraceptive methods, it is unclear how these capacities can be matched in humanitarian crisis situations.
132. Important challenges remain to be addressed in this area: the incorporation of sexual and reproductive health into national care systems, and the consideration of emerging forms of gender-based violence such as obstetric violence, sexual violence and digital violence. This last issue, although it does not appear strongly in this process, appears strongly in the final document adopted in the framework of the Summit of the Future, which took place last September 2024.

4.3.4. Data and evidence

PE7: To what extent has the Regional Programme enhanced the scalability of data and evidence for decision making?

Finding N° 8: The Regional Programme has contributed to the expansion of data and the generation of evidence, not only for decision-making but also for designing political advocacy and communication strategies. However, challenges persist in disseminating and highlighting achievements to diverse audiences and in the various languages of the region.

133. Among those consulted, there was agreement on the importance of designing and testing innovative methodologies to generate evidence for decision making, the design of effective advocacy strategies and the carrying out of evaluations on teenage pregnancy carried out by the Regional Programme in collaboration with various Country Offices.
134. Today, the analysis of disaggregated data and available information is crucial for evidence-based decision making and policy planning. The demands are growing, and are related to the questioning of the legitimacy of a Human Rights Based Approach in increasingly volatile environments and the growth of conservative groups and narratives regarding gender equality and women's rights, and the importance of designing and implementing a series of studies and models to support the adoption of evidence-based programmatic and advocacy strategies. UNFPA has made progress in carrying out this type of studies, although this strategy concentrates on certain cases, such as the Methodology for Estimating the Socioeconomic Impact of Adolescent Pregnancy and Childbearing in Latin American and Caribbean Countries (MILENA) and the Model for Estimating Impact Goals (MEMI).
135. **MILENA methodology** This methodology was adopted to document the socioeconomic consequences of adolescent pregnancy through a series of studies carried out in various countries

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⁵⁹ UNFPA. Annual Report 2023.

⁶⁰ Regional Evaluation of UNFPA's Contribution to Family Planning and Commodity Security in Latin America and the Caribbean, p.100 https://lac.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/esp_evaluacion_regional_sobre_la_contribucion_del_unfpa_en_materia_de_planificacion_familiar_y_aseguramiento_de_insumo.pdf

such as Suriname (2022), Colombia (2020)⁶¹ or Argentina (2019)⁶², among others. By mid-2024 there were 16 MILENA studies. Panama and Ecuador have already updated the study, while Costa Rica and Nicaragua conducted the study for the first time.

The MILENA methodology was based on the comparison of the trajectories of women who were "early mothers" (19 years of age or younger) with those who were "adult mothers" (after age 20 until age 29) in terms of labor and education, and the opportunity cost of adolescent pregnancy in terms of monetary income generated by the productive activity that is foregone, the fiscal opportunity cost, health expenses and the estimation of the total economic impact of adolescent pregnancy.

136. ***Model for the Estimation of Impact Goals (MEMI)***⁶³, which allows estimating impacts to be achieved by policies on the absolute number of adolescent pregnancies and on the Specific Adolescent Fertility Rate (SAR). The objectives pursued with this model have focused on contributing to the planning of public policies, the design of evidence-based advocacy actions, and the evaluation of the impact of interventions. Actors consulted pointed out the importance of the Regional Programme in the design of methodologies and exchange of experiences at regional level, promoting their testing, evaluation, documentation and scaling up.
137. In the area of Population and Development - an area where UNFPA's added value and trajectory stand out - there is agreement on the dynamics of generational turnover of specialists in demography, statistics and data, an area where capacity building and technical assistance to the various country offices (COs) is increasingly crucial. With a small core of specialists and consultants in LACRO and a network of focal points in the various COs, UNFPA has oriented its efforts to apply tailored strategies to provide technical assistance with limited resources and with internal management difficulties and some external overlap, rather than complementarity, with partner organizations. In 2025, a new round of censuses begins, which implies that both UNFPA and partner organizations such as CELADE need to be prepared with a solid structure. In addition to the censuses, UNFPA is collaborating with partners such as ECLAC to work with Big Data and incorporate satellite imagery.
138. UNFPA has been an important strategic partner of CELADE, given that this organization does not have country representation instances, being its sub-headquarters small and limited in scope. UNFPA National Offices have contributed to the implementation of surveys by CELADE, whose relationship and synergies are positive. Training in demography: Regional Course on Demographic Analysis, originally face-to-face (in Chile) with participation of students from Latin America. UNFPA financed the students' tuition. With COVID-19 it became virtual, with longer duration. UNFPA supported from the Country Offices, paying the tuition of the participants in the framework of strengthening the technicians of Statistical Institutes, with a practical approach, oriented to real practice.

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⁶¹ UNFPA (2020). Socioeconomic consequences of adolescent pregnancy in Colombia. Implementation of the methodology to estimate the socioeconomic impact of adolescent pregnancy and childbearing in Latin American and Caribbean countries - Milena 1.0. United Nations Population Fund - Colombia Country Office. Bogotá. https://colombia.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/informe_milena_colombia-v9.pdf

⁶² UNFPA: Socioeconomic consequences of teenage pregnancy in Argentina. Implementation of the methodology to estimate the socioeconomic impact of teenage pregnancy and childbearing in Latin American and Caribbean countries - MILENA 1.0. November 2019

https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sites/default/files/estudios_tecnicos_-_consecuencias_socioeconomicas_del_embarazo_en_la_adolescencia_en_argentina.pdf

⁶³ UNFPA-LACRO. Impact Goals Estimation Model. Panama. United Nations Population Fund Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, November 2021. Last consulted on July 22, 2024 at the following link: https://lac.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/memi_documento_presentacion.pdf

139. Regarding Population and Housing Censuses, Vital Statistics, Population Estimates and Projections, as well as Indigenous Peoples and Afro-descendants, CELADE has worked jointly on issues such as the Regional Conference on Population and Development (ECLAC), a relevant area where the Cairo Roadmap is defined in the region. Indicators, data and information production for follow-up of the Montevideo Consensus, Agenda 2030, and development of a Virtual Platform. Criticism focuses more on the implementation strategy. Greater visibility of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples has been achieved thanks to the important contribution of UNFPA, strengthening health information systems, in partnership with PAHO.
140. The World Population Conference in Cairo allowed for a more rights-based approach and the importance of integrating population dynamics into public policies and development processes. The emphasis is more on sexual and reproductive rights, but UNFPA should be more than that, since it does not take full advantage of synergies with other agencies on issues of adolescent pregnancy, violence, maternal mortality, in coordination with COs, UNICEF, UN WOMEN: there would even be more space to focus on population issues where there are limited interventions, such as aging.

4.3.5. Humanitarian Response

PE8: To what extent has UNFPA expanded humanitarian preparedness and response capacity and HPD nexus programming in the LAC region?

Finding Nº 9: UNFPA has established itself as a significant humanitarian actor in the region, driven by the increasing number of emergencies and rapidly emerging crises affecting almost all countries. The minimum service package for GBV and SRH in humanitarian response is a major achievement for UNFPA. It has positioned these issues in traditionally unaddressed spaces. The UNFPA Regional Programme has enabled some improvement in humanitarian programming and presence in inter-agency coordination instances. Humanitarian preparedness and response capacity, as well as humanitarian-development nexus programming, have been expanded.

141. Based on the interviews conducted, it is worth highlighting the work of capacity building, articulation of efforts, and deployment of specialized technical assistance tools to improve regional humanitarian preparedness and response from a Triple Nexus Approach between development, humanitarian action and peace building, mainly in Haiti, Venezuela and Colombia. This work was carried out within the broader framework of UNFPA's humanitarian work, which has included countries other than Haiti, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Venezuela, to which should be added the Regional Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants .⁶⁴
142. UNFPA's work in the region focused on the following areas: i) Improving access to sexual and reproductive health services and information in emergency situations; and ii) Prevention, mitigation and care of GBV in emergency situations, including the distribution of dignity kits, the provision of safe spaces, and the strengthening of local capacities of non-specialized personnel through the use of guidelines and tools.
143. The regional deployment of these actions has taken place within the framework of the Protection Cluster, in which UNFPA holds GBV as its main area of responsibility, participating in the coordination groups and subgroups. Within this framework, standards, tools, and specific guidelines

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⁶⁴ UNFPA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean. Regional Humanitarian Action. Latin America and the Caribbean 2024 Overview. Last accessed on 22 July at the following link: https://lac.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/unfpa_regional_humanitarian_action.pdf

have been developed and disseminated as part of the implementation of the Gender Strategy 2021-2025⁶⁵ whose vision is to eliminate gender-based violence in all humanitarian crises, applying a feminist perspective in the promotion of collective action to improve the effectiveness and accountability of humanitarian action for prevention, mitigation and response to all forms of gender-based violence, to ensure that the agency and capacity of survivors in all their diversities are recognized and strengthened, and that prevention efforts are effectively employed to address and transform underlying gender inequality.

144. UNFPA focuses its efforts on the availability of sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence services and information in humanitarian contexts, as well as on strengthening leadership and coordination of integrated and multisectoral responses. From the interviews conducted, in all cases a remarkable level of coordination and participation in inter-agency groups on SRH issues in humanitarian contexts by UNFPA has been observed.
145. However, the capacities of Country Offices in terms of humanitarian expertise, funding and supplies needed to act immediately in crisis situations are uneven. It is in this last point where difficulties have been observed, especially in the timing and agility in response management for the pre-positioning of rapid response kits in emergency situations, which has certainly weakened the humanitarian outlook and role of the organization. There is evidence that UNFPA has promoted a change in the humanitarian response, which would go beyond the shelter response to migrants, and would have a focus on women who arrive in neighboring countries and receive orientation in family planning, counseling, GBV response, etc.
146. There is a strategic orientation of a work that is assumed by local institutions so that there is a transition from humanitarian to development. For example, in Brazil's *Operação Acolhida*⁶⁶ UNFPA helped to configure the response network from a Nexus perspective, for example with the development of the *Casa da Mulher Brasileira*, being a fundamental partner for the establishment of this service and an example of a broader work for the development of the capacity of the State and the Municipality. In addition, the "Selo UNFPA" initiative has been implemented with Government, services and civil society, which proposes methodologies for strengthening institutional capacities both for management and for those who are in the delivery of services, involving civil society.
147. Regarding LACRO's support, the countries value the support in the development of the projects, and the coordination with UNFPA offices in Brussels or Copenhagen for the resolution of incidents or delays in the management of contracts or reports to donors. The updating of training and capacity building in this area is also valued.
148. Finally, it is worth mentioning UNFPA's difficulties in making its actions, data and tools visible to partners and donors in the field of humanitarian action. Unlike other UNS agencies, which report regularly and invite donors to their activities, no proactive strategies or measures are identified in the relationship with donors, but rather reactive ones. In turn, certain sources of funding for humanitarian action could be better leveraged, such as thematic or disaster preparedness and response funds with agencies such as DG-ECHO.

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⁶⁵ Global Protection Cluster. Gender-based violence AoR. Strategy 2021-2025. Last accessed on July 22, 2024 at the following link: <https://gbvaor.net/>

⁶⁶ Brazil has had to face an important humanitarian response, due to the crisis of Venezuelan migrants arriving, fundamentally, to the State of Roraima and also to the State of Amazonia. UNFPA is a key player in the *Operação Acolhida* launched by the Government of the Federation since 2017. UNFPA co-leads the gender-based violence subsector and the health sector of the R4V platform and participated in the preparation of all response plan documents. [Operação Acolhida - Ministério do Desenvolvimento e Assistência Social, Família e Combate à Fome \(www.gov.br\) / Brazil : R4V](#)

4.3.6. Social norms and gender

To what extent does the regional Programme address discriminatory **social and gender norms and structural inequalities**?

Finding No.10. The 2022-2025 RP has successfully integrated social and gender norms and structural inequalities into Theories of Change and programming design. In this regard, efforts have been identified to address the effects of perceptions, attitudes, and practices that limit the scope of comprehensive sexual education, primarily in schools and communities. This remains one of the main challenges, along with voluntary termination of pregnancy, in a highly dynamic and volatile regional environment.

149. One of the issues that have become clear from the field work is the profound diversity of scenarios and realities that characterize the Latin American and Caribbean region. From the interviews conducted, it is worth mentioning that the design of the Regional Programme based on the 3 Transformative Results has not been very receptive to contextual differences, and to the characterization of social and gender norms and structural inequalities that affect the full exercise of women's sexual and reproductive rights in the region, especially in the regulatory and public policy framework to influence the norms and policies that allow the voluntary interruption of pregnancy (VTP), and the promotion of comprehensive sexuality education for adolescents in school environments. It is in these last two gaps where the persistence of traditional social and gender norms is observed, with the strongest opposition from conservative groups and the prospects of greater rejection.
150. The transformation of social and gender norms is a challenge in the region for the achievement of UNFPA's transformative results. It is still difficult to implement Programmes that incorporate a transformative gender approach capable of changing these norms through greater involvement of men, youth and boys, and a broader approach to the various forms of violence, taking into account the achievements of GBV work. To achieve this, it is crucial to generate evidence on which strategies are effective and which are not, taking into account an intersectional approach. Progress has been made in the work on positive masculinities through the socialization of systematization tools developed at the regional level, as well as the preparation of a methodological guide for working on masculinities with an intercultural approach that includes indigenous and Afro-descendant men.
151. A survey measuring social and gender norms has been completed as a starting point for obtaining information on what these norms are and how present they are in the countries of the region. This survey has been developed in coordination with UNDP, and measures gender social norms in three dimensions that make up women's autonomy: i) economic autonomy, ii) decision-making autonomy and iii) bodily autonomy.

4.3.7. Normative role⁶⁷

PE10: To what extent has UNFPA's normative role been strengthened in the LAC region?

Finding No. 11. The normative role of UNFPA in Latin America and the Caribbean has been strengthened, albeit not in an integrated or uniform manner. While in some national contexts it has contributed to reinforcing mechanisms for the advancement of

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⁶⁷ It should be noted that within the framework of this evaluation, a deep-dive study has been carried out in which the normative role of UNFPA in Latin America and the Caribbean has been studied in depth, through different experiences and the participation of key informants from LACRO, SROC and the various Country Offices, as well as various strategic partners and implementers who kindly provided us with their contributions.

women through technical assistance in strategy design and strategic planning, it is important to consider the role of inter-agency work with other UN agencies with related mandates and areas of work. LACRO has developed the concept by adapting it to the regional context, promoting its adoption by the COs and partners.

152. Within the UN system, normative work is understood as "...Support for the development of norms and standards in conventions, declarations, regulatory frameworks, agreements, guidelines, codes of practice and other standard-setting instruments, at the national, regional and global levels". Normative work also includes support for the implementation of these instruments at the policy level, i.e. their integration into laws, policies and development plans, as well as their implementation at the Programme level. Thus, normative work refers to three important aspects of normative work: the development of norms and standards; support to governments to integrate norms and standards; and finally, support to governments to implement laws, policies or plans in line with international conventions and treaties. The definition distinguishes several categories: i) the development of norms and standards; ii) support to governments and other parties for the integration of norms and standards into laws, policies and development plans; and iii) c) support to governments and others for the implementation of laws, policies and development plans on the basis of norms, standards and international conventions.
153. Social and gender norms and addressing structural inequalities constitute a highly relevant strategic shift in the achievement of UNFPA's results in the region. This was affirmed in the survey conducted within the framework of the formative evaluation, in which 86.67% of the decision-makers consulted agreed that this work is very relevant for the achievement of UNFPA results in Latin America and the Caribbean. On the other hand, and in relation to the above, 46.67% of the people consulted highlighted the relevance of normative work, and 40% stated that it is very relevant. Only 13.3% of respondents stated that the agency's normative work was moderately relevant. UNFPA has shown progress in Latin America and the Caribbean, on the one hand, in the areas that are at the heart of its mandate, and on the other hand, in relation to the 3TRs.
154. One of UNFPA's strategic contributions to policy work in Latin America and the Caribbean is represented by the consultation processes and regional reports on progress, challenges and opportunities based on surveys in Member States, and the results of the Regional Population Conferences. This ICPD2030 World Report was expected to be presented at the recently held Summit of the Future. In Latin America, a series of consultative meetings were held in 2023 together with ECLAC on specific aspects of the Montevideo Consensus, shaping the "Second Regional Report on the Implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development", as well as in the ICPD30 review process". In the Caribbean, specific consultations were also established in 2023, joining the efforts not only of ECLAC, but also of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda.
155. UNFPA LACRO's comparative advantage in the performance of its normative role is fundamentally related to the breadth of its scope, encompassing multiple scenarios, with the potential to bring diverse experiences and realities into dialogue, and favoring the exchange of promising practices in the area of normative change in line with the 3TRs, but also in the ICPD Agenda, where the Montevideo Consensus constitutes a unique and singular roadmap at the regional level. In addition, and in the same line of reflection, it has a fundamental strategic place in the promotion of regulatory and legislative reviews and studies in different countries and subregions.
156. On the other hand, and based on a core of technical *expertise* that is highly valued, it plays an important role in strengthening institutional capacities and political dialogue of networks of organizations and civil society groups to implement strategies for the enforceability of rights before the States, to promote the transformation of legislative frameworks, but also the development of studies and data generation to support decision-making for the adoption of policies, or to favor the

change of laws, their regulation, or the allocation of public budgets for their effective implementation.

157. In a regional scenario characterized by questioning and even regression in terms of gender equality and women's rights, and especially in terms of sexual and reproductive health and comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in school environments, the normative role has been recognized as a fundamental instance, with a politically very sensitive agenda, and has managed to articulate a sustained work with key public agencies. During the period under review, there have been clear advances in the expansion of sexual and reproductive rights for women through the modification of regulatory frameworks and the regulation of voluntary interruption of pregnancy. Countries such as Argentina, Colombia and Mexico introduced legislative or legal changes in their national laws, following major social mobilizations with a strong presence of civil society networks and organizations from the feminist movement. Likewise, the regulatory and institutional framework has been modified to prevent and protect women and girls from different forms of gender-based violence, specifically femicide. Although several actors have acted in addition to UNFPA and, therefore, it is difficult to isolate their attribution to change, it is possible to delimit some of the areas of contribution to normative change and social norms to eradicate gender-based violence. From the interviews conducted, it has been possible to confirm that, in Cuba, UNFPA's normative work has also contributed to achieving significant progress in addressing gender-based violence and combating early marriages, although challenges persist in implementation. In 2021, the Council of State approved a comprehensive strategy to address gender-based violence, which represents an important normative advance for the country.
158. Despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, countries in Latin America and the Caribbean have strengthened contraceptive distribution policies, with advances in free and readily available contraceptives, although barriers persist in rural areas and among the most neglected population groups.
159. In relation to this point, it is worth noting that the strengthening of the capacities of the mechanisms for the advancement of women at the level of the ministries with key competencies in this area has taken place in some countries. The importance of UNFPA's normative role has been highlighted in the framework of the interviews conducted, and is of fundamental relevance in scenarios in which UN Women has a limited presence or no presence at all. In some cases, as in the Dominican Republic, the absence of UN Women, which has a normative role as part of its mandate, has resulted in greater involvement of UNFPA in strengthening the mechanisms for the advancement of women - the Ministry of Women - for the normative integration and design of the Strategic Plan for a Life Free of Violence for Women (2020).
160. UNFPA has contributed to the development of evidence for policy change through legislative review on sexual and reproductive health in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean. Here, English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries have made significant progress in their efforts to guarantee the right to sexual and reproductive health (SRH).
161. LACRO has played a significant role in positioning adolescent pregnancy as a key regional priority contributing to the 3TRs, not only by leveraging the power of data and evidence, but also through studies on regulatory and policy frameworks and the implementation of innovative methodologies for socioeconomic cost estimation (i.e. MILENA, MEMI). However, they also noted that LACRO could have been more assertive in positioning the mandate at regional and/or sub-regional levels.

4.3.8. Financing⁶⁸

PE11: To what extent has the focus of the Regional Programme shifted from funding to funding and financing of the ICPD agenda?

Finding No. 12. While promising regional and national experiences have been identified, there are significant limitations in UNFPA's capacities in Latin America and the Caribbean for resource mobilization with an integrated, proactive, strategic, and long-term approach.

162. During the period under review, the UNFPA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has deployed a series of efforts aimed at strengthening regional capacities for fund mobilization, mainly the capacities of its human resources and the development of a Regional Fund Mobilization Strategy⁶⁹ whose main focus is on the diversification of funding sources and a commitment to alliances and partnerships.
163. The greatest efforts are made at the Country Office level -which do not have uniform capacities for mobilizing funds-, although successful experiences of working in partnership with the private sector have been identified, as in the case of the Dominican Republic, where the Country Office has assigned a person dedicated to this task, and has managed to establish long-term relationships with private sector entities such as Banco Popular, and the Banco Popular Foundation in strategic areas of the agenda, such as the issue of care for the elderly and the prevention of maternal mortality, through the design of pilot experiences that can be implemented, evaluated and scaled up to increase their level of impact in other areas of the country and the region. At the regional -and, of course, global- level, the articulation of an alliance with the company ORGANON constitutes a framework of opportunity for working with the private sector, which raises some questions related to the internal measures and procedures for the evaluation of reputational risks and the implementation of the corresponding mitigation measures.
164. There are also some experiences in mobilizing funds on a regional scale, such as the Regional Project "Leaving No One Behind: Reducing Adolescent Pregnancy in Afro-descendant, Creoles, Garifuna and Miskito Communities in Selected Municipalities of the Central American Caribbean Coast", financed by the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. In this experience, the UNFPA Regional Office operated as a regional node that made it possible to articulate diverse experiences and opportunities, and to encompass different countries in the region under the same funding umbrella, expanding the scale of programming. On the other hand, the criteria for the inclusion of the Country Offices in the design of the Project and the presentation of the proposal to the donor were not generally and objectively made explicit to all the Country Offices that were also working on the reduction of adolescent pregnancy with the prioritized target groups and that could have been included.
165. Although the representatives of the donor entities consulted admit the outstanding *expertise* and technical quality of UNFPA, and the strategic and relevant nature of its role, the contractual management and the relationship with its donors admit there is room for improvement in terms of contract signing times, quality and agility in the presentation of reports, internal tools and provisions for the acceptance of public and international agency funds, and guidelines for the determination

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⁶⁸ In the context of the Formative Evaluation of the UNFPA Regional Program for Latin America and the Caribbean, a deep-dive study was also conducted with the objective of broadening the reflection and evidence base on transformative financing, a strategic aspect of the program. Through an exhaustive analysis that included documentary review, interviews and focus groups, we sought to understand the dimensions of this issue, its conceptual foundations, the progress achieved in the region, as well as the existing opportunities and challenges.

⁶⁹ Regional Resource Mobilization Strategy 2022-2025

of indirect cost percentages in the negotiation, design and implementation of inter-agency projects with other agencies of the United Nations System.

166. In this line, an experience usually highlighted at the inter-agency level is the Spotlight Programme developed with the European Union and other agencies of the United Nations system in different countries, where achievements were identified within the framework of Transformative Result N°3, and which in countries of the Caribbean subregion have made it possible to strengthen norms, institutions and public policies, as well as the development of protocols and the provision of public awareness measures for the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV)⁷⁰ although it is experiencing problems of sustainability and the need for ownership by key institutional actors.
167. Based on interviews with key informants, it is also important to mention the importance of adapting standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the receipt of funds from public and private institutions and large donors, and at the same time, it is still necessary to manage expectations in the receipt of funds and support, especially from civil society networks and organizations and social movements.
168. This issue is closely related to the definition of the Agency's Business Model in Latin America and the Caribbean, adapted to the reality and possibilities of the countries in the region, most of which are characterized by being middle or upper-middle income and, therefore, not eligible to receive international cooperation funds, which are also subject to a reorientation in terms of priority thematic and geographic areas. Here, based on the interviews conducted, there is agreement on the importance of defining UNFPA's role in the region, since it is not a matter of implementing projects and competing with civil society organizations for funding, but rather of concentrating its efforts and resources on acting as a node or platform for the exchange of experiences, lessons learned and practices at the regional level that can be evaluated, documented and scaled up to gain greater regional impact.
169. Before concluding, it is worth mentioning the mobilization of resources for humanitarian action and migration, especially in contexts such as Haiti, where support mechanisms have been articulated by the UNFPA Regional Office and the Country Office to identify and develop proposals and consolidate a long-term relationship with USAID. In addition, funding mechanisms for disaster risk preparedness and mitigation, and adaptation to climate change are partially used.
170. Finally, some triangular cooperation experiences deserve special attention, since in these, the Regional Programme has managed to articulate resources, knowledge, tools and collaboration with the Country Offices and regional partners, which have been very positively valued by their protagonists.
171. In general terms, the weaknesses observed in the mobilization of funds at the regional level have repercussions at two levels: on the one hand, in the management and strengthening of relations with current donors; and on the other, in the expansion of opportunities, scope and impact in the design of regional multi-country, inter-agency projects and/or in alliance with the private sector, within the broader framework of efforts to diversify funding sources.

4.4. Enabling factors

4.4.1. Strategic communication, resource mobilization and partnerships

PE12: To what extent have UNFPA's strategic communication, resource mobilization and partnerships accelerated progress on the 3Rs and the ICPD Programme of Action in the region?

Finding No.13 Experiences in strategic communication, resource mobilization, and partnerships have been primarily identified at the national level, and in recent

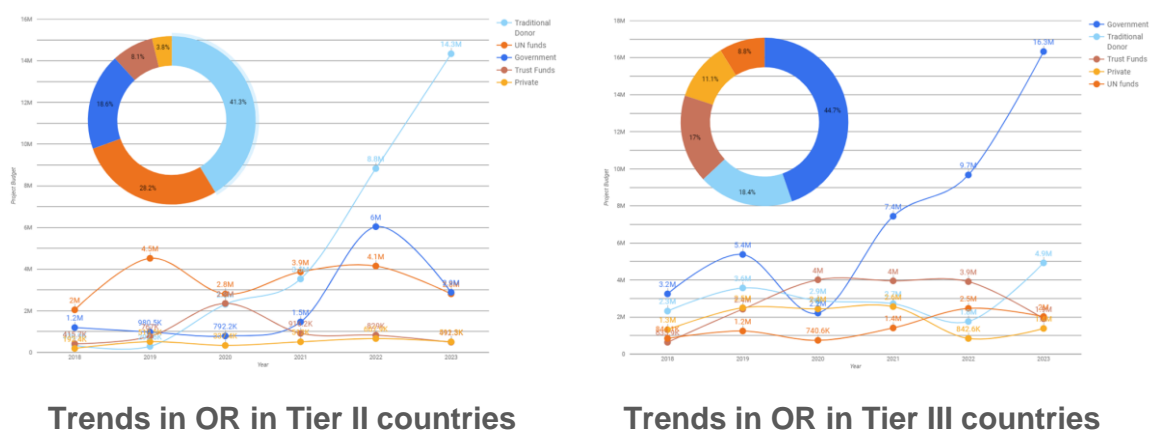
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⁷⁰ Choose a better way. A Jamaica constabulary force. Domestic Violence Intervention Brochure.

years, at the Regional Programme level. This offers an opportunity to enhance the impact and strategic nature of resource application. LACRO has strengthened the team and is developing strategies to equip the office with the capacity to foster a shift from funding to funding and financing. In the realm of communications, there is a conscious effort to strengthen coherence and communication strategy, manifested in a shift in focus primarily on resource mobilization and partnership generation.

172. Beyond the thematic focus of the Fund's work, the regional office has been reflecting on UNFPA's working methods in the region, i.e. the "how" to achieve the "what" discussed in sections 4.1 and 4.2. UNFPA has formulated a results framework and goals that, in some cases, are ambitious for the size of the teams and the availability and mobilization of resources. Therefore, in this scenario, it is even more relevant to understand the added value, the existing capacities, and the potential for impact and amplification of results through alliances and partnerships. In recent years, UNFPA has invested great effort in the development of certain strategic alliances, such as the traditional ones with civil society, UNS agencies, donors or the private sector, which have been fundamental for the realization of rights. It has established excellent alliances with countries that are strategic partners; however, in some cases, only a traditional type of partnership is observed, without exploring other options, such as those that could arise with the private sector. Nor have relations with emerging countries been fostered.
173. According to LACRO reports during the period, the main source of funds at the regional level has come from governments (Tier 3) and traditional donors (Tier 2), accounting for almost half of the contributions. Another source came from Programme countries financing their own CDDCs (representing a reduction of the former upward trend), and a fifth came from other UN agencies, mainly through *pool funds*. IFIs, the private sector and the European Union rounded out the funds, the latter accounting for less than 10%.

Graph6 Financing Trends by Country Category .



Source: LACRO

174. There is a perception among key stakeholders that UNFPA should seek different strategic alliances, in line with the progress of other United Nations System (UNS) agencies. The modality of operating as a technical agency that seeks partnerships with peers on regional issues, in addition to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and traditional donors, is questioning its sustainability when many countries are no longer eligible for such funding. In this sense, it is possible to explore different

strategies such as the formation of coalitions on specific issues,⁷¹ the adoption of more proactive and comprehensive approaches in working with donors and strategic partners, and of course, diversification in resource mobilization.

175. Socio-economic evidence is a very important tool for positioning the UNFPA mandate and its 3Rs, including the investments needed to achieve them, also with the objective of mobilizing resources from *funding* to funding and financing. All LAC countries should have at least one piece of evidence in this regard for which the need for staff who understand the country's economy, as well as its fiscal space, and the network of actors with which to operate has become evident.
176. In the area of communications, a conscious effort to strengthen coherence and communication strategy can be perceived from the UNFPA Regional Office's interlocutors. This effort has been manifested in a change of approach that has been ongoing for the last few years. Previously, communication was directed generally to the public, with the objective of explaining the Fund's functions and purpose. However, it is now moving towards a more strategically oriented communication, focused primarily on resource mobilization, partnership building and audience segmentation to tailor messages accordingly and in a targeted manner.
177. This change in approach seeks to explore how support can be provided from the regional level to the offices to achieve their mandate. However, this shift is not yet clearly perceived in the country offices. It can be inferred that there is still a gap between the strategic intent at the global and regional levels, and its perception and implementation at the local level in country offices. Therefore, additional effort is needed to ensure that this change in approach is effectively implemented and perceived at all levels of the organization. This is related to the aforementioned strategic shift *from funding to funding and financing*.
178. A notable achievement was the update of the regional MR strategy for LAC 2022-2025, which included supporting documents and three roadmaps, defining a common perspective for the region. In addition, 56 CFAs were co-signed by the COs and LACRO, totaling almost US\$40 million. Progress has also been made in the donor campaign for voluntary support. In addition, traditional donors such as Canada, the United States and Spain returned as major contributors after a period of absence, supporting LACRO in mobilizing \$2.4M in 2023.
179. Finally, on the balance between capacity, business model and results, the evidence indicates that UNFPA's actions at the regional level require an alignment between goals - some considered very ambitious in the post-COVID context - resources - clearly limited in terms of financial and human resources -, priorities assigned from a perspective that considers feasibility, the diversity of national and sub-national contexts. There is consensus on the need to strike a balance between these lofty objectives, resource constraints and operational limitations while giving countries flexibility and tools to operate.

4.4.2. Financial and human resources

To what extent have financial and human resources been sufficient, adequately allocated and managed to facilitate the effective, efficient and coherent implementation of the Regional Programme?

Finding No.14. The LACRO Regional Office has strengthened its capacity by incorporating various professional profiles, such as in programmatic areas, resource mobilization, human resource management, and communication. Several lines of work in these areas have been

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⁷¹ Issue based coalitions.

identified and are beginning to be developed. Key stakeholders highly value the high capacity, professionalism, and availability of LACRO staff.

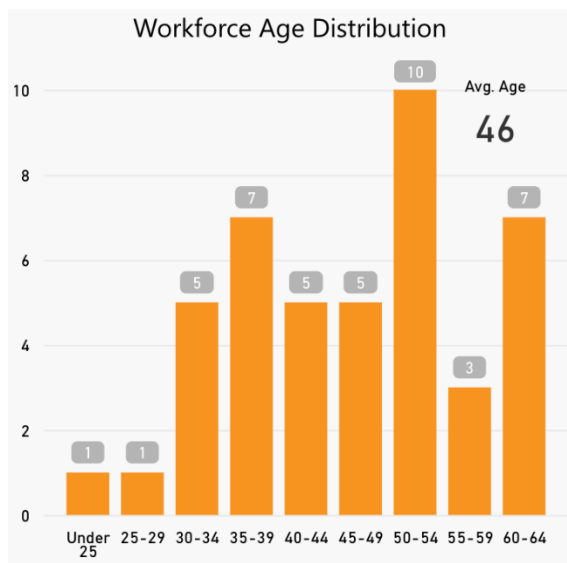
180. The resource allocation system changed compared to the operating model prior to this Strategic Plan. Starting with the allocation of a minimum level for all countries obtaining US\$500,000 per year to perform the main *modes of engagement* in the region, in particular the normative role through advocacy and policy dialogue, knowledge management and partnership building. The new resource allocation system allocates the remaining resources using a formula that takes into account: a) distance to the thresholds of the 3TRs; b) vulnerability to disaster risks; c) inequalities in access to health care; d) population size; and e) gross national income per capita
181. In the area of financial resource allocation, it has improved transparency in decision-making and predictability in the receipt of funds. Some office informants have expressed the perception that funds are released unpredictably, often without a clear explanation as to why certain funds are granted at that time when they could have been provided in advance.
182. In the context of annual planning, budget programming is carried out, which is broken down by area, initiative and type of expenditure, among other criteria. In addition, during the quarterly programmatic review, a comprehensive financial evaluation is carried out and, if necessary, resources are reprogrammed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the execution of projects. As mentioned, the regional office considers the possibility of reserving part of the funds for those COs that are effectively managing their resources. However, from the COs, there is a perception that this allocation of funds comes too late.
183. There is room for improvement in the programming of expenditures for both the COs and the Regional Office, so that resources, once available, can be delivered as soon as possible. With proper expenditure programming, it would be possible to inform COs that they have a certain amount of resources to be granted, with the second part of these resources depending on the performance of the COs. This approach would not only provide greater transparency and predictability, but could also incentivize better performance and more efficient management of resources.
184. The challenge is to establish synergies between the programmatic area and operations. For example, in order to optimize the response in the area of procurement, efforts have been made to develop a procurement plan, for which it is essential to improve management capacity.
185. Several key informants project an unfavorable view of the *Supply Chain Management Unit* (SCMU) due to the deficiencies identified, for example, in communication and delivery times, despite recognizing the contribution it makes in terms of facilitating countries' access to inputs and methods. The Regional Office has tried to mediate to improve the service and, in this regard, has developed several reports that identify the underlying causes. There is a perception that the procurement of goods from other continents is not the most efficient formula, which has led to a shift towards procurement in the region (with regional suppliers), as well as to establish a pre-positioning system to respond more quickly to emergencies. In addition, the Regional Office has been strengthened during the evaluation period with the incorporation of a supply chain management specialist (classified as P-3).

Finding N°15. LACRO demonstrates a balanced configuration of its human resources (HR) team in terms of age and gender. The distribution of HR across countries shows great variability without a clear logic based on the typology of countries according to their Tier classification or the size of the countries. The Regional Office has mapped the regular staff contracts in the region, but lacks detailed information on individuals employed under non-regular staff contracts, which represents a gap in the consolidated data at the regional level. Finally, there is a recognized need to improve staff well-being, and the

importance of reinforcing HR focal points in the Country Offices (COs) has been emphasized.

186. The LACRO Office has 44 professionals with a distribution of 35 Staff members, 8 United Nations Volunteers and 1 Service Contract. The average age of LACRO's professionals is 46 years old, seven of whom are close to retirement age. Of the total number of LACRO professionals, 30 identify themselves as female (68.2%) and 14 as male (31.8%).

*Graph7 Distribution of personnel according to age range
LACRO Source, October 2024*



Predominantly, two main modalities of human resources contracting can be discerned in the region: (i) Regular staff contracts such as Fixed-Term Appointment (FTA), Temporary Appointment (TA), Service Contract (SC), United Nations Volunteer (UNV), and Junior Professional Officer (JPO); (ii) Various categories of individual contracts, which include Individual Contract (IC), Local Individual Contractor Agreement (LICA), and Individual Contractor Agreement (ICA), the latter managed through the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The Regional Office lacks comprehensive information on persons hired under this second category, non-regular personnel contracts. From a human resources planning and management perspective, it is advisable to avoid this type of

contract, although the agile response capacity they allow COs should be ensured. Among other problems, these contracts are not incorporated into LACRO's performance management processes and remain unmapped.

187. Regarding most types of regular staff contracts, 18% of the total number of regular UNFPA staff in the Region are SB3 service contracts and 17% are United Nations Volunteers (see Annex 4.c). In terms of distribution by country, there is great variability, not always linked to the typology of countries according to Tiers or country size.

Table3 UNFPA staff in Latin America and the Caribbean

Country	Number of employees with regular contract	%
Venezuela - Caracas	73	15.08%
Colombia - Bogotá	47	9.71%
Regional Office/Panama City	44	9.09%
Mexico - Mexico City	38	7.85%
Bolivia - La Paz	37	7.64%
Haiti - Port-au-Prince	30	6.20%
Sub-Regional Office/Kingston	30	6.20%
Guatemala - Guatemala City	24	4.96%

El Salvador - San Salvador	22	4.55%
Honduras - Tegucigalpa	21	4.34%
Ecuador - Quito	18	3.72%
Nicaragua - Managua	16	3.31%
Peru - Lima	14	2.89%
Dominican Republic- Santo Domingo	13	2.69%
Argentina - Buenos Aires	11	2.27%
Paraguay - Asunción	9	1.86%
Brazil - Brasília	9	1.86%
Cuba - Havana	8	1.65%
Uruguay - Montevideo	8	1.65%
Panama - Panama City	6	1.24%
Costa Rica - San Jose	5	1.03%
Chile - Santiago	1	0.21%
Total	484	100.00%

Source: UNFPA LACRO, 2024

188. The general profile of UNFPA HR in the Region is described below. In terms of age, professionals between 36 and 55 years of age account for more than 50%. In general, it is considered a good distribution by age group, although some interlocutors call attention to the need to increase the incorporation of young staff in the offices in order to give a boost to the youth agenda in the region, while given the volume of 18% close to 65 years of age, it is worth foreseeing a generational change in the coming years and the implications that this implies. Finally, with regard to the gender distribution of the regular staff, it was found that 65% of the total is female.
189. The articulation of the Country Offices is based on the principle of autonomy of each one of them: their structure is designed according to the design of their Country Programme (CPD). Currently, office structures are being discussed prior to the presentation of the CPDs to the Executive Board to align these processes. These two processes are led by the Country Representation, with direct communication with Regional Management. The regional HR advisor intervenes from the draft, at which time a discussion is initiated on different topics, such as types of contracts, in addition to addressing particular situations in each country. In this sense, during the current Regional Programme, several "CO Alignments" were carried out. The following COs presented their CDP Alignments: Haiti and Costa Rica (approved and under implementation), Brazil, Nicaragua, Colombia, Paraguay and Venezuela.
190. At the Regional Bureau level, the payment of staff salaries is managed through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with international staff centralized at headquarters. At the level of individual countries, the situation is heterogeneous, with each country having a local UNDP counterpart. Despite the progress made in standardizing some processes, it has been identified that each country maintains different practices. Another difficulty that has been identified is the timeliness of charging personnel costs to the budget. This allocation is not done in a uniform manner: in some cases it is done monthly, in others semi-annually, which generates inconsistencies in the ability to monitor the budget in terms of HR.
191. A situation that has been expressed by several members of the Fund's regular staff is the high workload with an impact on the balance between work and family life, as well as the difficulty to reconcile it with the training processes aimed at professional development. From the Regional Office, certain practices have been implemented, such as a regional office retreat held in 2023, with the objective of fostering team cohesion. Likewise, actions related to staff counseling (staff

counselor) have been implemented, carrying out individual consultations. Some collective activities have been developed with the aim of improving personal wellbeing, although the perception is fairly unanimous of the need to balance commitment to the Fund's mandate and personal wellbeing. In summary, the need to improve wellbeing is demanded, an aspect that can be explored in terms of self-care, attention to workers' children, among others.

192. Finally, the need to strengthen the HR focal points in the COs has become evident in order to empower them and provide them with the necessary tools. In September 2024, the Regional Office held a face-to-face meeting of HR focal points in Panama, with the objective of strengthening capacities in the various HR processes and fostering a community of support and learning among the focal points in the countries of the region.

4.4.3. Business Model

PE14: What has been (and should be in the future) the business model and value added of UNFPA in a middle-income country (MIC) region?

Finding Nº 16. The added value of UNFPA lies in its widely recognized technical expertise, the quality of its professionals, and the horizontal and shared approach to decision-making with both strategic and implementing partner entities. Evidence highlights the importance of a flexible and collaborative approach, as well as the significance of the Fund's presence in countries, tailored to the diverse realities of the LAC region. This approach maximizes regional cooperation and leverages the strengths of country offices and governments. However, funding limitations, especially for middle-income or upper-middle-income countries, necessitate specific adaptations in the business model design, with a greater emphasis on innovation, data generation and evidence, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

193. The current business model adopted by UNFPA transcends the previous classification of countries by color quadrants, and instead distributes the 119 countries in which the Fund works into three categories, called *Tiers* or Levels: LEVEL I (corresponding to those countries that have not achieved any of the 3TRs); LEVEL II (referring to countries that have not achieved two of the 3TRs); and LEVEL III (relating to countries that have not achieved one of the 3TRs). According to this distribution, most Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) countries are classified in Level III, with only 6 countries in Level II (Colombia, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Venezuela) and 4 in Level I (Bolivia, Guatemala, Haiti and Peru). In the context of the Caribbean Subregional Programme, there are countries belonging to Levels I, II and III.
194. The current business model provides greater flexibility than the previous one in terms of implementation strategies and use of accelerators, an aspect that is positively valued by country offices. Although a combination of the five modes of *engagement* are used, most UNFPA country offices in Latin America and the Caribbean mainly use four modes: advocacy and policy dialogue, capacity development, knowledge management, and UN coordination, partnerships and South-South cooperation.
195. Service delivery remains vital in countries with weak service delivery systems, or in countries facing disasters or protracted crises, or at the onset of an emergency to strengthen their systems and address critical needs in humanitarian crises. Some countries in LAC still rely heavily on service delivery to fill critical gaps in the provision of reproductive health or gender-based violence services. Although service delivery is still used in the rest of the countries, its deployment is done in specific contexts or moments, such as humanitarian emergencies, or is done on a small scale to pilot or

demonstrate different or alternative ways of providing high quality services, or is limited to the subnational level, where the 3TRs still show equity gaps in terms of populations and territories reached. Even so, it is perceived from the countries that there should be flexibility in terms of implementation strategies. There are territories where the provision of services is valued as a way of applying pilot resources, such as the Reference Centers for training health professionals on family planning supplies.

196. There is consensus among the stakeholders consulted on the complexity of addressing the discussion on the business model (BM). The opportunity is identified to segment the countries to approach the BM in a different way, not only by the levels identified, but considering the implementation of thematic *clusters* based on the accelerator exercise. For example, considering situations with humanitarian settings the nexus accelerator is crucial. By positioning it, it is possible to mobilize resources and allow the growth of an office that offers services, linking it to a process of institutional strengthening. Services are provided to the population in need, while building national capacity. This is a unique capacity for UNFPA, as it has the same mandate in humanitarian and development situations, which represents a unique opportunity to bring the two together.
197. On the other hand, advanced countries in demographic transition, with a differentiated office structure and work modalities, must have a WB that makes it possible to visualize the future of UNFPA, as noted in the first section of this chapter.
198. For UNFPA's future business model, there is consensus in the region (see survey response 7 in Annex) on the importance of the presence of COs is crucial to understand and respond to the specific needs of each context. This proximity makes it possible to strengthen relationships with national actors and ensure that interventions are relevant. In addition, it allows positioning to take advantage of government co-financing opportunities to improve the sustainability and impact of UNFPA Programmes, aligning efforts with national priorities. Knowing and sharing good practices among countries is essential to leverage the collective capacity of country offices.
199. To address emerging challenges in the region, it is critical to provide quality technical assistance. According to key informants, a key value of UNFPA is its positioning as a leading provider of innovative and evidence-based knowledge. In this sense, the experience and development of the Thematic Clusters is considered very relevant. In addition, strengthening technical cooperation between countries is relevant, considering that the country offices have high-level specialists.
200. Finally, it identifies the need to collect data with a greater degree of specificity at regional, national and sub-national levels to ensure analysis and decision making based on solid and accurate information. It is foreseeable that the future Business Model in Latin America and the Caribbean will present several variants, which will depend on multiple factors, such as the specific context of each country, the typology of the UNFPA country office and the available funding opportunities, among others. In terms of *staff*, the stakeholders consulted reaffirm the need to have a strong presence in the countries with highly trained staff, mainly in the areas of sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality, gender-based violence, youth and population and data.

5. Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The UNFPA Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean employs a 3TRs-based approach, suitable for addressing inequalities and advancing towards the SDGs and ICPD. Although the region has made progress in the three transformative results of UNFPA, they remain relevant. Adolescent pregnancy is a priority, and LACRO has positioned it at the center of its Theory of Change. However, it is necessary to better highlight UNFPA's contributions in areas such as population and development, youth, gender, and HIV.

Related to Evaluation Question (EP1) and linked to Findings 1 and 2

201. The three transformative results have effectively provided focus to the organization's priorities, communicated the Fund's purpose, and improved its positioning with donors and resource mobilization capacity. In some countries—particularly those that have exceeded the established 3TR targets or are in transition phases, such as Uruguay, Chile, or Costa Rica—the focus on the three zeros is perceived as a limiting framework. These countries are beginning to have other priorities, such as low fertility rates and aging.
202. Within the framework of the 3TRs, LACRO correctly identified the need to strengthen the normative role and has been a highly committed partner in pursuing a strategic approach to leave no one behind (LNOB), especially towards people with disabilities, indigenous populations, and Afro-descendants. However, the life course concept, although mentioned in the UNFPA Strategic Plan, has not been developed or implemented. This represents a missed opportunity to comprehensively address the needs of individuals at different stages of their lives, from childhood to old age. The lack of operationalization of this concept limits UNFPA's ability to offer holistic and sustainable solutions that respond to the diverse realities and challenges faced by populations in the region.

Conclusion 2: The LACRO Regional Office has strengthened its capacity by incorporating various professional profiles in programmatic areas, resource mobilization, human resource management, and communication. Several lines of work in these areas are being reinforced. Key stakeholders value the high capacity, professionalism, and availability of LACRO staff. UNFPA's regional actions require a delicate balance between ambitious goals, limited resources, and priorities.

Related to Evaluation Question (PE2) and linked to finding 3.

203. The UNFPA Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean has significantly strengthened its supervisory and monitoring capacity. This has been achieved through several key initiatives, such as the implementation of a performance indicator dashboard that allows detailed performance tracking, the preparation of quarterly reports that provide a continuous overview of the progress of Country Offices, and the organization of mid-year meetings that facilitate the follow-up on implementation and strategic prioritization. These measures have enhanced monitoring, transparency, and accountability, enabling more effective management and better alignment with the region's strategic objectives.
204. Additionally, LACRO has strengthened its support function to Country Offices by implementing a technical assistance platform. This platform facilitates access to specialized resources and knowledge, improving the capacity of COs to implement their Programmes. At the intergovernmental level, LACRO has played a crucial role in the development of the Regional Conference on Population and Development and the ICPD Agenda, as well as in promoting collaboration and the exchange of best practices among countries in the region.

Conclusion 3: The accelerators proposed in the Regional Plan for Latin America and the Caribbean 2022-2025 are relevant for advancing towards the achievement of the 3TRs. Although the

accelerators have not been systematically implemented, some promising experiences have been identified in data generation, analysis and use of evidence-based interventions, knowledge management, partnerships, coordination and funding, and innovation and adaptation. LACRO correctly identified the need to conceptually develop the accelerators and has made progress towards their conceptualization and operationalization.

Related to Evaluation Question (PE3) and linked to finding 4.

205. The UNFPA Strategic Plan proposes six accelerators that differ slightly from the five included in the Regional Programme, causing some confusion among country-level actors and complicating the understanding of both strategic frameworks. Additionally, the relationship between the accelerators and the strategic shifts in the Strategic Plan is not widely understood by stakeholders. An explanatory document that clarifies the relationship and alignment between the accelerators of the Regional Programme and the Strategic Plan, as well as their connection to the strategic shifts, would have been very useful. Such a document could have facilitated better understanding and greater operationalization capacity, ensuring that all levels work coherently and coordinated towards the same objectives.
206. In response, LACRO has made a significant effort to develop a method for defining and operationalizing the concept of an accelerator. This operationalization process requires an in-depth discussion about the concept of accelerators to ensure that Country Offices (COs) understand and adopt it. The work in CO clusters based on specific issues, such as high maternal mortality rates (MM) or adolescent pregnancy, is identified as highly relevant for a diverse and unequal region like LAC. These clusters will allow for detailed analyses of the main causes of these issues. Based on these analyses, the most appropriate strategy to follow in each case can be determined.
207. This approach not only facilitates better understanding and application of the accelerator concept but also allows for a more focused and effective response to the specific challenges each country faces. By adapting strategies to the particular needs of each context, UNFPA can maximize its impact and contribute more effectively to the well-being of key populations in the region.
208. In addition to the above, some regional events and certain governments committed to UNFPA's areas of interest have the potential to act as accelerating agents at this time. For example, UNFPA is supporting Brazil to include key topics in the G-20 discussions, serving as a platform to highlight UNFPA's areas of interest at both regional and global levels, especially considering that Brazil will also host COP-30 next year. This approach not only aims to advance UNFPA's objectives but also to strengthen its presence and relevance in international forums, promoting an agenda that addresses the needs and challenges of the most vulnerable populations in the region.

Conclusion 4a: The UNFPA Regional Programme in Latin America and the Caribbean has made progress in integrating global megatrends and the principle of "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB), with innovative pilots in care and aging. It has also strengthened sexual and reproductive health services, data generation for public policy decision-making, and its normative role, while challenges remain in strategic resource mobilization and partnerships.

Related to Evaluation Questions (PE4 to 11) and linked to findings 5 to 12.

209. Overall, significant progress is reported, but there are also persistent challenges and opportunities to enhance UNFPA's impact in the region. The integration of global megatrends and the principle of "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB) into programming has begun to materialize, with notable pilot experiences in care systems and aging, though with differences in implementation and the need for more adaptive approaches, especially in response to the effects of climate change.
210. Achievements are highlighted in the expansion of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, contraceptive options, and the generation of data and evidence for decision-making. However, it is essential to improve the dissemination of these achievements and strengthen interagency and

multisectoral coordination to enhance the successes and expand the reach of these initiatives, concerting efforts, capabilities, knowledge, and resources of different UN system agencies.

211. UNFPA's normative role has been strengthened, but unevenly, and significant challenges remain in comprehensive and strategic resource mobilization, where partnerships and collaborations at both regional and national levels can gain greater prominence and be amplified to drive the desired transformations.

Finding 4b: UNFPA's humanitarian response capacity and its Nexus approach have expanded significantly. However, challenges remain in adapting and implementing this approach, interagency coordination, and transitioning towards sustainability. Consolidating these achievements is crucial for UNFPA to respond swiftly to strategic changes in regional policies.

Related to Evaluation Questions (PE4 to 11) and linked to findings 5 to 12.

212. At the regional level, UNFPA has significantly expanded its humanitarian preparedness and response capacity, as well as its humanitarian-development nexus programming. A notable achievement in this area has been the implementation of the minimum package of GBV and SRH services in humanitarian contexts. This advancement has allowed for the positioning and consolidation of these topics in spaces that traditionally did not address them, thereby expanding the reach and effectiveness of UNFPA's interventions.
213. However, the transition from humanitarian response to development policy presents several significant challenges. One of the main challenges is the continuous and increasing demand for responses to emergency situations, which requires constant adaptability, operational capacity, and sustainable resources. Additionally, there is the difficulty of obtaining adequate and sustained responses from national and local institutions, which often face resource and capacity limitations.
214. The progress made so far is encouraging, but the Regional Office is at a point where it is necessary to consolidate these achievements and accelerate changes that enhance UNFPA's catalytic role while reflecting the diverse needs and realities of the region. In this way, UNFPA can effectively respond to strategic shifts and contribute to a more equitable future for all people in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Conclusion 5: UNFPA's added value in the region lies in its recognized technical expertise, professional quality, and horizontal and collaborative approach. Evidence indicates the importance of a flexible and collaborative approach, as well as the relevance of the Fund's presence in countries, tailored to the diverse realities of ALC countries. This approach maximizes regional cooperation and leverages the strengths of country offices and governments. However, funding limitations, especially in middle- and high-income countries, require adaptations in the business model, with an emphasis on innovation, data generation, evidence, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Related to Evaluation Questions (PE12 to 14) and linked to findings 13 to 16.

215. There is a consensus among consulted stakeholders about the complexity of discussing UNFPA's business model in the region. The unequal acceleration of the three Transformative Results reflects both progress and challenges in implementing UNFPA's vision for change. In Latin America and the Caribbean, UNFPA has played a crucial role in promoting, policy advising, and providing technical assistance for the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies, plans, and Programmes related to sexual and reproductive health and rights, including family planning and the right to a life free of violence. These efforts have led to significant progress in TR1. However, setbacks in TR2 and TR3 underscore the need to redouble efforts to achieve a more balanced and effective implementation of the 3TRs in the region.

216. The ability to generate and analyze data has emerged as a key entry point for UNFPA's positioning. In the context of growing resistance to sexual and reproductive rights, the area of Population and Development has provided an essential entry point with governments, both at central and local levels, and for generating new partnerships and resources with non-traditional actors.
217. UNFPA has established itself as a relevant humanitarian actor in the region, due to the increasing number of emergencies and rapidly emerging crises affecting almost all countries. By positioning the Nexus accelerator, essential services can be provided to populations in need while building national capacities. This unique capacity of UNFPA in the region represents an exceptional opportunity to unite both aspects and maximize the impact of its interventions.
218. There are marked limitations in the financial and human resources allocated and managed for the implementation of the Regional Programme, both at LACRO and CO levels. The variability in the distribution of human resources requires the development of management and mapping models.
219. The future business model in Latin America and the Caribbean will likely present various variants, depending on multiple factors such as each country's specific context, the typology of UNFPA's country office, and the available funding opportunities. This flexibility will allow UNFPA to respond more effectively to the unique needs and challenges of each region.
220. There is an opportunity to segment countries differently, not only by development levels but also by implementing thematic clusters based on the accelerator exercise. The size of a CO does not determine the country's classification, nor its capacity for influence or impact. Evidence has shown that both small and large offices can secure significant funding in both humanitarian and non-humanitarian contexts.
221. Regarding personnel, consulted stakeholders highlight the need for a strong presence in countries, with highly skilled staff in all key areas of UNFPA's mandate. Not all countries can have all the necessary specialists, so it is considered appropriate to promote exchange and collaborative work. In this way, a specialist in one area in one country can support another country or LACRO. This approach will ensure that UNFPA can implement its Programmes effectively and sustainably.
222. Within the framework of UNFPA's future business model in Latin America and the Caribbean, there is an opportunity to evolve towards a more efficient operating model that leverages and optimizes the use of shared human and financial resources across the region, maintaining a universal presence and greater normative and policy support. This shift implies a gradual transition from a project-based service delivery model to a more comprehensive approach. Strengthening human resources is a key factor in driving this transformation.

6. Recommendations

The following recommendations are derived from the results and conclusions of this evaluation. The recommendations were independently developed by the evaluation team, presented to the GRE, and an internal working session with LACRO was held for their refinement and expansion, as well as to facilitate their appropriation. To facilitate their use, the recommendations are organized by indicating to whom they are directed and the conclusions on which they are based. For each recommendation, its link to the conclusion, the area or unit of responsibility, and its priority are indicated.⁷²

Recommendation 1: Increase the focus on accelerating progress towards the three transformative results in the next Regional Programme, ensuring that strategies are aligned with the regional

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⁷² Indicating short term to be implemented in the next six months, medium term to be implemented during the next year, and long term to be implemented in the next program cycle.

context, using a LNOB approach and the normative role of UNFPA. Simultaneously, capture and communicate advancements and outcomes in key areas not visible in the 3TRs.

Linked to conclusion: 1	Units involved: All LACRO units	Priority: medium term
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Proposed actions:

- *Ensure that all contributions of UNFPA's work are understood, captured, and communicated, including those not as evident in the 3TRs, such as population and development, youth, gender, HIV, gender-based violence, or aging. This review should include UNFPA's direct contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the ICPD Programme of Action that do not fall under the three transformative results, in addition to the most recent Future Pact.*
- *Continue advancing the agenda in countries with demographic convergence characteristics, aimed at building comprehensive care systems in three clear areas: (i) maternity, (ii) transition to adulthood, and (iii) active aging and protection against loss of autonomy.*
- *Define the scope of the life course approach within the framework of the next regional programme, in case it continues to be maintained in the next UNFPA Strategic Plan.*
- *Integrate the principle of "Leave No One Behind" (LNOB) and the normative role operationally into the work of Programme teams, rather than in specific and isolated projects or initiatives.*
- *Adjust the goals of the Regional Programme based on the desired impacts, but also considering existing capacities, with a perspective that takes into account the balance between available resources, priority goals, and the most appropriate strategies.*
- *Strengthen coherence: Improve coordination between national and regional processes to ensure that the priorities of the ICPD and the Montevideo Consensus are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda.*
- *Promote greater programmatic integration between humanitarian and development actions: Develop a clear conceptual framework that addresses the nexus between both areas, ensuring the necessary flexibility to adapt approaches according to the specific context of the different environments in which UNFPA operates.*

Recommendation 2: Operationalize the concept of accelerator by strengthening the links between concepts and programmatic approaches of the SP and the RP, and between the accelerators and strategic shifts.

Linked to conclusion: 3	Units involved: Management and Programme	Priority: Short term
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Proposed actions:

- *In-depth Discussion on Accelerators: Conduct a comprehensive analysis of the accelerator concept to ensure its proper internalization in Country Offices.*
- *Continuous Collaboration with Country Offices: Continue collaborative work with Country Offices, creating thematic clusters in priority areas. Conduct root cause analyses and, based on these, consider the strategies to be implemented.*
- *Development of Multi-Country Strategies: Develop strategies that identify common critical bottlenecks among countries and design response and implementation plans to achieve greater scale.*
- *Definition of Humanitarian Response Strategies: Establish actions that allow countries at different stages of humanitarian crises to resume their acceleration strategy, ensuring*

<p><i>that the integrated acceleration approach remains relevant in humanitarian contexts.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Support in Defining Acceleration Approaches: Assist Country Offices in creating an integrated acceleration approach adapted to their context, which is reflected in their Country Programme Documents (CPDs), thereby facilitating a more strategic approach to acceleration at the national level.</i>

Recommendation 3: Advance the Resource Mobilization Strategy using a proactive, comprehensive, and multi-level approach.		
Linked to conclusion: 4 and 5	Units involved: All LACRO units	Priority: short term
<p>Proposed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Comprehensive Approach: Implement an approach that operates at the national and regional levels, focusing on capacity building to increase impact and generate multiplier effects.</i> • <i>Fostering Thematic Coalitions: Promote the creation of multi-stakeholder coalitions that address specific issues and facilitate collaboration among diverse stakeholders.</i> • <i>Optimization of Operating Procedures: Improve operational mechanisms and procedures that limit resource mobilization capacity, facilitating more efficient access to financing.</i> • <i>Strengthening Diversified Partnerships: Continue to consolidate partnerships with the private sector and non-traditional actors at the regional and national levels, including sectors such as recreation and sports, to diversify sources of support and resources, while consolidating partnerships with the governments of the region and other strategic actors for UNFPA.</i> • <i>Acceleration from Funding to Funding and Financing: Develop and implement individual capacity-building initiatives for critical areas related to acceleration, such as funding to funding and financing, and strategic communication.</i> 		

Recommendation 4: Enhance organizational capacity in operational, human, and financial resources.		
Linked to conclusion: 2	Units involved: Operations and HR Areas	Priority: medium term
<p>Proposed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strengthen operational mechanisms and procedures: Support COs in the implementation of processes that streamline management, partnership building, resource mobilization and innovation.</i> • <i>Promote the staff well-being: Promote initiatives that strengthen and ensure the well-being of the teams.</i> • <i>Develop professional career plans: Support the creation of professional development and training plans, based on identified needs, aligned with organizational trajectories and priorities.</i> • <i>Optimize knowledge management: Improve the management of knowledge generated by UNFPA and its partners in the region, ensuring organizational learning despite staff turnover.</i> • <i>Streamline accountability: Improve donor accountability processes and timelines.</i> 		

Recommendation 5. Develop a business model adapted to the specific realities of the Region.		
Linked to conclusion: 5	Units involved: All areas	Priority: medium term
<p>Proposed actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Strengthen the capacity of COs</i>: Provide flexibility and adequate tools to enable them to respond in a timely and effective manner to the needs of their countries. • <i>Boost regional cooperation</i>: Leverage the strengths of country offices and local governments to maximize the impact of UNFPA interventions. • <i>Prioritize innovation and evidence</i>: Focus on data and evidence generation as a key strategy for collaborating with governments, partnerships and donors, especially in middle- and high-income countries. • <i>Optimize the operating model</i>: Evolve toward a comprehensive and efficient approach that shares resources throughout the region, maintaining a universal presence with greater support for regulatory and public policy changes. 		

