

Independent evaluation of the capacity of UNFPA in humanitarian action 2019–2025



Evaluation Brief

UNFPA's humanitarian action has evolved and grown significantly over the past two decades. Through its membership in the Inter Agency Standing Committee and leadership for gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) areas, UNFPA has integrated humanitarian action as a core part of its strategic plans and throughout its work. To assess this evolution, the UNFPA Independent Evaluation Office commissioned an evaluation of UNFPA's humanitarian capacity.

The evaluation assesses how the UNFPA's emergency preparedness and response has improved since the 2019 evaluation, and further assesses UNFPA's humanitarian action policies, strategies and programming. The evaluation also provides recommendations for future humanitarian action at UNFPA at country, regional and global levels.



600 people consulted across **6 regions**

65% of participants were women



1500+ documents reviewed

6

country case studies

Bangladesh, Chad, Colombia, Egypt, Moldova, Uganda

9

extended desk reviews

Burkina Faso, Burundi, Madagascar, Myanmar, Peru, Venezuela, Somalia, Syria, Ukraine

2

issue papers

resource mobilization and anticipatory action

Key highlights

- UNFPA is committed to its humanitarian mandate and is consolidating its role as a global humanitarian actor, although operational integration is incomplete.
- The quality and delivery of SRH and GBV services has improved, with successful roll out of service models and progress in youth engagement.
- Despite the improvement, programming cannot meet the large and growing scale of humanitarian needs.
- There have been important organizational, strategic, and policy advancements, although progress is limited by systemic internal fragmentation, supply chain delays, an over-reliance on short-term earmarked funding, and personnel bottlenecks.
- While SRH and GBV programming demonstrates strong coherence in delivery, it is jeopardized by internal siloing and increasing external inter-agency competition.
- UNFPA's is improving linkages to the humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) continuum and localization efforts, though guidance gaps and short-term funding result in inconsistent interventions and unsustainable local partnerships

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Priority recommendations

1. Elevate UNFPA's strategic and leadership role in humanitarian action via a dedicated humanitarian strategy that unifies its internal approaches and strengthens its external positioning.
2. UNFPA should target its resources on areas of highest need by focusing on sustaining and coordinating targeted, high-quality, high-impact SRH and GBV services.
3. Enhance operational agility, responsiveness and invest in people by revising policies for flexibility, optimizing the supply chain, investing in stabilizing dedicated humanitarian positions and streamlining recruitment.
4. Enhance accountability to affected populations and localization efforts by integrating consistent and mandatory mechanisms and deepening partnerships with national organizations.
5. Integrate and strengthen HDP continuum work, including climate adaptation and youth, peace and security by clarifying responsibilities and finalizing a corporate framework for the HDP continuum.
6. Develop a unified humanitarian data strategy and system for outcome measurement for SRHR and GBV in humanitarian settings to facilitate better organizational learning in humanitarian, which will also improve UNFPA articulation of its results.

Report available at unfpa.org/evaluation

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