



Independent evaluation of UNFPA support to the integration of the principles of 'leaving no one behind' and 'reaching the furthest behind' 2018-2024

Case Study

Latin America and the Caribbean



UNFPA Independent Evaluation Office

| | |
|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Karen Cadondon | Evaluation Manager |
| Donna Mertens | External Evaluation Adviser |

Latin America and the Caribbean case study

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Laura Gonzalez Garces | UNFPA LAC Regional Office, Case Study Manager |
| Adriana Anacona | Indigenous Evaluator |

Evaluation team (Euro Health Group)

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Katie Tong | Team Leader, Gender-based Violence, Protection and Inclusion Expert |
| Melissa Pomeroy | Equity, Social Justice and Rights Expert |
| Yemurai Nyoni | Evaluation Specialist, Youth Advocacy, Accountability, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights |
| Emma Pearce | Gender, Inclusion and Disabilities Expert |
| Giulia Mantovani | Data Analyst |
| Maiken Mansfeld Jacobsen | Quality Assurance and Project Director |



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 evaluation.office@unfpa.org

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Evaluation Reference Group

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Cecile Mazzacurati | Gender and Human Rights Adviser, West and Central Africa Regional Office |
| Elena Pirondini | Chief, Executive Board Branch |
| Emilie Filmer-Wilson | Human Rights Adviser, Programme Division |
| Jennet Appova | Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office |
| Joanna Friedman | Cash and Voucher Assistance Specialist, Humanitarian Response Division |
| Laura Gonzalez Garces | Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office |
| Luciano Costantino | Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Specialist, Division for Human Resources |
| Maria Bakaroudis | Comprehensive Sexuality Education Specialist, Leave No One Behind and Disability Inclusion Focal Point, East and Southern Africa Regional Office |
| Nathaly Guzmán Figueroa | Disability Inclusion and Gender Programme Specialist, Gender, Human Rights, and Inclusion Branch |
| Virpi Mesiäislehto | Disability Inclusion Senior Technical Specialist, Gender, Human Rights, and Inclusion Branch |
| Oyuntsetseg Chuluundorj | Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Asia Pacific Regional Office |
| Patricia Da Silva | Programme Adviser, Gender, Human Rights, and Inclusion Branch |
| Thi Kieu Oanh Nguyen | Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Adviser, Arab States Regional Office |
| Vivienne Wang | Strategic Planning and Knowledge Management Adviser, Programme Division |

Steering Committee members

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Foni Joyce Vuni | Programme Coordinator, Global Refugee Youth Network |
| José Viera | Executive Director, International Disability Alliance |
| Maegen Shanks | Disability Rights Activist, Ph.D. Candidate in the School of International Service at American University, and Faculty of International Development MA Program at Gallaudet University |
| Myrna Cunningham Kain | Miskitu Indigenous Peoples Activist |
| Nulu Nanono | Demographer and Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights |
| Tarcila Rivera Zea | President, Center for Indigenous Cultures of Peru (CHIRAPAQ), Former Member of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (2017–2019) |

Latin America and the Caribbean case study team

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Melissa Pomeroy | Case Study Lead Evaluator |
| Aralys Alvarez | National Evaluator, Panama |
| Emma Rotondo | National Evaluator, Peru |
| María Pía Montero Jiménez | National Evaluator, Costa Rica |

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Abbreviations and acronyms

| | |
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| CEDAW | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women |
| CEPAL | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| CERF | Central Emergency Response Fund |
| CMEU | child marriages and early unions |
| COD-PS | common operational datasets - population statistics |
| COs | country offices |
| CPD | country programme documents |
| CSE | comprehensive sexuality education |
| ECLAC | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| FGD | focus group discussion |
| FP | family planning |
| GBV | gender-based violence |
| HRBA | human rights-based approach |
| HRD | Humanitarian Response Division |
| ICPD | International Conference on Population and Development |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| INAMU | National Institute for Women (Costa Rica) |
| INEC | National Institute for Statistics and Census |
| KII | key informant interviews |
| LAC | Latin America and the Caribbean |
| LACRO | Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office |
| LARC | long-acting reversible contraception |
| LGBTQIA+ | lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and other gender diverse people |
| LNOD | leaving no one behind |
| MCLP | Mesa de Concertación para la Lucha contra la Pobreza (Roundtable for the Fight against Poverty) |
| MIC | middle-income country |
| MMR | maternal mortality ratio |
| RFB | reaching the furthest behind |
| RP | regional programme |
| SRHR | sexual and reproductive health and rights |
| TR | transformative result |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNCT | United Nations Country Team |
| UNDIS | United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNDRIP | United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples |
| UNFPA | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNRCO | United Nations Resident Coordinator Office |
| UNSDCF | United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework |
| VIP | visibility, inclusion and participation |

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The evaluation team acknowledges that while the data collected reveals a rich array of initiatives undertaken by LACRO and the country offices during the period under review, it was beyond the scope of this report to systematically document each one. We acknowledge the importance of these initiatives and regret any omissions, understanding that their absence here does not diminish their significance or impact.

Melissa Pomeroy

Case Study Lead Evaluator

1. Introduction

The principles of leaving no one behind (LNOB) and reaching the furthest behind (RFB) are central to the achievement of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the transformative results of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). UNFPA has made concerted efforts to integrate and adapt the LNOB principles in its programming to date, and the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022–2025 reflects a deepened commitment to the LNOB and RFB principles applied across a range of UNFPA-identified ‘furthest behind’ factors and characteristics often associated with discrimination and exclusion, which include: age; culture, ethnicity, race, language, religion; disability; HIV/AIDS status; location; migration, asylum, displacement; sexual orientation, gender identity; income and wealth.

Against this background, UNFPA has commissioned a formative evaluation to generate real-time evidence on how LNOB and RFB approaches are being implemented in all areas and at all levels of UNFPA work. The evaluation is also expected to advance the meaningful engagement of persons who represent UNFPA-identified furthest behind factors in the evaluation process. This is the first evaluation focused on UNFPA support for the integration of the principles of LNOB and is important to the agency because of its centrality in the achievement of the transformative results of UNFPA.

The evaluation has the specific **purpose** of providing evaluative evidence and learning to enhance UNFPA support to the implementation of the principle of LNOB, by surfacing real-time course correction to the current implementation of the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan and informing the development of the forthcoming 2026–2029 Strategic Plan. The evaluation has the following specific **objectives**:

1. Assess the **conceptualisation, integration, implementation, and monitoring** of the principle of LNOB across all areas and levels of UNFPA’s work;
2. Facilitate **learning, capture good practices and generate knowledge** from UNFPA’s experience in efforts to integrate and implement the LNOB principles;
3. Provide **actionable inputs for the implementation** of the current UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022–2025, inform the upcoming Latin America and Caribbean regional programme,¹ and the UNFPA strategic plan 2026–2029, as well as improve UNFPA contributions to the 2030 Agenda; and
4. Integrate **practical and innovative ways to engage** persons who represent UNFPA-identified furthest behind factors in various roles throughout the evaluation.

The evaluation is framed around the following five overarching questions:

1. **Relevance.** To what extent is the UNFPA LNOB operational plan relevant to (a) realities at community, sub-national, and national levels; and (b) the UNFPA mandate?
2. **Effectiveness and sustainability.** To what extent has the LNOB operational plan been effectively operationalized at country, regional and global levels?
3. **Effectiveness - humanitarian.** To what extent has the LNOB operational plan been effectively adapted for humanitarian and crisis contexts?
4. **Coherence, alignment, and contribution to wider system.** To what extent does the UNFPA LNOB operational plan align with, add value to, fill a gap in, and contribute to broader development and humanitarian efforts?
5. **Efficiency.** To what extent has UNFPA efficiently allocated resources – financial and human – to furthering the LNOB operational plan and goals?

¹ Since 2019, the LAC region has implemented a LNOB regional strategy and developed an extensive portfolio of work addressing issues related to people of African descent, Indigenous People and people with disabilities.

The evaluation includes seven different overall datasets, the first of which is presented in this report. The datasets comprise:

1. **This Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) case study**, which is an extended regional case study that includes country offices in Panama, Costa Rica, and Peru with primary data collected through key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) underpinned by a desk review of secondary data. The LAC case study was also used as a pilot case study to test the data collection tools. Feedback from the evaluation team member and the national consultants contributed to revising and finalizing the data collection tools after the LAC country visits.
2. **Three country case studies**, from Malawi, Pakistan and Türkiye, which include a desk review of secondary data as well as primary data collected through KIIs and FGD.
3. **Global and regional data and document review, and primary data collection** (KIIs, online survey), which formed a global and regional case study.
4. **Two thematic case studies**, which were developed through specific interviews and a document review. These thematic case studies have been selected in consultation with UNFPA:
 - a) LNOB in humanitarian and triple nexus settings where case study interviews included the Humanitarian Response Division (HRD) and selected humanitarian and triple nexus country contexts, and document review included HRD documents and humanitarian response plans;
 - b) LNOB in middle-income and low fertility settings where case study interviews were conducted with population data and other advisers, particularly in the Asia and Pacific regional office and the Eastern Europe and Central Asia regional office, and in selected countries across both regions. The document review included a review of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia demographic resilience approach and the Asia and Pacific life cycle approach.

2. Regional context

2.1 A region marked by inequalities and discrimination²

Composed mainly of upper middle-income countries,³ the Latin America and the Caribbean region (LAC) is known as the most unequal region in the world, with a population of 666 million, about 32.1 per cent of whom live in poverty while 13.1 per cent live in extreme poverty.⁴ Countries with a Gini index above the 0.40 threshold account for almost 80 per cent of the region's total population.⁵ Inequalities are not limited only to levels of economic income. Poverty and extreme poverty disproportionately affect certain groups, especially women, children and adolescents, Indigenous

² This section is based on the concept note to the LAC case study commissioned by UNFPA LACRO and authored by Alejandra Faúndez Meléndez and María Pía Montero Jiménez. All sources have been checked and data was updated and expanded, when needed.

³ As of the 2023 World Bank classifications, 24 out of the 33 countries in the region were classified as upper-middle-income countries (UMIC); 7 as lower-middle-income countries (LMIC), and 2 as high-income countries (HIC).

⁴ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2022 (LC/PUB.2022/15-P), Santiago, 2022.

⁵ The Gini measures the extent to which the distribution of income or consumption among individuals or households within an economy deviates from a perfectly equal distribution. A Gini index of 0 represents perfect equality, while an index of 100 implies perfect inequality. Source: World Bank, Metadata Glossary. The countries with a high Gini index, accounting for 80 per cent of the region's population, are: Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Panama, Honduras, Guatemala.

Peoples, rural residents, persons with disabilities and Afrodescendants.⁶ Structural and institutional racism, sexism and classism are increasingly being recognized as the root causes of these inequalities. They are slowly being recognized in the public debate and addressed in public policies by institutions, as a result of decades of social movements and civil society activism.

According to recent estimates by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), there were approximately 57.5 million Indigenous People in LAC in 2022, and around 153.3 million Afrodescendants, respectively constituting 9.5 per cent and 23.7 per cent of the total population.⁷ Those figures vary significantly by country; for instance, Indigenous People make up over 40 per cent of the population in Bolivia and Guatemala, while Afrodescendants represent about 95.5 per cent in Haiti and 55.9 per cent in Brazil. Geographically, most Indigenous People live in rural areas tied to their historical territories, although over 50 per cent now reside in urban areas. In contrast, Afrodescendants are predominantly urban, with over 70 per cent living in cities across 12 of the 15 countries for which data is available. By 2020, LAC had about 85 million individuals with disabilities, representing 14.7 per cent of the population. However, persons with disabilities are not properly represented in the statistics. The most frequent types of disabilities are motor impairments and vision impairments.⁸

The demographic landscape is marked by a complex set of dynamics both across and within countries. Some nations are reaching the final stages of their demographic dividend,⁹ while others face the challenges of an ageing population. Within countries, notable differences emerge among populations. For example, Afrodescendent populations in Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras and Nicaragua are generally younger, with around one-third under 15 years of age. Similarly, Indigenous communities, while younger compared to non-Indigenous populations in most regions, are beginning to show signs of ageing, particularly in Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica and Uruguay.¹⁰

Humanitarian needs have been increasingly pressing due to a confluence of economic, political and climate crises. Natural disasters have caused significant damage, particularly in low-income and already vulnerable communities. LAC faces two simultaneous mass migratory phenomena. As of June 2024, approximately 7.77 million Venezuelan refugees and migrants had left their country, and 84 per cent of them have relocated to other countries in the region, especially, Colombia, Peru and Ecuador.¹¹ The region is also witnessing a sharp increase in the number of refugees and asylum seekers from Central America and Mexico en route to the United States and Canada. Migration challenges in LAC significantly affect maternal mortality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-based violence, including trafficking and exploitation. Women and girls, as well as

⁶ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Social Panorama of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2022 (LC/PUB.2022/15-P), Santiago, 2022.

⁷ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Population, Development and Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: draft second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (LC/MDP.5/4), Santiago, 2023.

⁸ García Mora, María Elena, Steven Schwartz Orellana and Germán Freire. 2021. Disability Inclusion in Latin America and the Caribbean: A Path to Sustainable Development. Washington, DC: World Bank. Licence: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO.

⁹ Countries with the greatest demographic opportunity for development are those entering a period in which the working-age population has good health, quality education, decent employment and a lower proportion of young dependents. Smaller numbers of children per household generally lead to larger investments per child, more freedom for women to enter the formal workforce and more household savings for old age. When this happens, the national economic payoff can be substantial. Source: <https://www.unfpa.org/demographic-dividend#0>

¹⁰ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Population, Development and Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: draft second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (LC/MDP.5/4), Santiago, 2023.

¹¹ Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V) [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.r4v.info/en/refugeeandmigrants>

lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual and other gender diverse (LGBTQIA+) people, are greatly affected in both sudden and slow-onset humanitarian crises.¹²

Over the past decade, economic growth has been inconsistent, with moderate expansion from 2013 to 2019 averaging 2.6 per cent annual gross domestic product growth, followed by a severe contraction of 6.6 per cent in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹³ This economic downturn, compounded by falling commodity prices and political instability, has strained national governments' fiscal capacity. The pandemic-induced recession led to significant drops in revenue and fiscal deficits rose sharply. Public debt levels surged to over 40 per cent of gross national income in 2022.¹⁴ These fiscal pressures have limited governments' ability to invest in critical areas and have challenged their efforts to sustain economic stability and growth.

LAC countries, in general, have advanced in establishing solid human rights legal frameworks, having ratified key international treaties, and have engaged in most relevant political global and regional declarations, including the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development. With very few exceptions, all countries have some form of institutional framework for the defence of human rights. In many of these countries, there are specific bodies dedicated to issues related to children and adolescents, gender, Indigenous and/or Afrodescendent populations, and persons with disabilities. However, the effectiveness of these legal frameworks is frequently undermined by challenges in enforcement. Barriers include inadequate implementation mechanisms, insufficient funding and political instability.¹⁵ Moreover, progress on sexual and reproductive rights, right to a life without gender-based violence and right to gender equality has faced significant pushback from various social and political forces. Anti-rights movements have diversified and strengthened in recent years, amplifying the resistance from conservative groups and reinforcing discriminatory gender and social norms. On the other hand, the regions also benefit from a vibrant civil society, strong academic institutions and a dynamic private sector.

2.2 UNFPA in Latin America and the Caribbean

UNFPA in Latin America and the Caribbean has offices in 20 countries. Additionally, the UNFPA sub-regional office for the Caribbean serves 22 countries and overseas territories in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean.¹⁶

The 2022–2025 Regional UNFPA Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean focuses on six outputs aligned with the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022–2025, namely: (a) policy and accountability; (b) quality of care and services; (c) gender and social norms; (d) demographic change and data; (e) humanitarian action; and (f) adolescents and youth.¹⁷ The programme brings specific context analysis on left-behind groups across UNFPA areas of work and focuses on women, adolescents and youth, and applies intersectional approaches to reach the most underserved population groups first, especially Indigenous and Afrodescendent communities, people living in rural areas, people in

¹² Brizuela V et al. (2023). Strengthening locally led research to respond to the sexual and reproductive health and rights of migrants from Venezuela and Central America. 47:36. (<https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/57168>).

¹³ Source: World Development Indicators. <https://databank.worldbank.org/>

¹⁴ World Bank, International Debt statistics 2023. Available at https://datatopics.worldbank.org/debt/ids/regionanalytical/LAC?_gl=1*1yhzhno*_gcl_au*NzA1Mjk3ODEyLjE3MjM4MjgzODM

¹⁵ UNFPA Midterm Review of UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean Regional Programme 2022-2025, 2023.

¹⁶ UNFPA Overview <https://lac.unfpa.org/es/rese%C3%B1-general>

¹⁷ UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean regional programme 2022-2025.

situations of human mobility, people with disabilities, key populations¹⁸ and people with humanitarian needs. Five cross-cutting approaches are applied: (a) life cycle and life course; (b) gender equality; (c) human rights; (d) intercultural; (e) focused and targeted interventions.

While LNOB is proposed as an accelerator in the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022–2025, it has not been listed as one of the accelerators in the regional programme (RP). However, the RP clearly states that UNFPA in the region will “contribute to accelerating the achievement of the three transformative results, with a focus on ‘leaving no one behind’ and addressing intersectionality”.¹⁹ Yet, as the findings of the case study show, LNOB in LAC is clearly recognised and increasingly operationalized as an accelerator. Table 1 presents LAC RP outputs and indicative resources, showing LACRO’s prioritization of policy and normative work (output 1) and population change and disaggregated data (output 4).

Table 1: UNFPA LAC RP outputs and indicative resources

| Output | Regular | Other | Total |
|---|---------|--------|---------------|
| 1. By 2025, improved integration of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, as well as the prevention of and response to gender-based violence and harmful practices, into relevant national policies, plans, legal frameworks and accountability mechanisms | \$5.2m | \$1.7m | \$6.9m |
| 2. By 2025, strengthened capacity of systems, institutions and communities to increase coverage and ensure access by those furthest behind to high-quality, comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information and services, including supplies, as well as essential services to address gender-based violence and harmful practices | \$2.7m | \$0.8m | \$3.5m |
| 3. By 2025, strengthened mechanisms and capacities of actors and institutions to eliminate social norms that underpin gender and intersectional discrimination to advance sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, gender equality and women’s decision-making | \$3.7m | \$1.2m | \$4.9m |
| 4. By 2025, strengthened fully disaggregated data systems and evidence that take account of population changes and regional megatrends for use in policy and programme formulation, especially those related to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, reaching the furthest behind first | \$4.6m | \$1.5m | \$6.1m |
| 5. By 2025, strengthened capacity of critical actors and systems, including UNFPA country offices and partners, for emergency preparedness, early action and provision of lifesaving sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence interventions that are timely, integrated and conflict- and climate-sensitive | \$1.3m | \$0.4m | \$1.7m |
| 6. By 2025, strengthened agency of women, adolescents and youth through increased leadership, knowledge, participation | \$1.3m | \$0.4m | \$1.7m |

¹⁸ Key populations are defined groups who are at increased risk of HIV irrespective of the epidemic type or local context. Key populations are those where risk and vulnerability converge.

¹⁹ The Regional Programme identifies five accelerators to support results achievement: (a) partnerships, United Nations 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 agile operational processes.

and expanded choices and opportunities, especially for women, adolescents and girls left furthest behind

Source: UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean RP 2022–2025

2.2.1 The three UNFPA transformative results in the region²⁰

TR1. Unmet need for family planning

The region has a relatively high contraceptive prevalence rate (70 per cent) and a low unmet need for family planning among women that are married or in union (10 per cent). The average fertility rate in the region stands at 1.84 children per woman. Meanwhile, inequality in fertility within countries has been historically high. Disadvantaged socioeconomic groups have consistently had higher total fertility levels. Despite a sharp drop in the last decade, adolescent fertility remains notably high – 51.4 – and remains well above the global average of 41.3. Most concerning, fertility in the 10–14 age group has fallen less sharply, with some countries in the region showing increased rates. Available data show that, overall, indicators for Afrodescendent and Indigenous women reveal worse conditions in terms of adolescent pregnancy, unmet demand for family planning services, and use of modern contraceptive methods. For instance, in Brazil, girls of African descent account for 71 per cent of adolescents’ births. Disparities are also seen across countries; in Guyana the unmet need for family planning (FP) is three times higher than LAC average.

TR2. Preventable maternal deaths

Maternal mortality in LAC has remained relatively stable over the past 20 years, with an increased maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by 2020, when there were 88 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.²¹ However, there are important intraregional disparities. In Haiti, for instance the MMR is 350 per 100,000 live births, four times higher than the average of the region. Likewise, the Caribbean countries, on average, present a higher mortality rate when compared to LAC’s average, around 190 per 100,000. Nine countries are responsible for almost 90 per cent of the total number of maternal deaths. Low levels of educational attainment, Indigenous or Afrodescendent ethnicity and residing in a rural area are factors associated with a higher risk of maternal death. For instance, in Bolivia, Indigenous women from rural areas account for 68 per cent of maternal deaths.

TR3. Gender-based violence and harmful practices

In LAC, two out of three women aged 15–49 have experienced violence in their lifetime. The region has a high femicide rate. Worldwide, out of the 25 countries with the highest femicide rates, 14 are in the LAC region. Sexual violence, including intimate partner violence, is prevalent, affecting one in four women. Notable progress in the LAC region includes the implementation of comprehensive and multisectoral interventions addressing gender-based violence, as well as the adoption of international human rights agreements and national laws addressing gender-based violence, although enforcement and access to justice is still a challenge. However, harmful practices like early unions and child marriage persist, with one out of five women married or in union before 18 in LAC. This is particularly prevalent among Indigenous girls.

²⁰ Data presented in this section is based on UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean regional programme 2022–2025; Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (2023), Population, Development and Rights in Latin America and the Caribbean: draft second regional report on the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development (LC/MDP.5/4), Santiago. UNFPA LAC (2024) Acceleration action towards the three transformative results in LAC. Leaving No One Behind to Get to Zero (ppt).

²¹ WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank Group, and UNDESA/Population Division. Trends in Maternal Mortality 2000 to 2020. Geneva, World Health Organization, 2023.

2.2.2 UNFPA LAC approach to LNOB

In 2019, a regional strategy for advancing the rights of persons with disabilities in the work of UNFPA in LAC was launched, based on the triad: visibility, inclusion and participation (VIP). In 2020, the Regional Work Plan to promote the rights of persons of African descent was approved. Later, in 2021, LACRO developed its LNOB strategy, where the VIP rationale was further expanded, to include other discriminatory and exclusion factors, specifically people of African descent, Indigenous People, and people with disabilities. The strategy proposes mainstreaming specific affirmative actions in all policies, programmes and actions across five strategic areas of action, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: LAC LNOB strategy – principles and strategic areas of action

| Principles | Strategic action |
|--|---|
| Visibility Raising awareness of rights among people who are left behind, opening opportunities for political, cultural and technical dialogue, and generating data and evidence for development actions to take account of their priorities. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accelerate the implementation of the Montevideo Consensus and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in relation to these groups. 2. Achieve statistical visibility and generate evidence for action. |
| Inclusion Actions, services and programmes related to sexual and reproductive health and ending gender-based violence must reach excluded people and take account of their perspectives, development approaches and priorities. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Develop inclusive, multisectoral and comprehensive policies and programmes to promote sexual and reproductive health, and reduce maternal mortality, teenage pregnancy and the unmet need for family planning. 4. Develop inclusive, multisectoral and comprehensive policies and programmes to end gender violence and child, early and forced marriages and unions. |
| Participation The commitment to accompany people who know their own needs, capacities and barriers so that they are the ones who can lead the most effective solutions to defend their own rights. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Empower and amplify the voices of these population groups (especially women, adolescents and young people). |

3. Methodology

3.1 Overall evaluation approach for the global LNOB evaluation²²

The overall evaluation approach is designed to be fundamentally different from traditional evaluation approaches that often fail to capture the varied experiences and perspectives of people left behind, including those who identify with the factors set out by UNFPA in its Gender+ conceptualization of LNOB (age; culture, ethnicity, race, language, religion; disability; HIV/AIDS status; location; migration, asylum, displacement; sexual orientation, gender identity; income and wealth).²³

This evaluation, therefore, has been designed under inclusive feminist principles and intends to engage, empower and endorse the agency of all stakeholders related to the evaluation subject matter, particularly those from communities who identify with LNOB factors. There is a strong belief within the UNFPA evaluation office that incorporating a fundamental shift in how evaluations are conducted, and reducing the exclusionary aspects of evaluation as much as possible, will result in an evaluation that is more relevant and impactful.

The evaluation framework is based on Merten's transformative paradigm,²⁴ which emphasizes using mixed methods – combining both qualitative and quantitative methodologies – to recognize that realities are shaped by various social, political, cultural, economic, and other factors, and are influenced by social power dynamics. The approach integrates qualitative data collection from diverse societal perspectives with quantitative analysis to ensure triangulation and robust findings. The evaluation applies this paradigm through a mixed methods approach that is inclusive, participatory and focused on practical application. Additionally, the approach is utilization-focused and formative, aiming to produce practical and impactful recommendations based on robust, evidence-based findings agreed upon by key stakeholders, especially those representing marginalized groups. While both qualitative and quantitative data will be used, the evaluation will place greater emphasis on qualitative insights, particularly from marginalized voices, aligning with a feminist approach where subjective perspectives are valued more highly than quantitative data.

3.1.1 The LNOB transformative continuum

A critical aspect of the feminist approach is seeking to understand which LNOB interventions are genuinely transformative. In light of this, the evaluation team applied a LNOB-transformative scale.²⁵ Initially, the LNOB transformative continuum was designed to differentiate those interventions that genuinely aim to address and remove root causes of inequality and barriers to inclusion, from those programmes that provide targeted services to specific groups. As the evaluation unfolded, evidence on UNFPA's LNOB programming and results provided a more nuanced picture, with the continuum serving as the overall lens to guide the analysis across all evaluation questions. Although the continuum has not been systematically applied as initially planned in the evaluation design, this case study has identified UNFPA programming with transformative potential, as well as unintended outcomes that could potentially be harmful. A more detailed discussion on the application and limitations of the transformative continuum, based on the lessons learned from all datasets, will be included in the global evaluation report.

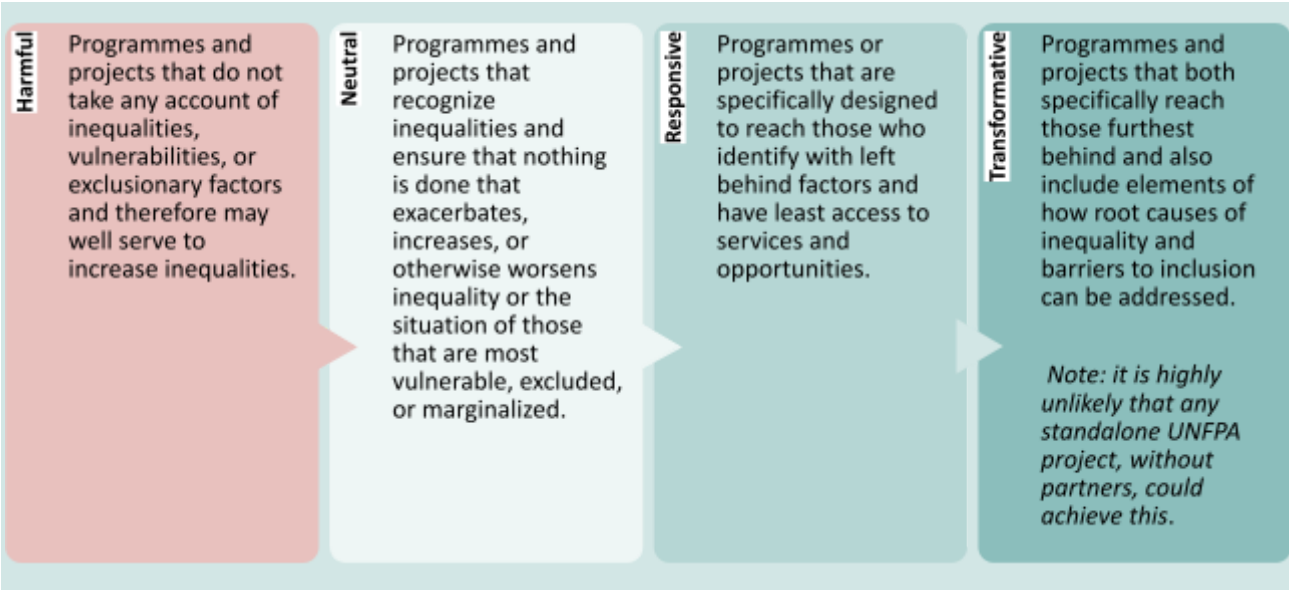
²² For a comprehensive overview of the evaluation methodology, please refer to the final LNOB evaluation report.

²³ UNFPA LNOB Operational Plan (2021).

²⁴ Mertens, D. M. Transformative Paradigm: Mixed Methods and Social Justice. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(3), 212-225.2007.

²⁵ This is similar to the gender scale that has been developed along the same lines as the Spotlight Initiative evaluation (not yet published) considered in their thematic assessment of LNOB. The Spotlight Initiative on LNOB used a transformative scale in the framing of their thematic assessment, although this is (a), not yet published and (b), was not intended to be used in any practical sense, being more of a conceptualization for design of the evaluation.

Figure 2: LNOB transformative continuum



3.1.2 Evaluation questions and assumptions

The inception report details the development of the Theory of change and evaluation matrix. The evaluation questions and assumptions are listed below in Table 2. The full evaluation matrix can be found in Annex I.

Table 2: Evaluation questions and assumptions

| |
|--|
| <p>EQ1. Relevance. To what extent is the UNFPA LNOB operational plan relevant to: (a) realities at community, sub-national and national levels; and (b) the UNFPA mandate?</p> <p><i>Feminist principles applied: a focus on learning with regard to the conceptualization of the LNOB plan; and a focus on intersectionality.</i></p> |
| <p>1.1 The LNOB strategic approach to LNOB and RFB has evolved to focus on factors of exclusion/discrimination rather than groups which are relevant to addressing the intersectional needs of those left behind.</p> |
| <p>1.2 The LNOB operational plan is relevant to different contexts (including across diverse development and humanitarian settings) and allows for/promotes reaching the furthest behind regardless of political capital expended on working with certain groups.</p> |
| <p>1.3 The UNFPA LNOB operational plan is relevant to the UNFPA mandate and contributes to the three transformative results.</p> |
| <p>EQ2. Effectiveness and sustainability. To what extent has the LNOB operational plan been effectively operationalized at country, regional and global levels?</p> <p><i>Feminist principles applied: participatory and inclusive approach; centring and prioritizing the perspectives of those most left behind.</i></p> |
| <p>2.1 The fundamental shifts and principles within the LNOB operational plan have been consistently understood and meaningfully incorporated into planning at regional and country levels.</p> |
| <p>2.2 The LNOB operational plan has been meaningfully operationalized at country, regional, and global levels, across the six output areas of: (a) policy and accountability; (2) quality of care and services; (3) gender and social norms; (4) population change and data; (5) humanitarian action; (6) adolescents and youth (<i>note: humanitarian action will be answered under EQ3</i>)</p> |

2.3 LNOB has been fully leveraged as an accelerator and has been linked to other accelerators, across country, regional and global levels, where alignment exists, being: (a) human rights-based approach and gender transformative action; (b) partnerships; (c) digitalization and innovation; (d) data and evidence; and (e) Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus. *(note: Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus will be answered under EQ3)*

2.4 UNFPA has, at country, regional, and global levels, identified and implemented mitigation measures for the external barriers to effective LNOB programming being: (a) competing priorities for resources; (b) lack of quality disaggregated data; (c) unfavourable political environment; (d) unfavourable socio-economic context; (e) lack of available partners; and (f) the fact that the concept of LNOB is complex and context-specific.

2.5 UNFPA meaningfully engages with, works with and listens to organizations led by representatives of left-behind groups at country, regional and global levels.

EQ3. Effectiveness - humanitarian. To what extent has the LNOB operational plan been effectively adapted for humanitarian and crisis contexts?

Feminist principles applied: understanding changing power dynamics as contexts change.

3.1 UNFPA country offices in humanitarian and crisis/fragile contexts *(including during COVID-19)* have been able to continue LNOB programming, supported by the LNOB operational plan.

3.2 UNFPA country offices in humanitarian and crisis/fragile contexts *(including during COVID-19)* were/are able to understand changing dynamics of vulnerability and identify emerging and new left-behind populations.

EQ4. Coherence, internally, and contribution to wider system. To what extent does the UNFPA LNOB operational plan align with, add value to, fill a gap in, and contribute to broader development and humanitarian efforts?

Feminist principles applied: UNFPA contribution to transformative change.

4.1 The UNFPA operational plan is coherent with, and has continued over time to be aligned to, global UNFPA frameworks including the strategic plan.

4.2 The UNFPA operational plan adds value to a broader attempt to reach left-behind groups within the United Nations system, adding value specifically through the provision of disaggregated and localized data to government and the United Nations system

4.3 UNFPA's normative policy and advocacy interventions with governments, particularly through human rights-based approach and promotion of human rights instruments, increases interventions aimed at reaching those furthest behind.

EQ5. Efficiency. To what extent has UNFPA efficiently allocated resources - financial and human - to furthering the LNOB operational plan and goals?

Feminist principles applied: empowerment and capacity building questions on human rights; employing persons from left-behind groups; and social justice and accountability for financial resource allocation.

5.1 The internalization of LNOB principles, including specifically (a) allocation of earmarked funds; and (b) allocation, and training of staffing for operationalization of LNOB across different modes of engagement has been implemented consistently and efficiently across different levels of UNFPA (country, regional, and global).

5.2 UNFPA systematically and proactively seeks to employ persons from left-behind groups.

5.3 UNFPA has an efficient organizational structure for the implementation of LNOB strategies and approaches.

5.4 UNFPA recognized and efficiently addressed the internal barriers to the LNOB approach, including: (a) people-related: change of mindset, insufficient staffing, vertical working, guidance fatigue, lack of clarity on priority groups; and (b) organizational issues: lack of strategic focus,

inclusivity gaps, lack of clarity on support from UNFPA headquarters, and the fact that the United Nations does not speak as one voice.

5.5 UNFPA has the capacity to monitor, collect and disaggregate its data/results to assess existing inequalities and ensure UNFPA reaches specific groups who are the furthest behind.

3.2 Latin America and the Caribbean regional case study

Table 3: Summary of the data collected



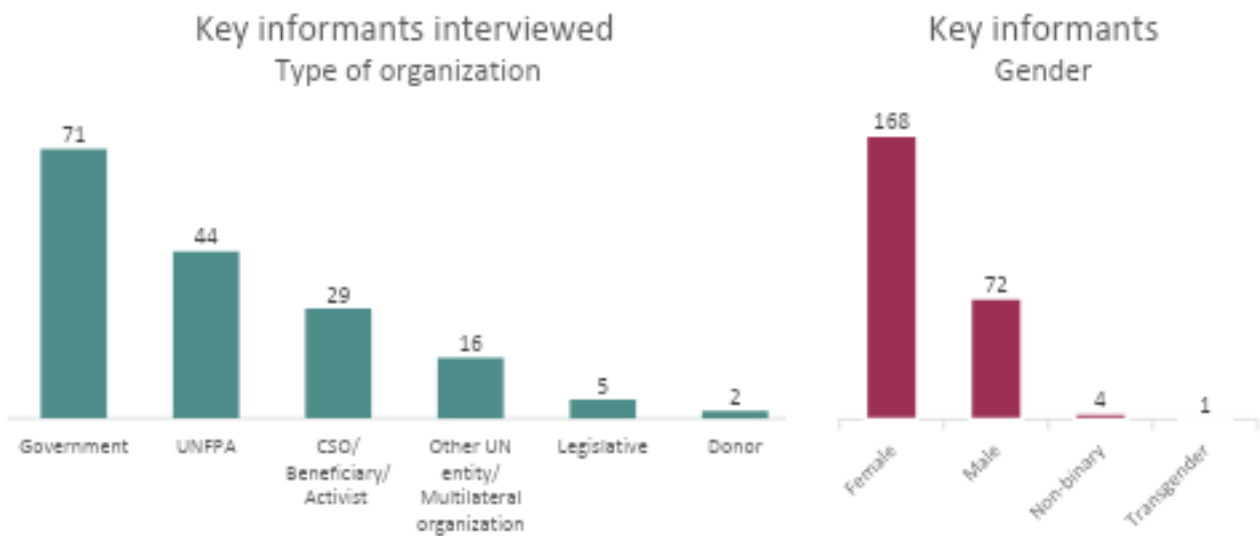
| | |
|---|--|
|  | 57 documents reviewed at regional and country level. |
|  | 167 key informant interviews at regional and country level. 10 of which were with activists, legislators and representatives of civil society from Afrodescendent movements |
|  | 10 focus group discussions with 76 informants who identify with left-behind factors. 3 with Indigenous women 2 with Indigenous adolescent girls 2 with adolescents and young people, one of which specifically involved the participation of Afrodescendent adolescents and youth 1 with LGBTQIA+ persons 1 with persons with disabilities |

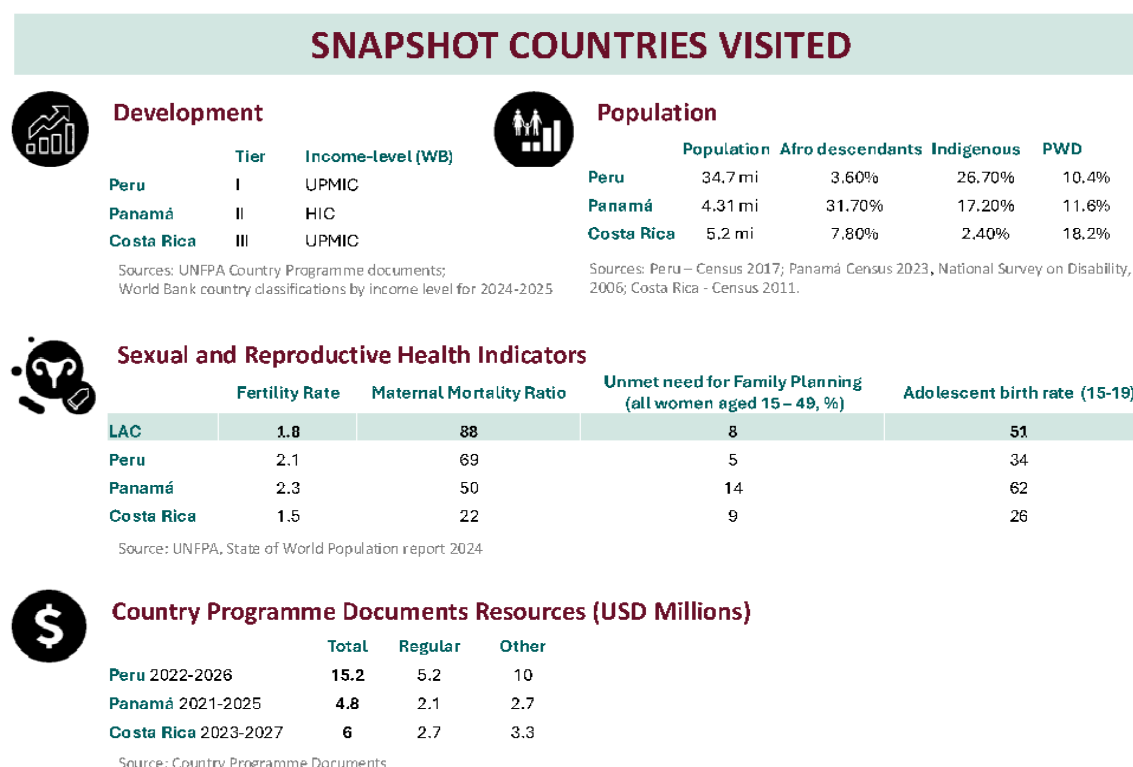
Figure 3: Key informants’ profile



3.2.1 LACRO case study in-country data collection.

The case study team conducted three in-country visits during the months of June and July 2024, in Costa Rica, Panama and Peru, totalling 21 days in the programme countries.²⁶ Besides the opportunity to have in-depth exchanges with key stakeholders, the visits also allowed the team to visit specific locations where UNFPA is, or had been, implementing specific projects. Figure 4 gives a snapshot of key indicators of the countries visited.

Figure 4: Countries visited: snapshot of key indicators



3.2.2 Data analysis methods

Descriptive analysis was used to understand the contexts within which UNFPA support to LNOB approaches takes place. Document review and key informant interviews provided data that allowed a specific contextual analysis for each country and for the region, providing the necessary understanding of the context within which UNFPA implements LNOB programming. All team members are Latin-American, and national consultants for each country visited provided in-depth knowledge of context specifics.

Content analysis constitutes the core of qualitative analysis. All documents, interview transcripts, FGD notes and observations from the field were coded against the evaluation matrix and data was analysed to identify common trends, themes and patterns for each of the key evaluation questions and assumptions. An evidence database was used to ensure triangulation of evidence for findings across data collection methods.

Comparative analysis was also used to examine findings across different initiatives, countries and approaches, based on the data collected from the three countries and at regional level.

Contribution analysis was used to understand the contribution that interventions have made to the observed results, and the role played by UNFPA along with other external factors.

²⁶ The team consisted of one core team member for the overall evaluation and three national consultants.

3.2.3 Feminist, intercultural and participatory approaches

This section provides a concise overview of how feminist, intercultural and participatory approaches have been integrated into the development of this case study. While each approach stems from distinct backgrounds and conceptual frameworks, they share several commonalities. The distinction made between these approaches and their core elements is intended to enhance clarity and understanding.

Feminist principles

This case study integrates gender and human rights principles throughout both its methodology and outcomes. It was developed with a strong emphasis on the principles of inclusion and participation, ensuring that these values were reflected not only in the final product but also in every stage of the process. The approach prioritized creating an environment where diverse voices, particularly those from marginalized and underrepresented groups, were actively engaged and considered. The analysis itself was conducted with a deliberate focus on gender and inclusion, employing a lens that recognized the intersections of gender, power, and human rights. This ensured that the perspectives and experiences of all stakeholders—especially women and vulnerable populations—were central to the study.

Interculturality and ancestral knowledge integration

A Yanakuna Indigenous woman, a university professor and scholar specializing in Indigenous knowledge systems, was engaged by the LACRO team. Throughout multiple discussions, she provided expert technical and methodological guidance to ensure the case study adhered to an Indigenous evaluation approach. Several meetings were held between the Indigenous scholar and the case study team, both prior to and following the programme country visits, to refine data collection and analysis strategies. The key insights she shared, which were integrated into the country data collection and analysis processes, are summarized below:

- **Explicit recognition of Indigenous and ancestral knowledge systems:** The explicit acknowledgement of Indigenous and ancestral knowledge systems holds particular significance in the LAC context, where some countries formally recognize and maintain ethnic-based health and education systems. This recognition aligns with ILO Convention 169, which directly influences UNFPA programming in the region. Although these concepts are often encompassed under the broader term ‘interculturality’, which is UNFPA’s corporate framework for working with Indigenous populations, the recommendation was made to explicitly state this recognition to ensure proper attention and respect. This acknowledgement shaped the data collection protocols and methods, making them flexible to respect and incorporate ancestral knowledge systems. Protocols were tailored on a case-by-case basis, informed by previous exchanges between the case study team and UNFPA stakeholders, which helped deepen understanding of the diverse cultural frameworks and social structures of the stakeholders involved. The team also adopted a highly context-sensitive approach. The case study sought to remain reflective and respectful of local contexts, recognizing the broader implications of Indigenous knowledge in areas such as development, policymaking and scientific discourse. This approach added a valuable analytical perspective to the evaluation, enabling the team to identify and accurately represent instances of UNFPA’s intercultural programming that acknowledged Indigenous and ancestral knowledge systems, ensuring these practices were properly captured and reflected in the report.
- **Diversity of feminisms:** Incorporating a feminist perspective requires understanding the diversity of feminist movements in Latin America and the Caribbean, while also considering

the distinct struggles and perspectives they represent. These differences influence how inequalities are understood and addressed. In this context, it is important to highlight that the case study consulted a wide range of women from diverse backgrounds, each facing multiple layers of exclusion that extend beyond gender alone. diverse groups of women who identified with various intersecting factors of exclusion beyond gender alone. These factors included age, culture, ethnicity, race, language, disability, geographic location, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socio-economic status.

- **Contextual narratives:** The case study team worked to bridge the gap between institutional language and the lived realities of stakeholders by adapting LNOB language to reflect more context-specific UNFPA narratives. Additionally, the team recognized and valued the agency of each informant, ensuring that their individual histories, struggles, and perspectives were respected and appreciated throughout the process.

Consultative approach to validate key findings, conclusions and recommendations:

In addition to the debriefings with country offices at the conclusion of each country visit, which allowed for an initial feedback loop on emerging findings, LACRO organized a broader consultation on the emerging findings of the case study, aimed at bringing together the diverse stakeholder groups with which UNFPA collaborates, including Indigenous populations, Afrodescendants, people with disabilities, youth and LGBTQIA+ communities.

Two events titled “Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion: Weaving Strategies for Closing Inequality Gaps and Promoting Development” were organized, bringing together 45 representatives or network members from each stakeholder group. The discussions from these events were compiled into a stand-alone report (in Spanish) and have been incorporated into this report in two ways: as recommendations for the UNFPA LNOB approach, presented in boxes alongside related findings, and as a source for triangulating and refining specific evidence and analyses.

3.2.4 Sampling strategy for this report

Sampling strategy for country visits: The sampling criteria for the regional case study were designed to ensure geographic representation, selecting two key subregions: Central America and the Andean Region. This approach aimed to provide a balanced perspective across diverse contexts. In addition to geographic factors, the selection process also took into account the size of UNFPA offices in each country, with Peru representing a medium-sized office and Costa Rica and Panama representing smaller offices. This diversity in office size was intended to capture a broad range of operational contexts within the UNFPA's regional framework.

Countries were further selected based on their significant and critical work with diverse and often marginalized populations, including Indigenous communities, persons with disabilities, and Afro-descendants. This focus allowed the case study to address the intersectionality of development challenges faced by these populations and to assess how UNFPA programming responds to their specific needs.

Panama, Costa Rica, and Peru were chosen as the primary countries for the case study, as they had not been included in previous regional or corporate evaluation case studies, from which the case study team could draw on previously collected data. This provided an opportunity to generate new insights while also ensuring coverage on areas that have not been evaluated before.

Additionally, Panama and Costa Rica were combined into a single visit due to their geographic proximity, which allowed for logistical efficiency.

Sampling strategy for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

The case study employed a purposive sampling strategy for KIIs and FGDs. The purposive samples are aimed at selecting specific sources of information that were as representative and diverse as

possible, thereby ensuring the generation of rich insights, learning and recommendations. The selection of KIIs and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) was done in collaboration with regional and country offices, following an analysis of their programs and initiatives. Participants included UNFPA staff, implementing partners, donors, government representatives, civil society organizations, grassroots movements, activists, representatives of left-behind populations and affected communities.

Sampling of documents and data: The selection of documents and data followed a purposive sampling approach to ensure the most relevant and comprehensive materials were included for review. The regional and country offices compiled a comprehensive set of reports, publications and evaluations that covered their programming from 2018 to 2024. Key informants also provided relevant documents that were reviewed. To enhance the robustness of the analysis and ensure triangulation of information, additional documents and online resources were also reviewed.

3.2.5 Ethical issues and considerations

The evaluation complies with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation. The following ethical issues and measures were noted for data collection in the LAC case study.²⁷

Integrity: The case study team ensured transparency throughout the evaluation process by openly communicating the purpose, methods and expected outcomes to all participants. All stakeholders were informed about how the findings would be used and who would have access to them. Participants in KIIs were informed, prior to data collection, of the purpose of the evaluation and how the data collected was going to be used, and participants were assured that their responses would be treated confidentially. The informed consent of participants to provide information was obtained verbally, respecting oral traditions.

Accountability: The case study team used an evidence database to ensure that the perspectives of all respondents to the evaluation were included in final analyses and that equal attention was paid to all evidence using an objective and robust system. The case study team recognized its responsibility to all stakeholders and implemented mechanisms for accountability, such as feedback sessions with COs and a broader consultation to discuss the evaluation process and findings.

Respect: The case study team approached stakeholders with cultural sensitivity and respect for their unique contexts. This included adapting the evaluation methods to fit the cultural norms and values of the participants, ensuring that their dignity was upheld throughout the process. Affirmative actions during data collection were implemented whenever needed to ensure that everyone could fully participate and could do so in a respectful, empowering and enjoyable manner.

Examples of affirmative actions included: (1) During a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Indigenous women, a scheduling conflict occurred with a local government interview. When government representatives arrived, they were respectfully asked to wait outside, prioritizing the time and voices of the Indigenous women participants; (2) The case study team ensured cultural norms were respected by allowing for a flexible structure in the FGDs, enabling participants to self-organize in accordance with cultural practices—such as permitting elderly Indigenous women to speak first and give consent for others to contribute. Once trust was established, however, the team made deliberate efforts to encourage young Indigenous women to share their perspectives and ensured they had the opportunity to speak; (3) In more informal settings, such as a visit to a

²⁷ Evaluation Matters. Making Feminist Evaluation Practical. 2018

<https://idev.afdb.org/sites/default/files/Evaluations/2020-03/Making%20Feminist%20Evaluation%20practical.pdf>

specific UNFPA intervention, the case study team actively sought the input of the Indigenous intercultural facilitator, focusing on both the quality of the services provided and its intercultural approach; and (4) Throughout the process, UNFPA Country Offices (COs) facilitated participant engagement by providing transportation to interviews and FGDs, along with refreshments and meals when necessary, to ensure equitable participation in the evaluation

Beneficence. The case study team focused on how the findings could lead to positive changes and improvements in their situations. The evaluation's design included a commitment to using the findings to advocate for policy changes.

Ensuring data privacy and confidentiality:

- The privacy of participants was safeguarded, and all data collected was treated with the utmost confidentiality. Euro Health Group's data security system complies with the European Union General Data Protection Regulation. Only relevant data is collected, and data is kept securely and confidentially. All interview notes are stored on a project specific Microsoft SharePoint owned by Euro Health Group and will be deleted after the evaluation has concluded.
- Interviews were not recorded. The evaluation report will not include any citations that can be traced back to a specific individual, nor will any personal details such as titles or functions be revealed.
- The evaluation process was designed with a strong focus on ethical considerations, particularly around power dynamics and data privacy. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was maintained throughout. The evaluation team took deliberate steps to ensure that data safeguarding measures were strictly followed, and that conditions were created to prevent discrimination—whether by action or omission. The team worked to establish an environment in which all participants could engage freely, voluntarily, and safely. Special attention was given to addressing power imbalances, particularly during Focus Group Discussions, to ensure that all voices were heard and respected throughout the data collection process.

3.2.6 Limitations and related mitigation strategies

Table 4 provides an overview of the limitations encountered throughout the process and the mitigation strategies applied.

Table 4. Risks and limitations and related mitigation measures

| Risk/limitation | Explanation and mitigation measure |
|--|--|
| Extracting sufficient data from three country visits to reach credible conclusions about LNOB in LAC. | All data collected at country level was extensively triangulated with additional sources, including LACRO annual reports and the midterm review of the Regional Programme (RP). This triangulation process ensured a more comprehensive and balanced view of the data, enhancing the credibility and robustness of the findings. The findings presented in this report are explicitly based on this triangulation process, clearly distinguishing between analyses that are more universally applicable and those that are context-specific to the individual countries. |
| Speaking to a sufficient number of community members from diverse | The organization of country visits was designed to ensure the representation of the diverse groups with whom UNFPA works. Focus Group Discussions were prioritized, allowing for more inclusive and |

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|---|--|
| stakeholder groups to fully do justice to LNOB principle and ensure a comprehensive evaluation. | interactive engagement with community members, as opposed to individual interviews that could be conducted remotely at a later time. Additionally, funding from the evaluation budget, as well as contributions from LACRO and Country Offices was secured to enable the case study team to reach a broader range of community members. The case study team was constantly assessing the risk of underrepresentation of specific groups, especially those affected by exclusion or discrimination. To mitigate this risk, the team conducted additional interviews with activists, legislators, and representatives from grassroots movements associated with marginalized groups identified by UNFPA. This ensured that the perspectives of left-behind populations were adequately represented, enhancing the comprehensiveness and inclusivity of the evaluation. |
| Unavailability of key stakeholders due to limited time availability or interest in the evaluation. | The case study team offered the flexibility of conducting additional interviews online, making it easier for stakeholders to participate despite time constraints or logistical barriers. As a result, the data collection phase was extended to four months to accommodate these adjustments and ensure comprehensive participation. To avoid additional burden on LACRO partners, notes from previous interviews conducted by the RP were kindly shared to be incorporated into the case study, enriching the data and insights without placing additional demands on local partners. |

4. Findings

4.1 EQ1. Relevance

To what extent is the UNFPA LNOB operational plan relevant to (a) realities at community, sub-national and national levels; and (b) the UNFPA mandate?²⁸

(Feminist principles applied: participatory and inclusive approach; centering and prioritizing the perspectives of those most left behind.)

Finding 1. In LAC, the UNFPA strategic approach to LNOB has prioritized groups, based on evidence and taking into consideration the intersectional factors that drive the exclusion of those furthest behind, as outlined in the corporate LNOB operational plan. However, there are still challenges to fully reflect intersectional analysis in the programming.

In LAC, there has been a clear prioritization of some groups, aligned with the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development, which prioritizes measures related to Afrodescendants, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, persons with disabilities, and ageing and young populations. The introduction of factors as proposed by the LNOB operational plan is viewed by UNFPA stakeholders as a significant advancement. This introduction has provided (1) an entry point to identify and articulate systemic causes that perpetuate exclusion and discrimination, and (2) a lens to identify

²⁸ Sub-questions: 1.1 The LNOB strategic approach to LNOB and RFB has evolved to focus on factors of exclusion/discrimination rather than groups which is relevant to addressing the intersectional needs of those left behind; 1.2 The LNOB operational plan is relevant to different contexts, (including across diverse development and humanitarian settings) and allows for/promotes reaching the furthest behind regardless of political capital expended on working with certain groups; 1.3 The UNFPA LNOB operational plan is relevant to the UNFPA mandate and contributes to the three transformative results.

and analyse intersecting and overlapping factors that lead to exclusion.²⁹ However, stakeholders note that these advancements have yet to be fully explored.

The shift toward focusing on factors has enhanced the evidence base and analysis needed to identify left-behind groups, though not without challenges. While analysis has progressed, it still falls short of adequately considering certain factors, such as poverty and rurality.³⁰ Addressing these issues may require the organization to engage with matters beyond its traditional mandate, requiring renewed skills, partnerships and approaches – yet these are essential for advancing the goal of LNOB and addressing root causes of exclusion.³¹

Fully integrating an intersectional approach into programming is an area that, according to UNFPA and external stakeholders, has shown progress but remains underexplored. External stakeholders from left-behind groups have expressed concerns about the need to integrate an intersectional approach into programming. Practical gaps were cited, such as the absence of HIV-related actions within gender-based violence and maternal mortality interventions for Indigenous communities in Panama, despite the rising number of infections.³² Additionally, there is a lack of representation and tailored approaches for non-heteronormative couples in materials and studies addressing gender-based violence.³³ Overall, stakeholders emphasise that this challenge is particularly pronounced for more politically sensitive factors, such as sexual orientation, gender identity and LGBTQIA+ inclusion.³⁴

Moreover, it is clear from interactions with furthest behind groups during the visits, and reinforced by UNFPA staff at regional and country level, that addressing factors and engaging with groups are not mutually exclusive strategies but are instead complementary. Furthest behind groups have distinct identities – some overlapping – and social identities are an important entry-point. Belonging to specific groups significantly shapes experiences, political needs and access to resources. Identity politics plays a pivotal role in political struggles serving as a key driver to challenge discrimination and underrepresentation.

Stakeholders have also raised complexities and challenges surrounding the communication of the UNFPA LNOB operational plan. While the LNOB operational plan and its conceptualization are quite comprehensive, communicating its nuances and its potential to contribute to universal equitable policies that are difference-sensitive remains a challenge.³⁵

The LAC LNOB strategy, framed around the VIP pillars, has been the main driver guiding efforts across the region. Stakeholders mentioned that the VIP approach is more straightforward than

²⁹ KII UNFPA LACRO.

³⁰ KII UNFPA LACRO.

³¹ KII UNFPA LACRO, UNFPA Costa Rica, other United Nations entity Panama.

³² FGD Panama.

³³ FGD Panama.

³⁴ KII UNFPA LACRO, UNFPA Panama.

³⁵ ‘Universalism that is sensitive to differences figures as one of the principles of the LAC Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development. It is based on the rationale that to achieve universal well-being and full realization of rights, policies must adopt a dual perspective to promote effective equity: (1) apply the principle of universality to access social services, following a rights-based approach; and (2) aim to recognize and overcome existing gaps and inequalities, ensuring no one is left behind, which requires affirmative action to dismantle access barriers for individuals and groups experiencing inequality, discrimination and exclusion. Progress depends on recognizing diverse identities and demands to foster inclusion and a culture of equity, incorporating gender equality, interculturalism and non-discrimination perspectives. Source: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), Regional Agenda for Inclusive Social Development (LC/CDS.3/5), Santiago, 2020.

UNFPA corporate LNOB operational plan, which enabled common understanding and supported its roll-out in a concerted manner between the RO and COs, as will be further developed in EQ2.

Finally, although UNFPA's guidance and approach clearly sets out the differences and linkages between a human-rights based approach (HRBA), LNOB and RFB,³⁶ there is a concern that the LNOB agenda should not lose its strong connection to human rights frameworks, which is a much more accountable framework, since in the region member states have ratified a significant number of treaties.³⁷ While these issues do not necessarily challenge the UNFPA conceptualization of its LNOB work, they highlight the challenges in fostering a cohesive understanding within the organization.

Box. Recommendations from the Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion: intersectional programming

UNFPA should continue advancing the integration of an intersectional approach into its programming, ensuring that established approaches – such as gender-transformative, intergenerational and intercultural approaches – are not overlooked. UNFPA takes the care economy into consideration from an intersectional perspective, particularly its entrenched impact in contexts where many young women assume caregiving roles. This entails gender-transformative approaches that challenge social norms, while also recognizing cultural diversities and territorial realities. Integrating these perspectives into programming would promote a more inclusive approach, acknowledging the burden of unpaid care work and the related inequalities, with particular attention to individuals with diverse abilities.

Finding 2. The prioritization of specific groups, favourable national contexts and corporate backing have been crucial to achieve significant results for furthest behind groups in LAC. At the same time, UNFPA in LAC has continued laying the groundwork to tackle more sensitive agendas.

UNFPA has made important progress in pushing forward the LNOB agenda with several factors accounting for these advances. First and foremost, there has been a clear prioritization of some groups, which has been a key driver of results, as it has been concerted across levels. Conducive national environments, adequate funding and UNFPA longstanding collaboration with certain groups have also been key factors contributing to these results. In LACRO, a LNOB team, with dedicated funds, has been created, with focal points to work with specific groups, namely people of African descent, persons with disabilities, adolescents and youth, and Indigenous Peoples.

Progress related to Afrodescendent populations has been bolstered by conducive national environments and a deliberate push from UNFPA. This was reflected by political support at the highest levels, prioritization of the agenda across various levels within the organization, and the allocation of resources and efforts. The UNFPA Global Programme on African Descendants has provided corporate backing for activities in the region, both politically and financially. Several stakeholders at both regional and national levels highlighted the personal commitment of Executive Director Natalia Kanem, as well as former Regional Director Harold Robinson.³⁸ Similarly, in Costa Rica, the agenda received strong political backing, with the country playing a central role within the framework of the International Decade for People of African Descent. This involved leading key

³⁶ UNFPA LNOB Operational Plan (2021), UNFPA Guidance Note for Applying a Human Rights-Based Approach to Programming in UNFPA (2020).

³⁷ KII UNFPA LACRO, other UN entity Panama.

³⁸ KII UNFPA LACRO, Government Panama, Government Costa Rica.

international initiatives, including the establishment of the Permanent Forum on Afro-descendants and the designation of the International Day for People of African Descent.³⁹

In the same vein, UNFPA's longstanding work on interculturality and engagement with Indigenous communities and networks, dating back to the early 2000s, has continued yielding long-term results. Conversely, for other groups, despite significant efforts, the same level of momentum has not been achieved. In LAC, UNFPA has positioned itself as the de facto leading youth-focused United Nations agency; however, stakeholders acknowledge that the adolescent and youth agenda has recently lost some of its drive, with networks at regional level claiming a clearer definition of spaces for follow-up of youth initiatives.⁴⁰

Likewise, UNDIS has contributed to the growing focus on disability inclusion within the organization, which has indeed led to the development of a specific strategy, first in LAC and then globally.⁴¹ However, as a relatively newer agenda for the organization, it is still unfolding and regional support will prove decisive in articulating an evidence-based strategic approach on how to mainstream disability inclusion at national programming, as well as to support regional advocacy efforts.⁴² At regional level, on the disability inclusion agenda, LACRO has provided COs with seed-funding and technical advice to leverage their actions and position themselves in the subject. It has also developed comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) accessible materials, aimed at people with hearing-impaired people, which was also translated into Quechua.⁴³ Additionally, significant work has been done to strengthen organizations of women with disabilities. LACRO has included specific regional activities in its 2024 workplan.⁴⁴

While the focus on these groups has yielded results, UNFPA has also begun laying crucial groundwork on more politically sensitive issues, particularly in starting to advance the LGBTQIA+ agenda. Although LGBTQIA+ collectives and UNFPA stakeholders still view this progress as modest, significant steps have been identified. In Costa Rica, a reference framework for addressing the LGBTQIA+ population in the production and dissemination of official statistics was developed in 2019, as a result of an extensive consultative process with CSOs, LGBTQIA+ persons and various governmental institutions. In Panama, UNFPA has strengthened relationships with LGBTQIA+ networks, including through an implementing partner agreement, and has commissioned an initial study to identify entry points for further work on this agenda. Additionally, UNFPA has politically supported the Ethical Electoral Pact for the Human Rights of the LGBTIQ+ Population, a move considered by stakeholders as an important political stance. However, despite these advancements, some informants have pointed out that while the topic remains politically sensitive, the LAC region has a relatively enabling normative framework compared to other regions. This presents an opportunity to enhance knowledge production, which would serve as a key first step for building advocacy and enhancing intersectional programming.

Finally, in LAC, framing the strategy around addressing structural inequalities has proven effective. Countries in the region have adapted their engagement strategies, translating the foundational elements of the LNOB approach into more contextually appropriate frameworks. Inequalities have

³⁹ KII UNFPA LACRO.

⁴⁰ KII UNFPA LACRO and Panama; participants Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion.

⁴¹ Visibilizar, Incluir, Participar. Estrategia VIP. Orientaciones para promover los derechos de las personas con discapacidad en el trabajo del Fondo de Población de Naciones Unidas en América Latina y el Caribe (2019-2021); UNFPA Disability Inclusion Strategy 2022-2025.

⁴² KII UNFPA LACRO.

⁴³ KII UNFPA LACRO and UNFPA LACRO, 2023 Annual Report - Latin America Caribbean Regional Office; 2024.

⁴⁴ UNFPA KII LACRO and FGD persons with disabilities.

long been recognized as one of the major barriers to development in the LAC region. Concepts such as structural and systemic discrimination, inequalities, exclusion, racism and historical debts are much more familiar, mobilizing, and well understood in the region, both among governments (with varying degrees of recognition depending on political orientation) and, especially, within civil society.⁴⁵

Finding 3. The UNFPA LNOB operational plan is highly relevant to accelerating the full realization of UNFPA’s three transformative results in the LAC region, which is characterized by deep structural inequalities, and it has enabled UNFPA to further refine its targeting and strategies.

In middle-income countries (MICs) of the LAC region – even those with relatively solid health and social protection systems, which in many cases are universal – significant gaps in coverage and quality remain, predominantly affecting groups that have been historically marginalized. For instance, the three countries visited for this case study have some form of universal health coverage,⁴⁶ with coverage rates around 80 per cent in Panama and Costa Rica, and 70 per cent in Peru.⁴⁷ However, as identified by UNFPA in collaboration with people from furthest behind groups, there are two main gaps that impede the realization of the three transformative results. The first is coverage and physical access, particularly in remote regions and specific territories; the second is the quality of services available, especially taking into consideration interculturality and discrimination.⁴⁸ In the region, efforts to overcome those barriers have been framed under a difference-sensitive universalism approach, emphasizing the need for targeted policies and action.⁴⁹

UNFPA stakeholders unanimously affirm that the three transformative results in the region cannot be achieved without addressing inequalities. The RFB lenses and approach have enabled UNFPA to refine country programme documents (CPD) targets, focusing on those who are furthest behind and, importantly, on how this focus contributes to the three transformative results.⁵⁰ For instance, the three CPDs consulted clearly identify furthest behind groups, not only in their analysis of country context in relation to UNFPA transformative results, but also in the results and resources framework (RRF), where output indicators specify which groups or territories will be targeted.⁵¹ It is worth noting that, in both cases, although the CPDs from the previous cycle were already intentionally focusing on specific groups at the indicator level, there is a noticeable increase in targeted emphasis in the current cycle.⁵²

⁴⁵ KII UNFPA LACRO, UNFPA Costa Rica .

⁴⁶ Costa Rica operates a publicly funded health system through the Caja Costarricense de Seguro Social (Costa Rican Social Security Fund), known for its comprehensive coverage. Panama’s UHC is implemented through a mixed system combining public and private services, with the Caja de Seguro Social (Social Security Fund) playing a central role in delivering services to formal workers and their families, while also extending some coverage to vulnerable populations. Peru’s UHC model, Seguro Integral de Salud (Comprehensive Health Insurance), seeks to cover the uninsured population, those who are not part of the formal employment sector or covered by other insurance schemes, such as EsSalud (the health insurance programme for formal workers).

⁴⁷ 2021 data for the UHC Service Coverage Index (SDG 3.8.1)
<https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/uhc-index-of-service-coverage>

⁴⁸ UNFPA LACRO, Evaluaciones de Programa País 2018-2022. Síntesis de lecciones aprendidas y recomendaciones para el diseño e implementación de un nuevo ciclo de programas de país, en América Latina y el Caribe; 2023.

⁴⁹ Comisión Económica para América Latina y el Caribe, Agenda Regional de Desarrollo Social Inclusivo (LC/CDS.3/5), Santiago, 2020.

⁵⁰ KII UNFPA LACRO, UNFPA Panama, UNFPA Costa Rica, UNFPA Peru.

⁵¹ UNFPA, Country programme document for Costa Rica 2023-2027, 2023; UNFPA Country programme document for Panama 2021-2025; 2020; UNFPA Country programme document for Peru 2022-2026; 2021.

⁵² UNFPA, Country programme document for Costa Rica 2018-2022, 2017; UNFPA Country programme document for Panama 2016-2020; 2015.

From a regional perspective, differences among and within countries are being taken into account, linking with the discussion around the concept of LNOB as an accelerator. In that regard, understanding both absolute numbers and specific ratios within the broader context of health disparities is crucial for guiding targeted efforts. For example, at the regional level, a few countries account for the largest share of maternal mortality in absolute numbers, while in other countries the ratios may be much higher, albeit with smaller absolute figures. On the other hand, at country level, certain groups may represent a small percentage of the population yet account for a disproportionately high share of maternal deaths. One example given was of Paraguay, where Indigenous Peoples, despite constituting only 2 per cent of the population, account for 33 per cent of maternal deaths, emphasizing the need for focused interventions that are both targeted and cost-effective.⁵³ In LAC, LNOB is clearly recognised as an accelerator, especially in those contexts where targeting the furthest behind can potentially contribute to improving indicators.⁵⁴

4.2 EQ2. Effectiveness

To what extent has the LNOB operational plan been effectively operationalized at country, regional and global levels?⁵⁵

(Feminist principles applied: participatory and inclusive approach; centring and prioritizing the perspectives of those most left behind.)

Finding 4. UNFPA in LAC has yielded important results in terms of visibility of furthest behind groups, especially of people of African descent in the 2020 round of censuses.

UNFPA in LAC has yielded important results in terms of visibility of furthest behind groups. It has shown increased efforts to further advance in disaggregated data and enhance analysis of existing data, and counterparts have recognized this as an UNFPA comparative advantage. There is a strong consensus across the board on the key role that data plays in further advancing the LNOB agenda.⁵⁶ Partnerships at regional and country levels have been key to this stream. Beyond its traditional support to censuses and surveys, new frontiers in terms of administrative data and systems integration are being explored, but this is an area where capacities and the strategic approach need to be strengthened.

UNFPA has yielded important results in the 2020 round of censuses, supporting the inclusion of the racial-ethnic self-identification variable or refinement of the set of related questions in those countries who had already included the variable in previous rounds.⁵⁷ The number of countries in

⁵³ KII UNFPA LACRO.

⁵⁴ KII UNFPA LACRO. UNFPA LACRO, accelerating action towards the three transformative results in LAC. Leaving No One Behind to Get to Zero (PPT) 2024.

⁵⁵ Sub-questions: 2.1 The fundamental shifts and principles within the LNOB operational plan have been consistently understood and meaningfully incorporated into planning at regional and country levels; 2.2 The LNOB operational plan has been meaningfully operationalized at country, regional and global levels, across the six output areas of (a) policy and accountability; (2) quality of care and services; (3) gender and social norms; (4) population change and data; (5) humanitarian action; (6) adolescents and youth; 2.3 LNOB has been fully leveraged as an accelerator and has been linked to other accelerators, across country, regional and global levels, where alignment exists, being (a) human rights-based approach and gender transformative action; (b) partnerships; (c) digitalization and innovation; (d) data and evidence; and (e) Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus; 2.4 UNFPA has, across country, regional and global levels, identified and implemented mitigation measures for the external barriers to effective LNOB programming, being: (a) competing priorities for resources; (b) lack of quality disaggregated data; (c) unfavourable political environment; (d) unfavourable socio-economic context; (e) lack of available partners; (f) concept of LNOB is complex and context-specific; 2.5 UNFPA meaningfully engages with, works with, and listens to, organizations led by representatives of left-behind groups at country, regional and global levels.

⁵⁶ KII UNFPA LACRO, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru; Government Costa Rica, Panama; CSO Costa Rica, Panama; other United Nations entities Costa Rica, Panama.

⁵⁷ KII UNFPA LACRO.

LAC that incorporated the racial-ethnic self-identification variable has increased from 13 countries in the 2010 census to 23 in the 2020 census.⁵⁸ It is worth noting that the region has made significant efforts to improve the statistical visibility of Indigenous Peoples in the previous round.⁵⁹

Aligned with broader efforts to promote self-identification, UNFPA supported an array of innovative strategies, including awareness-raising campaigns around the census exercises, hand-in-hand with afro national and regional movements.⁶⁰ In Panama, the 2023 census was marked by being the first de jure census of the country, and UNFPA technical assistance to the National Institute for Statistics and Census (INEC) combined with concerted efforts with the civil society on raising awareness had led to a significant improvement in self-recognition, with 31.7 per cent of the census population considering themselves as Afrodescendant and 17.2 per cent as Indigenous, up from 9.2 per cent and 12.3 per cent respectively in 2010. In Brazil, aligned with the International Labour Organization Convention 169, UNFPA supported the consultation process with Quilombolas representatives around their inclusion in the 2020 census, fostering a participatory process to agree on the methodology.⁶¹

LACRO has also supported countries in integrating Washington Group questions on disability into their census and survey questionnaires, as well as brokered knowledge exchanges on the incorporation of the short set of Washington Group on Disability Statistics in administrative registers.⁶² Nonetheless, informants have raised concerns regarding data results on persons with disabilities, citing that the 2020 round of censuses in LAC have not properly incorporated the Washington Group questions and that results are underestimating the number of persons with disabilities in the region. Moreover, certain groups within the population of persons with disabilities remain invisible, such as children under five with disabilities or individuals with mental disabilities.⁶³

The different results achieved for people of African descent and persons with disabilities points to an important challenge around visibility. On the one hand, an accurate result can be transformative, as the censuses results are an important piece of evidence to guide public policies, resource allocation and to support evidence-based advocacy efforts and in-depth research. On the other hand, results when underestimated can be harmful, leading to reinforcement of inequalities and invisibility.

Finding 5. In the region, UNFPA has made strong efforts to advance disaggregated data and use it to support advocacy and decision-making, which are key accelerators for its LNOB programming. However, structural challenges related to data integration, digitalization and capacity development remain, highlighting the need for a more strategic and collaborative approach that leverages UNFPA’s comparative advantage.

Beyond the census, UNFPA has also shown efforts to advance on disaggregated data. Related to surveys, in Panama, UNFPA is providing technical assistance to the National Secretariat for Disability and the National Institute for Statistics and Census, to develop and implement the

⁵⁸ KII UNFPA LACRO.

⁵⁹ KII UNFPA LACRO, KII other United Nations entity; ECLAC, Guaranteeing Indigenous People’s rights in Latin America Progress in the past decade and remaining challenges, 2014.

⁶⁰ In Costa Rica and Panama, UNFPA and the national statistics offices have disseminated the ethnic self-identification variable, including animated videos in different languages and influencer videos from different groups, to promote involvement and participation in the last censuses.

⁶¹ UNFPA, Advancing the principle of LNOB; a snapshot of UNFPA field initiatives, 2021.

⁶² UNFPA LACRO, 2022 Annual Report - Latin America Caribbean Regional Office; 2023. UNFPA LACRO, 2023 Annual Report - Latin America Caribbean Regional Office; 2024

⁶³ UNFPA LAC informants, participants Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion

Second National Survey on Disability (ENDIS-2). In Costa Rica, UNFPA has supported the National Institute of Statistics and Census in developing and implementing gender, race and ethnic standards in various statistical operations, which will generate data to enhance research on disability and dependency, Indigenous Peoples, and the Afrodescendent population.⁶⁴ Likewise, in Peru, UNFPA advocated for and supported the National Statistical Office, in coordination with international financial institutions and other United Nations agencies, in the design and implementation of an official survey assessing the living conditions of refugees and migrants from Venezuela in 2018–19 and 2022–23. UNFPA also provided technical support to the National Statistical Office to address sexual and reproductive health and rights indicators for girls under 15 years of age in the annual National Health Survey.⁶⁵

UNFPA-supported studies that explore existing data from an intersectional approach are seen as an important asset to support advocacy efforts and decision-making.⁶⁶ Investment in studies is also seen for particular groups, with a wealth of evidence around the UNFPA mandate being systematized for Afrodescendent women and youth, migrants and women with disabilities.⁶⁷ Also worth highlighting are initiatives implemented by different countries in the region to generate and/or process disaggregated data on youth, such as the national map of girls and adolescent pregnancy and fertility in Peru.⁶⁸

Leveraging UNFPA capacity in the region to transform data and evidence into investment cases is regarded as a promising approach to accelerate LNOB results that could be further explored. LACRO has successfully implemented innovative methodologies for estimating the socio-economic costs of adolescent pregnancy and the projected impact of policies aimed at preventing it (MILENA and MEMI, respectively).⁶⁹ These methodologies have proven to be powerful tools for supporting advocacy and evidence-based public policy making. In fact, the Leaving No One Behind: Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in the Afrodescendant, Creole, Garifuna and Miskito Communities in Selected Municipalities of the Central America Caribbean Coastal Project is deploying the MEMI model as a baseline to inform the project's planning – including the unmet need for contraception – and to measure its outcomes. However, a wide range of stakeholders have emphasized the need to scale up and diversify these approaches to strengthen investment cases for reaching those furthest behind.⁷⁰

Still, disaggregated data on the three transformative results is a challenge, especially in the case of gender-based violence and harmful practices, including child marriage and early unions. The evaluation has identified emerging UNFPA support to countries to enhance disaggregated data on maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy, gender-based violence and other harmful practices in administrative records and through data interoperability. In Peru, UNFPA, in coordination with the National Statistics Office, has promoted the inclusion of the ethnic self-identification variable in maternal death registries and the inclusion of a gender-based violence descriptor in the Ministry of Health administrative registry. Additionally, UNFPA has supported training to support its effective

⁶⁴ Government KII Costa Rica, UNFPA Costa Rica 2018 Annual Report, 2019

⁶⁵ UNFPA KII Peru.

⁶⁶ UNFPA, government and civil society KII in Panama and Costa Rica.

⁶⁷ UNFPA LACRO, Leaving No One Behind. Programme for the advancement of the rights of people of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean. 2021; UNFPA Costa Rica, Evaluation of the Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme Area of the UNFPA V Country Programme 2018-2022; UNFPA LACRO Annual Reports; UNFPA Peru Annual Reports.

⁶⁸ For example, Guatemala, Mexico, Uruguay.

⁶⁹ MTR, RPE.

⁷⁰ UNFPA KII LACRO, UN KII Costa Rica, Government KII Panama.

implementation in territories prioritized by the CPD.⁷¹ In Costa Rica, UNFPA, with the Pan American Health Organization and HIVOS, has provided technical assistance to facilitate data integration between public health facilities, and also supported strengthening of population data systems to map and address inequalities, particularly of Indigenous, Afrodescendent, and Chinese populations, through the improving of the self-identification reporting in administrative records and the promotion of information campaigns, including written information translated into English and Mandarin, and audio information in Bribri, Ngäbere, Cabecar, Maleku, Mandarin, Creole and Spanish.⁷² Also, regarding gender-based violence disaggregated data, LACRO is also investing in guidance to COs to support National Statistics Offices on how to obtain disaggregated data, whether in administrative registers or surveys, as well as mapping available national disaggregated data on gender-based violence.⁷³

However, key informants have identified several challenges that could affect the development of more robust integrated and digitalized systems that could provide updated disaggregated data. On the one hand, even in countries where there is a strong statistical culture, technology and human capital investments are needed to advance. On the other hand, UNFPA also needs to assess its capacities and entry-points in order to develop a strategic approach, based on its comparative advantages, to engage in this realm.⁷⁴ Some of the recommendations raised during the data collection point to the importance of moving away from the traditional technical assistance model to build on the position of UNFPA in the region to broker partnerships and foster data ecosystems that enable countries’ transitions to digital and integrated statistical systems, as well as to advocate for and support inclusion and disaggregation within registries.⁷⁵

Box. Recommendations from the Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion: meaningful and useful data for those furthest behind

UNFPA should intensify its efforts to ensure that data is not only disaggregated but also accessible, meaningful and useful for those furthest behind. This entails fostering closer collaboration with local and grassroots organizations to collect more specific and contextualized data while simultaneously supporting capacity development to enable these organizations to effectively use data in their advocacy efforts.

Moreover, data must be presented in formats that are accessible and understandable to those furthest behind. This requires adapting it to diverse languages – both spoken languages and accessible formats for persons with disabilities. It is essential that persons with disabilities not only have access to data but are also empowered to engage with, interpret and use it to advocate for their rights.

Finding 6. The LNOB approach in LAC is comprehensive, linking upstream and downstream programming, as well as combining mainstream and targeted approaches. There is an open question regarding striking the right balance between those different approaches, considering the business model in a MIC region.

⁷¹ UNFPA LACRO, Leaving No One Behind. Programme for the advancement of the rights of people of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean. 2021. UNFPA Peru, 2023 Annual Report. 2024.

⁷² UNFPA Costa Rica 2021 Annual Report, 2022; Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censos, Technical Guidelines to Incorporate an Ethnic-Racial Approach in Statistical Production by the National Statistical System, 2021. UNFPA Costa Rica, 2023 Annual Report. 2024.

⁷³ KII UNFPA LACRO.

⁷⁴ UNFPA LAC KII, Costa Rica Government informants, Panama other United Nations entities.

⁷⁵ UNFPA LAC KII, Costa Rica Government informants, Panama other United Nations entities, other United Nations entities.

The countries visited for this evaluation present a comprehensive approach to their work on LNOB, with different strategies to build linkages between their normative work and on-the-ground interventions, as well as combining mainstreamed and targeted approaches, particularly to ensure culturally appropriate, physically accessible quality services to people furthest behind.

In Costa Rica, although the UNFPA CO does not manage a big portfolio of earmarked projects, it leverages its strong relationships at national level, while also ensuring a strong liaison with specific vulnerable territories, supporting local institutions capacities, intersectoral coordination, and strengthening local civil society. In a highly centralized country, this approach has proven effective in ensuring that national policies trickle down effectively and meaningfully.⁷⁶ The CO's on-the-ground presence and legitimacy among local institutions and grassroots movements, as well as its capacity to advocate at national level, was acknowledged as a key comparative advantage by other United Nations entities.

For instance, UNFPA has been supporting the roll-out of the Law 9406 on improper relationships, including raising awareness and strengthening capacities of personnel from a wide range of public institution to improve their intersectoral response.⁷⁷ Those efforts were complemented by a targeted initiative, entailing the development of a culturally appropriate awareness-raising toolkit, in consultation with Indigenous communities from Talamanca.⁷⁸ Based on this experience, which has been acknowledged by counterparts as pioneering and respectful, UNFPA partnered with the Ministry of Public Education to develop a methodology to co-create a technical guidance to implement CSE with an intercultural approach.⁷⁹ These examples highlight UNFPA's capacity to integrate Indigenous and ancestral knowledge systems into its programming by ensuring that culturally appropriate approaches are embedded in its efforts, fostering equity, inclusiveness and difference-sensitive universal public policies.

In 2022, in the same territory, triggered by cases of sexual violence in the media, the Municipal Council expressed concern over the rise in sexual violence and declared a local emergency, urging the national government to address the issue. In response, the National Institute for Women (INAMU for its acronym in Spanish) requested support from the United Nations Country Team (UNCT). UNFPA, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Foundation, provided technical and political support to the development of a participatory multisectoral plan to coordinate and strengthen the gender-based violence response and prevention capacities of local institutions, as well as to strengthen women organisations' capacity to follow-up this plan and ensure the enforceability of their rights. Previously, in 2021, UNFPA had supported INAMU in the roll-out of a toolkit for the prevention of adolescent pregnancy and violence against women, training local institutions and grassroots organizations, mainstreaming a sensitive approach to Indigenous and migrant women, as well as girls from 10 to 14.⁸⁰

In Panama, UNFPA has leveraged its strong relationships with government institutions to extend services to underserved areas. For example, UNFPA partnered with the Ministry of Health to

⁷⁶ KII Costa Rica Government, UNFPA, Civil Society.

⁷⁷ KII Costa Rica Government, UNFPA Costa Rica, 2021 Annual Report, 2022.

⁷⁸ Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres Rescatando el equilibrio: Apoyo didáctico para la prevención de las relaciones impropias con población Bribri y Cabécar de Talamanca / Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres; Fondo de Población de Naciones Unidas. -- 1. ed. -- San José: Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres; Fondo de Población de Naciones Unidas, 2021. (Colección Tenemos derecho a tener derechos, n. 95; Derecho a una vida sin violencia; n. 8)

⁷⁹ KII Government Costa Rica; UNFPA Costa Rica, 2021 Annual Report, 2022.

⁸⁰ UNFPA Costa Rica, 2021 Annual Report, 2022.

establish maternity homes targeting the reduction of maternal mortality of Indigenous women through an intercultural approach. These homes are located in underserved regions, such as the Ngöbe-Buglé Indigenous territories (five units) and Metetí-Darién (one unit), the latter built by UNFPA with funding from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) near the Panama-Colombia border, serving migrants from one of the most dangerous migration routes in LAC (see finding 7). The primary objective of the maternity homes is to provide women with timely access to professional childbirth care and family planning counselling, including options for long-acting reversible contraception (LARC). Similarly, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Health in setting up a women’s integrated care centre on the Panama-Colombia border.

Additionally, UNFPA has been a long-standing partner of the Ministry of Health in rolling out 130 adolescent-friendly health services and a related out-of-school CSE strategy. Two of the services visited during the data collection were working for vulnerable communities, including a remote Indigenous area. These efforts complement UNFPA support in ensuring systematic purchase and availability of LARC, and in strengthening national capacities to monitor the availability of medical supplies. By 2022, the Ministry of Health had provided 7,000 LARCs to girls aged 15 to 19, leading to a 16-point reduction (67.2 per cent to 51.2 per cent) in the adolescent fertility rate over four years.⁸¹

In Peru, UNFPA has conducted comprehensive work on gender and social norms, particularly on gender-based violence and harmful practices. UNFPA played a critical role in facilitating the advocacy process leading to the enactment of Law No. 31945 against child marriage and has invested in evidence-based awareness campaigns on adolescent pregnancy and its links with gender-based violence, and child marriages and early unions (CMEU). It also supported the development of a national map on adolescent pregnancy and fertility which highlights the situation in left-behind territories. These efforts not only identify the furthest behind girls, particularly those affected by racial, ethnic and territorial factors, but also highlight the rising pregnancy rates among girls under 15 years old and their correlation with gender-based violence and harmful practices.⁸² By leveraging its involvement in the Roundtable for the Fight against Poverty (MCLP for its acronym in Spanish), the CO ensured that all winning candidates in the 2023 regional elections (26 in total) committed to prioritizing the prevention of adolescent pregnancy, as well as other indicators related to UNFPA transformative results.⁸³ These initiatives have been coupled with collaborative efforts with the media, amplifying its dissemination to a broader audience.⁸⁴ UNFPA is also supporting government capacities at national and local level to institutionalize and implement a transformative gender approach in fostering positive masculinities. UNFPA provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations to cost a gender-based violence rural attention service and advocate for its integration into the national budget.⁸⁵

At the local level, the CO is investing in strengthening capacities of women-led Indigenous organizations and community-based organizations to advocate for the eradication of CMEU. Also recognizing the challenges of advancing in-school CSE, the CO has implemented alternative strategies. These include supporting IPs in out-of-school initiatives (in Afrodescendent territories); partnering with the Ministry of Health to implement a digital training programme on community-based CSE for health providers, aimed at expanding CSE on prioritized territories and population groups; and developing an adolescent-friendly app to provide information on

⁸¹ Written information provided by UNFPA Panama.

⁸² KII UNFPA Peru, IPs, Government.

⁸³ KII UNFPA Peru, CSO and Governments Peru.

⁸⁴ KII UNFPA Peru.

⁸⁵ KII UNFPA Peru, KII Peru Government. This work is being carried out under the Men for Equality Strategy of the Aurora Programme.

contraceptive methods. The app was co-created with adolescents and young people from groups most at risk of being left behind.⁸⁶ In interviews with local leaders and focus groups with adolescent girls participating in UNFPA projects, key informants emphasized the significance of such efforts in raising awareness about bodily autonomy and gender-based violence, as well as challenging social stigmas around adolescent decision-making.⁸⁷

UNFPA Peru, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies, has led efforts to promote the full implementation of the decisions of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, particularly in cases where access to therapeutic abortion and necessary medical care is limited or denied, including that of an Indigenous girl survivor of gender-based violence. This includes supporting the capacity development of the health sector and other key actors to ensure the effective application of the existing national protocols for therapeutic abortion. On the ground, UNFPA continues to work in partnership with government entities, professional medical associations and civil society to build capacity in prioritized programme areas, particularly in highly vulnerable populations in regions such as Loreto, Piura, Ayacucho, and Amazonas.⁸⁸

Countries visited have found different ways of balancing on-the-ground interventions and normative work. On-the-ground support has proven important to foster local capacities and ensure enforceability of public policies. It also enables UNFPA to build trust with institutions and social movements and, at the same time, to generate feasible proposals for normative approaches that address intersectionality. Importantly, working at decentralized levels is seen as an efficient mitigation measure to address unfavourable political contexts at national level.

It is worth noting that interventions at local level can be a potential route to achieving results in the short-term, reaching the last mile, and demonstrating UNFPA impact. Such interventions also support UNFPA communication efforts, with powerful storytelling, which is seen as crucial for resource-mobilization, including from non-traditional sources like the private sector.⁸⁹ However, this approach may also entail risks for small COs, such as creating workload,⁹⁰ which can be challenging in terms of smaller COs’ business models.⁹¹ While the evidence clearly shows that UNFPA has succeeded in maintaining a strategic balance between on-the-ground interventions and normative work, there is also concern that focusing on territorial interventions, in addition to requiring substantial financial investment, risks shifting UNFPA focus away from its strategic normative role in the region.⁹² Finally, such strategies must involve a dual-track approach, requiring careful knowledge management and strategic advocacy to ensure pilots feed into national public policy with strong evidence, which is still seen as an area for improvement within UNFPA.⁹³

While COs provide interesting examples of both mainstreamed and targeted initiatives, at regional level an important reflection on how to structure the LNOB work also provides useful insights on how to strike the right balance between mainstreamed and targeted approaches. The establishment of an LNOB team with allocated resources has enabled UNFPA to position its mandate with furthest behind groups and advance on targeted approaches at national and regional level. This is deemed important, as will be further discussed in finding 6 below, in applying the

⁸⁶ KII UNFPA Peru, UNFPA Peru, 2022 Annual Report, 2023.

⁸⁷ FGDs Peru.

⁸⁸ KII UNFPA Peru, Other UN entities. UNFPA Peru, 2023 Annual Report, 2024.

⁸⁹ KII UNFPA LACRO.

⁹⁰ UNFPA Peru, 2021 Annual Report, 2022. UNFPA Peru, 2022 Annual Report, 2023.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² KII UNFPA LAC; UNFPA Peru, 2022 Annual Report, 2023.

⁹³ KII UNFPA LACRO. UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 Formative Evaluation, forthcoming.

principle of “nothing about us without us”. UNFPA engaged with and supported regional and national civil society to join up efforts around its mandate, which is not necessarily the primary focus of such groups. However, having an LNOB team was assessed as having contributed to a siloed approach to programming around the three transformative results.⁹⁴

In response to this learning, the LACRO team was restructured, with the incorporation of the LNOB team under programmatic areas (sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-based violence), aligned with the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025 strategic shift on aligning the organizational focus around the three transformative results and the RP priorities. With the new structure, the challenge ahead is how to mainstream the LNOB approach without deprioritizing the agenda.⁹⁵ In the same vein, it is advancing in establishing a mainstreamed LNOB portfolio, such as the Leaving No One Behind: Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in the Afrodescendant, Creole, Garifuna and Miskito Communities in Selected Municipalities of the Central America Caribbean Coastal project, funded by Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. The multi-country project aims to reduce teenage pregnancy by empowering women and young people from tribal communities in five countries.⁹⁶ The initiative aims at strengthening in- and out-of-school CSE and improving coverage and access to high-quality sexual and reproductive health services for adolescents and young people, ensuring culturally sensitive approaches. The multi-country project started in 2023 and has a total budget of €6 million (US\$6.13 million) for four years of implementation. It is also acknowledged as a potential approach to fund LNOB work within UNFPA, generating a scale economy. It is further expected that this type of approach will support the generation of innovative models, while also contributing to mainstream the LNOB perspective into sexual and reproductive health and rights programming. Although the project is fully aligned with priorities set out by CPDs, its roll-out has not yet been fully integrated within country-level programming.⁹⁷

Box. Recommendations from the Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion: supporting learning among those furthest behind

UNFPA should promote the exchange of experiences and facilitate shared learning spaces where organizations led by those furthest behind can share their experiences in engaging with both upstream and downstream initiatives. These spaces should support the adaptation of successful approaches to local realities, while respecting regional diversity and maintaining a balance between cross-cutting and context-specific approaches.

Finding 7. UNFPA in LAC has joined up efforts with civil society and parliamentarians to support enabling national and regional environments to foster institutional accountability and tackle discriminatory social norms. Diversifying and expanding partnerships is seen as a strategic approach to accelerate LNOB outcomes.

Aligned with the principle of “nothing about us without us”, UNFPA collaboration with civil society has become a cornerstone of its approach to fostering enabling environments, achieving institutional accountability and addressing discriminatory social norms. These strategies are tailored to specific contexts, taking account of the political landscape and the capacity of civil society, while maintaining a high level of alignment with regional strategies. UNFPA is increasingly

⁹⁴ KII UNFPA LACRO.

⁹⁵ Finding 11 will further explore lessons learned and challenges regarding LNOB optimal internal structure.

⁹⁶ Initially the project included six countries: Panama, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, and Belize. However, the Nicaraguan Government retreated at the beginning of March 2024, due to internal political context.

⁹⁷ KII UNFPA Panama, Costa Rica; Costa Rica Government.

positioning itself as a partner rather than a donor, although funding remains a critical element to bolster civil society capacities.⁹⁸

In Costa Rica, UNFPA is aiming to accelerate the Decade of People of African Descent Programme of Action and the full implementation of the ILO convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' rights, by partnering with civil society, parliamentarians and government authorities at both national and regional levels. Through those partnerships, UNFPA is supporting a comprehensive array of initiatives with transformative potential, as they aim at addressing the root causes of exclusion and discrimination faced by Afrodescendent communities. Beyond the efforts on statistical visibility, the initiatives have ranged from supporting high-level, multi-stakeholder dialogues – such as the first celebration of the International Day for People of African Descent in 2021 – to, in subsequent years, supporting celebrations at the subnational level among local communities and grassroots organizations, as well as producing musical spots promoting the Afro-Costa Rican diaspora and culture. Importantly, UNFPA and its partners have advanced in an enabling institutional environment with institutional accountability.⁹⁹

With regards to the latter, UNFPA has been commended by stakeholders for its sound technical and political support for key legislative initiatives in Costa Rica, including: (1) the draft bill criminalizing racial and ethnic discrimination (2020); (2) the executive decree establishing the self-recognition of Afro-Costa Ricans as a tribal people (2021); and (3) the draft bill on the recognition of Afro-Costa Ricans as a tribal people (2023).¹⁰⁰ Notably, the executive decree has institutionalized accountability through the establishment of the Afro-Costa Rican Tribal People's Forum as a forum for consultation, dialogue and coordination between the Afro-Costa Rican Tribal people and governmental institutions. UNFPA is also supporting the forum's establishment and self-organization. The related draft bill, in turn, establishes the self-determination of Afrodescendent peoples, recognizes their right to free, prior and informed consultation and consent, and affirms their ancestral property rights. It mandates the Costa Rican state to take affirmative actions to recognize their rights to return and own their lands and territories through measures such as delimitation, demarcation and titling facilitation. Those bills have a transformative potential, as they are aimed at tackling root causes of exclusion, such as underrepresentation and land rights.

Similarly, in Panama, UNFPA's partnership with the Afro-Panamanian movement has contributed to the brokering of intra-movement dialogues to strengthen the institutional capacity of SENADAP, including through supporting the development of the National Master Plan for the Development of the Afro-Panamanian Population 2022–2030, in close collaboration with civil society.

In Peru, UNFPA played a critical role in facilitating the advocacy process leading to the enactment of Law No. 31945 against child marriage in Peru, through supporting the advocacy efforts of Indigenous women leaders and coordinating multi-actor advocacy efforts, including partnering with Indigenous-led organizations (Chirapaq), strategic engagement with the Gender Cooperation Table (MESAGEN) and media outreach. This process has been considered key in challenging deeply entrenched discriminatory social norms, as CMEU is frequently dismissed as cultural tradition. Importantly, Indigenous women leaders recounted the emotional burden of confronting legislative

⁹⁸ KII UNFPA LACRO, CSO Costa Rica, CSO Panama, IPs Peru, CSO LAC, participants Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion.

⁹⁹ Supported by UNFPA and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), which facilitated the participation of UNFPA Executive Director, Natalia Kanem; Epsy Campbell, Vice President of Costa Rica; and the King of Akwamu, His Majesty Odeneko Kwafo Akoto III.

¹⁰⁰ KII Costa Rica CSO, government, parliamentarians.

rhetoric that not only dismissed their experiences and culture, but also implicitly blamed children for their own vulnerability.¹⁰¹ In this process, UNFPA engagement with Indigenous women leaders emphasized the importance of drawing on Indigenous and traditional knowledge systems to reframe harmful practices as violations of rights rather than cultural norms.

It is worth highlighting an important level of concertedness between country and regional levels. For instance, Peru is one of the countries participating in the multi-country project on CMEU, funded by AECID, which is currently entering in its second phase. At regional level, based on UNFPA-supported evidence generation, CMEU was included as a priority issue to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment of girls and adolescents in the Buenos Aires Commitment, the intergovernmental agreement from the XV Regional Conference on Women. Regionally, UNFPA is part of the ALIADAS regional platform, to accelerate prevention and elimination responses.¹⁰²

Also at regional level, there is a clear strategy on engaging with regional networks of social movements from furthest behind group to advocate for international instruments aimed at reinforcing rights enforceability at national level. Support and coordination are evident with networks and organizations representing Afrodescendants, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, women and youth aiming at engaging and influencing in key spaces related to the Montevideo Consensus.

UNFPA's longstanding support to Indigenous leadership to engage in regional human rights mechanisms has contributed to the issuance of General Recommendation No. 39 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) on the rights of Indigenous women and girls (2022). UNFPA and the Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean, and Diaspora Women engaged with the follow-up Mechanism to Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment, and Eradication of Violence against Women, MESECVI, which issued a recommendation on gender-based violence towards Afrodescendent women, with UNFPA support (2023).¹⁰³ Similarly, in the resolution of the fifth session of the regional International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), there is a specific paragraph that establishes an open-ended group of friends of the chair on the rights of persons with disabilities to assess inclusion strategies, in close collaboration with UNFPA.¹⁰⁴ UNFPA LACRO made efforts to establish a network of organizations representing women with disabilities, providing them with training, information and advocacy tools, leading to an unprecedented level of participation by these organizations in both the Montevideo Consensus presiding officers meeting (Santiago 2023) and the Cartagena Regional Conference (2024).¹⁰⁵ However, the extent to which those efforts at regional level are complemented by a clear uptake at national levels is not straightforward, with coordination between country and regional offices being crucial to ensuring that political processes and initiatives are effectively interconnected across all levels.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ FGD Peru.

¹⁰² ALIADAS members are: UNICEF, UN WOMEN, UNFPA, ECLAC, MESECVI, Girls Not Brides, Plan International, CLADEM, Network of Afro-Latin American, Afro-Caribbean and Diaspora Women, Enlace Continental de Mujeres Indígenas, HIAS, Jovenes Latinas, among others. UNFPA LACRO 2023 Annual Report, 2024.

¹⁰³ MESECVI/CEVI/doc.284/23. MESECVI Recomendación General nro. 5 Violencia de género contra las mujeres afrodescendientes, 2023.

¹⁰⁴ ECLAC, Fifth session of the Regional Conference on Population and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Resolution 5(V), 2024.

¹⁰⁵ UNFPA LACRO KII, FGD Persons with Disabilities.

¹⁰⁶ Participants in Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion: Weaving Strategies for Closing Inequality Gaps and Promoting Development.

But, as a premise, full realization of rights of furthest behind groups goes beyond the UNFPA mandate, requiring bold concerted efforts and a broad range of partnerships. UNFPA has extensively partnered with United Nations entities, governmental institutions and civil society across levels, and to a lesser extent, with parliamentarians. Still, informants recommended that partnerships could be expanded to engage broader ecosystems of partners, such as universities, media and the private sector, in a more deliberate manner.¹⁰⁷ Work around the people of African descent agenda in Costa Rica also provided an interesting, albeit ad hoc, example of how UNFPA can broker innovative partnerships, such as the one between a community organization and an international philanthropic institution.

Moving beyond traditional alliances and expanding and diversifying strategic partnerships remains an overarching challenge for UNFPA in the region, as identified in both the midterm review and the RP evaluation. Strategic partnerships have been raised as a strategic priority for the remainder of the RP implementation and integrating LNOB into forthcoming efforts in that realm would be a critical area to explore.

Box. Recommendations from the Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion: supporting capacities to fulfil the principle “nothing about us without us”.

The importance of UNFPA's support for organizations led by those furthest behind is underscored. It is recommended that UNFPA continues providing both technical and financial assistance, while also enhancing the visibility of these organizations and facilitating networks to foster synergies. UNFPA plays a critical role in ensuring these organizations gain access to spaces of political influence at local, national and international levels, enabling them to advocate for their rights on their own terms, ensuring their voices and needs are acknowledged at all levels. This support allows organizations to strengthen their institutional capacity and sustain their work over the long term, even in crisis contexts. Particular attention should be given to amplifying the visibility and empowerment of women with disabilities, especially those experiencing multiple forms of discrimination.

4.3 EQ3. Effectiveness - humanitarian¹⁰⁸

Has the LNOB operational plan been effectively adapted for humanitarian and crisis contexts?

(Feminist principles applied: understanding changing power dynamics as contexts change.)

Finding 8. UNFPA has been responsive and intentional about reaching the furthest behind in humanitarian and crisis contexts. However, the LNOB operational plan has not been fully adapted for humanitarian and crisis contexts within LAC programming, which limits the effectiveness of approach in reaching those furthest behind in such contexts.

Currently, humanitarian crises in LAC are mainly due to natural disasters, climatic emergencies and migration, as it currently hosts more migrants per capita than any other region. Accordingly, the humanitarian response set out in the RP prioritizes strengthened internal and external capacities for emergency preparedness, early action and provision of lifesaving sexual and reproductive health and rights, and gender-based violence interventions, as well as resilience-building and complementarity across development and humanitarian work as one of the accelerators.¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰⁷ KII UNFPA LAC, CSO Costa Rica, Government Panama, other United Nations entities Panama and Costa Rica.

¹⁰⁸ Sub-questions: 3.1 UNFPA country offices in humanitarian and crisis/fragile contexts (including during COVID-19) have been able to continue LNOB programming, supported by the LNOB operational plan; 3.2 UNFPA country offices in humanitarian and crisis/fragile contexts (including during COVID-19) were/are able to understand changing dynamics of vulnerability and identify emerging and new left behind populations.

¹⁰⁹ UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean regional programme 2022-2025.

Midterm Review of the LAC RP provides an overall picture of the UNFPA humanitarian response in LAC. While LACRO has supported strengthening capacities for emergency preparedness, results have been uneven across COs; there is a need to enhance prepositioning of sexual and reproductive health and rights supplies to ensure a more agile humanitarian response. Strengthening programming across the humanitarian-development nexus and enhancing humanitarian funding to work across the nexus were also assessed as important gaps. Also, and importantly for the LNOB work, LACRO supported the identification of the most recent sex and age disaggregated subnational population datasets – common operational datasets – population statistics (COD-PS) – for all LAC countries.¹¹⁰

While the highest number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in the region are in Venezuela, Haiti and in the northern countries of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras),¹¹¹ countries visited for this evaluation provided insights on UNFPA's response to both natural disasters and migration and echoed general findings from the midterm review. Peru hosts the second largest share of Venezuelan migrants and has also been heavily impacted by natural disasters, while Panama and Costa Rica are an important migration route from South to North America and have faced increased flows of migrants in recent years.

In Peru, UNFPA is piloting a humanitarian initiative targeted at Indigenous women and adolescent girls in the province of Condorcanquí, a region characterized by overlapping vulnerabilities, where significant gaps in access to basic social services and infrastructure coexist with alarming rates of gender-based violence. The province faces a compounded crisis, having been heavily impacted by a series of natural disasters following an earthquake in 2021, while also contending with increasing insecurity due to the expansion of illegal activities. The project seeks to grant access to gender-based violence response in a humanitarian setting, through implementation of interagency minimum standards in gender-based violence in emergencies with an intercultural approach.¹¹² As part of the project, UNFPA provided the public prosecutor's office with a Gesell chamber, which is a tool intended to prevent the re-victimization of gender-based violence survivors, removing geographical barriers that hinder access to justice for the Indigenous population. In Northern Peru, following massive floods, UNFPA supported brigades to implement both the minimal initial services packages and the minimum standards for prevention and response to gender-based violence in emergencies in impacted communities affected by the climate emergency, including migrants and refugees, as part of broader United Nations system efforts funded by CERF. The house-to-house brigades' methodology has been taken on by the local health facilities as a local strategy to reach the furthest behind.¹¹³

Both initiatives show UNFPA's capacity to respond to changing dynamics of vulnerability, addressing territories where the impact of pre-existing structural inequality is overlaid with multiple humanitarian crises, and have adapted culturally and contextually sensitive approaches, engaging with local partners and communities. UNFPA informants highlighted that service-delivery humanitarian initiatives provide UNFPA with an opportunity to pilot localized, community-based intercultural approaches, ensuring that models and services are adapted to the different needs of the targeted populations, which can potentially inform both future humanitarian and humanitarian-development continuum work from a LNOB perspective. However, it was also

¹¹⁰ KII UNFPA LACRO and UNFPA midterm review of UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean regional programme 2022-2025.

¹¹¹ UNFPA LACRO. Regional Humanitarian Action. Latin America and the Caribbean 2024 Overview.

¹¹² Funded by USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

¹¹³ KII Peru Government.

highlighted that maintaining high-quality standards is necessary in order to do no harm and, as such, investments are quite high.¹¹⁴

As noted in finding 5, in Panama, UNFPA has supported government institutions to extend services to host communities in traditionally underserved areas, including in the Metetí-Darien border area, strengthening sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence responses and care for both the migrant population and host communities. Examples include the maternity home built by UNFPA, with CERF funds, and UNFPA support to the Ministry of Women response with a comprehensive women care centre in Metetí, as well as the establishment of safe spaces in the temporary migration reception stations.¹¹⁵

The response to COVID-19 also provides interesting examples of reaching the furthest behind. In Costa Rica and Peru, UNFPA supported the dissemination of lifesaving information in different languages.¹¹⁶ There has also been a wealth of targeted studies on the impact of COVID in different populations, particularly youth, Indigenous People and people of African descent.¹¹⁷ In Peru, the CO provided personal protective equipment and sexual and reproductive health kits to ensure continuity in service provision and also invested in informing furthest-behind populations about COVID vaccines for pregnant women, which illustrates UNFPA's role in leveraging governmental financing toward achieving the three transformative results.¹¹⁸

Overall, UNFPA informants reinforced the already identified challenges of UNFPA humanitarian capacity in the region to reach the furthest behind in humanitarian and emergency contexts, such as supplies prepositioning, funding, internal capacities and the enhanced positioning of UNFPA's mandate in response plans. Partners in humanitarian efforts have praised UNFPA efforts, especially its capacity to leverage its relations with institutions to focus on emergencies and deliver high-quality services, but they also noted limited capacities to provide a bolder response. It is worth noting that UNFPA informants highlighted that the lack of integration between development and humanitarian programming is also noticeable when it refers to the LNOB operational plan, which hinders not only UNFPA's capacity to reach the furthest behind in humanitarian and emergency contexts, but also its communication of humanitarian results under the LNOB perspective and vice-versa.¹¹⁹ Due to this lack of integration, it is unclear to what extent the LNOB operational plan has supported LNOB programming in humanitarian settings, particularly in the identification of emerging and newly left-behind populations.

4.4 EQ4. Coherence

To what extent does the UNFPA LNOB operational plan align with, add value to, fill a gap in, and contribute to broader development and humanitarian efforts?¹²⁰
(*Feminist principles applied: UNFPA contribution to transformative change.*)

¹¹⁴ KII UNFPA LACRO.

¹¹⁵ KII UNFPA Panama and Government Panama.

¹¹⁶ UNFPA Costa Rica 2021 Annual Report. 2022.

¹¹⁷ UNFPA LACRO 2021 Annual Report. 2022; UNFPA LACRO 2022 Annual Report. 2023, UNFPA KII Peru.

¹¹⁸ KII UNFPA Peru.

¹¹⁹ KII UNFPA LACRO.

¹²⁰ Sub-questions: 4.1 The UNFPA LNOB operational plan is coherent with, and has continued over time to be aligned to, global UNFPA frameworks including the strategic plan; 4.2 The UNFPA plan adds value to a broader attempt to reach left behind groups within the United Nations system, adding value specifically through the provision of disaggregated and localized data to government and the United Nations system; 4.3 UNFPA's normative policy and advocacy interventions with governments, particularly through human rights-based approach and promoting human rights instruments, increases interventions aimed at reaching those furthest behind.

Finding 9. UNFPA’s LNOB strategy in LAC is fully aligned with global, regional and national frameworks, and it has leveraged its normative policy role to make further progress in guaranteeing and realizing the rights of those furthest behind.

UNFPA’s work in LAC is firmly rooted in the Montevideo Consensus on Population and Development from 2013, which prioritizes measures related to Afrodescendent, Indigenous, migrant, ageing and young populations. Additionally, it aligns with corporate commitments that precede the operational plan, including the 2030 Agenda, the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006) and the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS), from 2019, while building upon UNFPA’s longstanding engagement with Indigenous populations, which is guided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).¹²¹

The UNFPA LNOB strategy in LAC is in full alignment with the UNFPA strategic plan. It has not only been integrated into the six interconnected outputs, but it has also increasingly been operationalized as an accelerator. Furthermore, LACRO is currently focusing on mainstreaming LNOB into programming, in line with the SP strategic shift on aligning organizational efforts to achieve the three transformative results.

As noted in finding 6, UNFPA has provided technical advice and support to a wealth of initiatives aimed at increasing access to, and enhancing the quality of, services to those furthest behind, such as the adolescent friendly health services and the maternity homes in Panama, implementation of existing protocols for therapeutic abortion in Peru and intercultural CSE in Costa Rica. Finding 7 details UNFPA’s contribution to advances in normative frameworks such as the full implementation of the ILO Convention 169 in Costa Rica, the passing of the Law 31945 against CMEU in Peru and, at regional level, the issuing of recommendations under CEDAW and MESCEVI.

There are also visible efforts to support state accountability regarding international commitments across levels. In Panama, UNFPA supported the Ministry of Social Development with the statistical annex of the Montevideo Consensus report, raising awareness of the lack of disaggregation of data for LNOB factors, such as disabilities and ethnicity.¹²² In Costa Rica, UNFPA has worked closely with the MIDEPLAN to support the incorporation of the international commitments signed by Costa Rica into its public policies and the presentation of country reports to the corresponding committees, including the Montevideo Consensus, CEDAW and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹²³ UNFPA supported the Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations in Peru by developing a digital dashboard to track progress on the Montevideo Consensus priority measures. Additionally, UNFPA assisted the Ombudsman’s Office in creating a dashboard to assess the implementation of human rights recommendations within its mandate.¹²⁴ At the regional level, the partnership between UNFPA and the ECLAC is being further capitalized, fostering accountability around the Montevideo Consensus’ commitments, with the launch of a regional monitoring platform of the Montevideo Consensus, which gathers specific indicators on Indigenous, Afrodescendent people and persons with disabilities.¹²⁵

Box. Recommendations from the Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion: intersectional normative work

¹²¹ https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Indigenous_Issues.pdf

¹²² Government KII Panama.

¹²³ Government KII Costa Rica.

¹²⁴ UNFPA KII Peru.

¹²⁵ <https://consensomontevideo.cepal.org/es/indicadores>

Normative work should also integrate an intersectional perspective, ensuring that UNFPA's technical advice and advocacy efforts support the enhancement of normative and policy frameworks that effectively address overlapping factors of exclusion and discrimination. Additionally, it should harness UNFPA's potential to act as a bridge between diverse groups, promoting intersectional, intersectoral, intergenerational, and intercultural collaboration to advance public policy advocacy. Consideration should be given to designing tools and strategies applying a critical praxis and inclusive language to ensure meaningful engagement and transformative outcomes.

Finding 10. UNFPA in LAC has contributed data to strengthen LNOB positioning in United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, as well as adding value to the United Nations country teams' work with LNOB.

Within the United Nations, UNFPA is recognized as a strong LNOB voice, which was widely acknowledged by the other United Nations entities consulted for this evaluation. The United Nations entities consulted commend UNFPA capacity to contribute with data, which has been key to bolster LNOB positioning in common country assessments and, consequently, in United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), as well as for its capacity to combine upstream and downstream work, which translates into valuable knowledge, practical know-how and political capital for the UNCTs.¹²⁶

UNFPA in LAC has increasingly become the go-to agency for issues related to people of African descent, Indigenous communities, and adolescents and youth.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, it is unclear whether this aligns with a long-term corporate commitment and whether the UNFPA mandate can sustainably encompass work with such a broad range of groups. While LNOB is a system-wide commitment, data collected at the country level suggests that the United Nations system relies heavily on United Nations Resident Coordinator Offices (UNRCOs) to maintain prioritization and coordination of the agenda.

Although this challenge goes beyond the regional scope of this case study, stakeholders raised concerns with significant implications for UNFPA, such as its capacity to continue advancing work with current or new groups, as this will largely depend on how much the UNRCOs and other United Nations entities will also be prioritizing and supporting these populations. Additional concerns include whether UNFPA may be overstretching itself by working with so many different groups, and whether the United Nations system can effectively sustain the LNOB agenda amid new priorities, such as the six transitions and the outcomes of the Summit of the Future, particularly in less conducive political contexts.¹²⁸

4.5 EQ5. Efficiency

To what extent does UNFPA have an efficient organizational structure for the allocation of resources – financial and human – to further the LNOB operational plan and goals?¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Other United Nations entities Panama and Costa Rica.

¹²⁷ Other United Nations entities Panama and Costa Rica.

¹²⁸ Other United Nations entities Costa Rica, Government Panama.

¹²⁹ Sub-questions: 5.1 The internalization of LNOB principles, including specifically (a) allocation of earmarked funds; and (b) allocation, and training of staffing for operationalization of LNOB across different modes of engagement has been implemented consistently and efficiently across different levels of UNFPA (country, regional and global); 5.2 UNFPA systematically and proactively seeks to employ persons from left-behind groups; 5.3 UNFPA has an efficient organizational structure for the implementation of LNOB strategies and approaches; 5.4 UNFPA recognized and efficiently addressed the internal barriers to the LNOB approach, including, (a) people-related: change of mindset, insufficient staffing, vertical working, guidance fatigue, lack of clarity on priority groups; and (b) organizational issues: lack of strategic focus, inclusivity gaps, lack of clarity on support from UNFPA headquarters,

(Feminist principles applied: empowerment and capacity building questions on human rights and employing persons from left-behind groups; and social justice and accountability for financial resource allocation.)

Finding 11. UNFPA has made efforts to diversify its teams and there is a clear sense that representation matters, as it directly impacts the relevance of UNFPA LNOB approach, in addition to fulfilling the principle of “nothing about us, without us”. However, structural challenges still prevent people from left-behind groups from entering UNFPA and, just as importantly, feeling included.

While there have been advancements, significant structural challenges remain in hiring and promoting the inclusion of various furthest-behind groups. Although comprehensive data is unavailable, the UNFPA survey on diversity, equity and inclusion, from 2023, found that 16 (7 per cent) of all LAC UNFPA respondents (n=233) identified as LGBTQIA+, and five people (2 per cent of all LAC respondents) identified as persons with disability.¹³⁰ While LGBTQIA+ representation in LAC is higher than the global average (5 per cent), representation of persons with disabilities is lower (4 per cent).¹³¹

UNFPA informants reported progress in the representation of Afrodescendants and persons with disabilities within the organization over the past 20 years, though setbacks have been perceived more recently regarding persons with disabilities, as corporate investments in disability inclusion have not been sufficient or sustained to ensure long-term, meaningful progress.¹³² According to key informants, Indigenous Peoples representation remains much lower, and it is somewhat more visible at the country level. There is also a perception that Indigenous and Afrodescendent presence is higher at the project or operational levels than within programme teams. However, data on the Indigenous and Afrodescendent presence in LAC offices, from the EDGE survey, was not available to verify this statement.

UNFPA informants clearly view representation as crucial, as it introduces standpoints rooted in the personal experiences of left-behind groups. This not only enhances the relevance and appropriateness of programming but also raises awareness about inclusion within UNFPA teams. External stakeholders similarly see representation as a key factor in improving UNFPA's response to left-behind groups, fostering increased sensitivity and understanding of the realities faced by those furthest behind.¹³³

Challenges in human resources policies and procedures were raised, as they frequently set high standards that do not account for socio-economic and cultural disparities. Moreover, informants reported inconsistencies between UNFPA and the UNDP hiring policies, which further complicate corporate inclusion efforts. Although the global LNOB operational plan provides recommendations regarding human resources, it is not clear to what extent there have been efforts to make these recommendations actionable. Strengthening affirmative policies to ensure genuine inclusion and equity was highlighted by informants as an important area for exploration. A desk review identified an ad hoc example from the UNFPA CO in Brazil, which launched an affirmative internship

and the fact that the United Nations does not speak as one voice; 5.5 UNFPA has the capacity to monitor, collect and disaggregate its data/results to assess existing inequalities and ensure UNFPA reaches specific groups who are the furthest behind.

¹³⁰ The 2023 EDGE survey collected staff profile data on a voluntary basis, with the participation of 1,395 individuals, representing 60 per cent of the UNFPA workforce. Staff based in LAC made up 17 per cent of the total respondents.

¹³¹ Global data available at <https://www.unfpa.org/diversity-equity-inclusion>

¹³² UNFPA KII LACRO.

¹³³ FGD groups in Panama, KII Government and CSO Panama.

programme in 2016 for people from marginalized groups to gain professional experience within the United Nations system.¹³⁴

Age group representation is also seen as imbalanced, with lower representation of both young and older individuals. It was reported that the hiring policy lacks specific criteria for promoting the inclusion of young people, while the policy of mandatory retirement at age 65 systematically excludes a growing population group.¹³⁵

Disability inclusion is still viewed as a major area for improvement. Although inclusion and accessibility policies exist, systems and processes have not yet been fully adapted to meet the needs of this group, creating significant barriers to realizing their rights. While there is recognition that meeting such diverse needs can be challenging – since there is no one-size-fits-all solution – informants believe that insufficient efforts have been made in this regard.¹³⁶

Overall, UNFPA informants emphasized that overcoming historical inequalities requires bold efforts and sustained intentionality; otherwise, major setbacks could quickly undermine the progress achieved so far.

Box. Recommendations from the Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion: procurement UNFPA should establish an inclusive registry of suppliers and consultants that incorporates intersectionality criteria throughout all stages of the procurement process. This would help recognize and include grassroots organizations and individuals representing various forms of discrimination, as well as ensuring a more authentic representation of historically excluded groups. This would not only uphold the principle of "nothing about us without us", but also strengthen the relevance of its LNOB approach, ensuring that programme implementation is truly inclusive and responsive to the needs of those furthest behind.

Finding 12. While UNFPA has made notable progress in building corporate capacity in the region to implement the LNOB operational plan, challenges remain – such as the lack of clear corporate thematic programming guidance, consistent monitoring and effective communication – which hinder efforts to scale up and fully operationalize the plan consistently across country offices.

UNFPA has made progress in building corporate capacities to implement the LNOB operational plan. Countries have refined its targeting, integrated the LNOB approach across outputs and advanced in both mainstream and targeted programming. UNFPA informants and external stakeholders have provided numerous examples of how capacities to enhance inclusivity have been developed by engaging with the furthest behind and addressing their diverse needs.¹³⁷ Practical lessons learned include fostering meaningful inclusion and accessibility in in-person and online events, providing accessible documents and budgeting for LNOB-related activities, among others.

Despite these advancements, challenges remain in scaling up and fully operationalizing the approach consistently across COs. While the LNOB operational plan has been crucial in establishing a comprehensive and appropriate vision to guide LNOB efforts, and elevating LNOB as an accelerator in the current strategic plan has helped push the agenda, a lack of clear

¹³⁴ UNFPA LACRO, Leaving No One Behind. Programme for the advancement of the rights of people of African descent in Latin America and the Caribbean. 2021.

¹³⁵ KII UNFPA LACRO.

¹³⁶ KII UNFPA LACRO, FGD Costa Rica.

¹³⁷ KII UNFPA LACRO, FGDs Panama and Costa Rica.

mechanisms and detailed guidance for programming, implementation, monitoring and – equally important – communicating LNOB work and results, remains.

UNFPA informants have highlighted that strengthening LNOB capacities is an important area to enable systematic integration of LNOB into programming across COs. Recent efforts from LACRO to address this include reinforcing strategies to operationalize LNOB as an accelerator, further integrating it into work toward the three transformative results, and fostering a cluster approach to enhance efficiency and cross-fertilization among countries.¹³⁸ More comprehensive efforts to integrate LNOB into corporate-level programming are seen as essential for achieving consistency across all levels.¹³⁹ One example given refers to coherence around traditional midwives. While the institutional stance promotes professionalized midwifery, Afrodescendent and Indigenous communities often rely on traditional midwifery practices.

Regarding monitoring, as noted in finding 3, some CPDs have clear output indicators specifying the furthest behind groups and targeted territories, which supports specific reporting on LNOB work. Globally, in the global programming system, a mandatory tag has been included to explicitly identify activities that address furthest behind factors, however, the recent migration to Quantum has disrupted its use.¹⁴⁰

Monitoring results remain a challenge, particularly in upstream work where the expected outcomes involve changes in development indicators. These indicators not only require disaggregated data but also reflect the contributions of many different efforts. At the intervention level, the Leaving No One Behind: Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in the Afro-descendant, Creole, Garifuna and Miskito Communities in Selected Municipalities of the Central America Caribbean Coastal project in the Caribbean has made progress in establishing a baseline to track outcomes based on the MEMI model. This work, supported by LACRO, has been rolled out in all participating countries using the same methodology, which has the potential to provide significant impact evidence at the end of the project.¹⁴¹

Finally, as previously mentioned, monitoring and communicating LNOB outcomes directly impact UNFPA's ability to mobilize adequate funding and financing for LNOB initiatives, including through LNOB business cases. Another aspect of communication is that it is an inclusion tool in itself, and there is broad consensus among informants that UNFPA capacities in this area remain insufficient. Several efforts have been identified, such as translations into Indigenous languages, audio-based information campaigns and various inclusion strategies in in-person events. However, the accessibility of the wealth of UNFPA-produced knowledge and communication materials is still an underexplored area.¹⁴²

Box. Recommendations from the Intercultural Dialogue for Recognition and Inclusion: knowledge management

UNFPA should document and systematize its experiences within the LNOB agenda, collaborating with those who are furthest behind. Many successful practices remain under-recognized and lack the necessary visibility, limiting their potential for replication. It is recommended that UNFPA

¹³⁸ KII UNFPA LACRO.

¹³⁹ KII UNFPA LACRO.

¹⁴⁰ UNFPA. Global Programming System (GPS) Activity Tagging User Guide. Version 10. November 2022. The furthest behind factors included as tags are: culture, ethnicity, language, race, religion; disability; HIV/AIDS status; location (rural/informal settlements, etc.); migration, asylum, displacement; sexual orientation and gender identity.

¹⁴¹ KII UNFPA LACRO and UNFPA LACRO. Acceleration action towards the three transformative results in LAC. Leaving No One Behind to Get to Zero (ppt). 2024.

¹⁴² KII UNFPA LACRO.

establish a systematic process to document these practices, fostering the exchange of good practices at all levels. This process should actively engage grassroots organizations to ensure that context-specific approaches are accurately captured and reflected. UNFPA is also encouraged to develop an accessible database to collect studies and reports from grassroots organizations led by, and working with, those furthest behind. This would facilitate the sharing and adaptation of valuable insights across various contexts, ensuring that the voices and contributions of those furthest behind are captured and easily accessible for replication and adaptation.

Finding 13. UNFPA in LAC has experimented with different institutional structures to advance the LNOB agenda in the region, responding to its own learnings. However, challenges remain in ensuring LNOB optimal integration and consistency across programme areas. Challenges such as over-reliance on focal points, inadequate coordination with other strategies and limited long-term funding hinder effective LNOB mainstreaming and accountability.

The RO has experimented with structuring the LNOB work within the teams in different manners, providing important reflections on how to find an optimal structure to promote LNOB work. The capacity of being flexible and adapting to search for enhanced working arrangements are deemed positive by UNFPA informants.

During the 2021–2023 biennium, an LNOB area, with dedicated budget and a team of focal points, was responsible for advancing the work with specific groups, namely Indigenous People, people of African descent and persons with disabilities, following the priority groups established by the VIP strategy. This arrangement played a crucial role in prioritizing those groups and ensuring that they remained at the forefront of the organization efforts. It has enabled strong specialized advocacy efforts, allowing the organization to foster regional networks and partnerships, as well as targeted policy dialogues.¹⁴³

However, this approach also presented drawbacks, with a perceived disconnection from programmatic areas, hindering the coherence of LNOB efforts across the mandate areas.¹⁴⁴ From 2023 onwards, LNOB focal points in the RO were integrated into programmatic areas to enhance LNOB mainstreaming as an accelerator across all UNFPA programmes and actions, including in budgets. UNFPA LACRO informants assess that the new arrangement also presents challenges, highlighting risks related to LNOB becoming an add-on and ending up deprioritized, while also making resources allocation to the LNOB agenda more challenging. The lack of clear oversight and accountability on LNOB efforts is seen as a main challenge in maintaining the LNOB momentum and avoiding setbacks. Overall, there is an emerging assessment that still more thought is needed to arrive at an optimal arrangement that allows for intersectionality.

Another significant issue is the reliance on focal points. In smaller COs, staff are taking on multiple focal point roles, which are sometimes not even a fixed attribution.¹⁴⁵ This affects LNOB delivery and, as capacities to work with the LNOB approach are not comprehensively in place, there is still an over-reliance on the technical support from regional teams.¹⁴⁶ At regional and corporate level there is also a perceived lack of coordination between the Disability Inclusion Strategy and the LNOB work. For instance, disability inclusion programmatic guidance is mainly circulated within the persons with disabilities focal points network, while demand for technical assistance is sometimes

¹⁴³ KII UNFPA LACRO and UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean regional programme 2022–2025.

¹⁴⁴ KII UNFPA LACRO and UNFPA Latin America and Caribbean regional programme 2022–2025.

¹⁴⁵ UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022–2025 Formative Evaluation, forthcoming.

¹⁴⁶ KII UNFPA LACRO.

handled outside the network, which suggests lack of clarity on networks’ processes and attributions vis-à-vis LNOB work.¹⁴⁷

Funding is also a key area of concern for stakeholders. Although the RP and CPDs are – in general – aligning programming towards LNOB, existing targeted financial resources have been proven fundamental to advance in the specific LNOB agendas. However, LNOB specific funding, so far, has been mainly related to specific projects or initiatives, which do not allow for sustained advocacy efforts. The Leaving No One Behind: Reduction of Adolescent Pregnancy in the Afrodescendent, Creole, Garifuna and Miskito Communities in Selected Municipalities of the Central America Caribbean Coastal project is an important attempt from LACRO to ensure specific funding for targeted initiatives, while also ensuring the organization focuses on regional priorities around the three transformative results. However, at the country level, there are still challenges in ensuring integration with sexual and reproductive health and rights programming areas and coordination with governmental efforts.¹⁴⁸

5. Summary observations

1. The VIP strategy has effectively provided a context-specific framework and clear overall direction for LNOB coordinated work in the region, including through the prioritization of specific groups, while simultaneously enabling a tailored strategic approach at the national level. Further integration of LNOB as an accelerator into the three transformative results programming has proven successful in aligning organizational focus. UNFPA in LAC has laid a strong foundation to capitalize on its achievements and strengthen the use of an intersectional approach in its programming. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to deepen the integration of the LNOB approach into humanitarian programming.

Links to findings 1, 2, 3, 8

2. UNFPA has leveraged its data capacities to make the furthest behind more visible at regional and national levels and to position the LNOB agenda. Based on this comparative advantage, UNFPA in LAC could examine its internal capacities and entry points aiming at developing a comprehensive strategy that advances evidence-based investment cases to secure funding for LNOB initiatives, positions LNOB within public financing frameworks, and supports governmental partners’ capacities to generate disaggregated data.

Links to findings 4 and 5

3. UNFPA has leveraged its normative policy role to further advance the realization of the rights of those furthest behind, not only by supporting the development of legal frameworks but also by influencing the implementation of public policies to ensure that those left furthest behind can access services that are of higher quality and responsive to their specific needs. At the same time, UNFPA has maintained an important on-the-ground presence, which is proven to be important to foster local capacities, ensure enforceability of public policies, build trust with institutions and social movements and, at the same time, generate feasible proposals for normative approaches that address intersectionality. There is an opportunity to build upon the learnings and successes achieved and further develop a clear theory of change that explicitly links UNFPA’s normative role with local interventions as proof of concept, and is appropriate for the region’s business model.

Links to findings 6 and 9

¹⁴⁷ KII UNFPA LACRO.

¹⁴⁸ KII UNFPA Panama, Costa Rica Government.

4. Strong leadership, corporate investment at all levels and meaningful partnerships with civil society have been key enablers of changes with transformative potential. However, sustaining momentum for diverse groups and addressing the root causes of exclusion requires coordinated efforts that go beyond UNFPA's mandate, as well as the engagement of a more diverse range of strategic partnerships. UNFPA in LAC is well positioned to invest in coordinated efforts across regional and national levels to mobilize ecosystems of diverse partners with a focus on LNOB, focusing not only on resource mobilization. This includes government institutions, international organizations, civil society, grassroots organizations, social movements, academia, media, the private sector, philanthropic organizations, and technology and innovation hubs. UNFPA should also build upon its added value by playing the role of broker in supporting coalitions for change, fostering collaboration and leveraging collective efforts to advance the LNOB agenda.

Links to findings 1, 7, 10

5. While programmatic results are evident, there are significant internal capacities that require further strengthening to continue advancing the LNOB agenda, including ensuring the inclusion of the furthest behind groups within UNFPA itself. UNFPA in LAC has the opportunity to map human rights and administrative bottlenecks that hinder greater inclusiveness, act on those within its governance and consider piloting affirmative actions at regional and national levels.

Links to findings 11, 12 and 13

6. Annexes

Annex I. Evaluation matrix for the global evaluation

Key to acronyms used:

AoI – Areas of investigation (as articulated in the terms of reference for this evaluation)

LNOB – Leave no one behind

ICPD – the International Conference on Population and Development

ToC – theory of change (in this case, meaning the theory of change developed specifically for the evaluation)

ToR – terms of reference (for this evaluation)

QoC – quality of care

| Evaluation question and assumptions | Indicators | Sources of information | Links to evaluation ToC and AoI in the ToR |
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EQ1. Relevance. How relevant is the UNFPA LNOB operational plan to: (a) realities at community, sub-national and national levels; and (b) the UNFPA mandate?

Feminist principles applied: a focus on learning with regard to the conceptualization of the LNOB operational plan; and a focus on intersectionality

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| 1.1 The LNOB strategic approach to LNOB and RFB has evolved to focus on factors of exclusion /discrimination rather than groups which are relevant to addressing the intersectional needs of those left behind. | <p>Evidence that the LNOB and RFB principles, as defined in the operational plan– “nothing for us without us”, and an organization-wide endeavour – are relevant to those left furthest behind and operationalized within UNFPA.</p> <p>Evidence that the outputs of LNOB (making the invisible visible, institutionalizing accountability, ensuring quality and accessible services, addressing root cause, mainstreaming and targeted approaches, taking an intersectional approach, strengthening voice and partnerships, making funding available, and</p> | <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global,</p> | <p>Links to the bottom level of the ToC: conceptualization of LNOB at UNFPA.</p> <p>Links to AoI1.</p> |
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| | supporting an enabling environment are relevant to those furthest behind. | regional and country levels. (3) survey. | |
| 1.2 The LNOB operational plan is relevant to different contexts (including across diverse development and humanitarian settings) and allows for/promotes reaching the furthest behind regardless of political capital expended on working with certain groups. | Evidence of key points of alignment to changes in the development and humanitarian landscape (for example, global pandemics and complex emergencies, climate change, demographic shifts, growing inequalities, technological advancements, rise and influence of conservative positions/ideology). | (1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. | Links to green sidebar – external assumptions to be tested – and grey bottom level of the ToC. |
| | Evidence of identifying those left behind due to different factors across the gender+ scale – gender, age, culture, ethnicity, race, language, religion, disability, HIV/AIDs status, income and wealth, location, migration, asylum, displacement and sexual orientation and gender identity (for example, in RPs and country programme document analysis sections): specifically, those considered more controversially or culturally difficult to reach. | (1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (3) survey. | Links to AoI1. |
| | UNFPA staff perceptions of recognizing and identifying different and changing vulnerabilities in emerging humanitarian situations or as political landscapes shift. | (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. | |
| 1.3 The UNFPA LNOB operational plan is relevant to the UNFPA mandate and contributes to the three transformative results. | Evidence of relevance of LNOB operational plan to the UNFPA mandate. Evidence of relevance of LNOB to the three transformative results. | | Links to top level of ToC – contribution to three transformative results. |

EQ2. Effectiveness and sustainability. How effectively has the LNOB operational plan been operationalized at country, regional and global levels?

Feminist principles applied: participatory and inclusive approach; centring and prioritizing the perspectives of those most left behind.

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| 2.1 The fundamental shifts and principles within the LNOB operational plan have been consistently understood and meaningfully incorporated into planning at regional and country levels. | <p>UNFPA staff perceptions of conceptual clarity on LNOB across global, regional, and country levels of the organization.</p> <p>Evidence of coherence of UNFPA strategies, approach, procedures and guidance relevant to implementation of LNOB/RFB work across all levels of UNFPA work.</p> <p>Evidence of good lessons from different countries/regions incorporated into planning at regional and country level. <i>(Note: collect reasons for success and differences per region.)</i></p> | <p>(1) UNFPA KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (2) survey.</p> <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> | <p>Links to bottom 3 levels of ToC.</p> <p>Links to AoI1.</p> |
| 2.2 The LNOB operational plan has been meaningfully operationalized at country, regional and global levels, across the six output areas of: (1) policy and accountability; (2) QoC and services; (3) gender and social norms; (4) population | <p>Evidence of LNOB and RFB strategies used across (1) type of strategy (for example, disaggregated data, partnerships, social norms change, intersectional analysis, targeted programmes, etc.) and (2) context (for example, geographical/regional contexts, resource</p> | <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country</p> | <p>Links to 3 middle boxes of the ToC .</p> <p>Links to AoI2 .</p> |

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| change and data; (5) humanitarian action; (6) adolescents and youth. <i>(Note: humanitarian action will be answered under EQ3.)</i> | <p>contexts and development contexts, including humanitarian contexts).</p> <p>Evidence of gender+ focus in UNFPA programme activities, outputs, outcomes and indicators at country, regional and global levels in (1) policy and accountability; (2) QoC and services; (3) gender and social norms; (4) population change and data; (5) humanitarian action; (6) adolescents and youth.</p> <p>Evidence of reaching those considered more controversially or culturally difficult to reach, specifically LGBTQIA+ populations, Indigenous groups, or those who are displaced.</p> | <p>strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> <p>(2) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (3) survey. (4) FGDs at country level with community members and civil society partners.</p> | |
| 2.3 LNOB has been fully leveraged as an accelerator and has been linked to other accelerators, across country, regional, and global levels, where alignment exists, being (1) HRBA and gender transformative action; (2) partnerships; (3) digitalization and innovation; (4) data and evidence; and (5) HDP nexus. <i>(Note: HDP nexus will be answered under EQ3.)</i> | <p>Evidence of Furthest Behind factors being addressed in UNFPA's transformative results – by type of factor, strategy and result.</p> <p>Evidence of furthest behind factors considered in the implementation of other accelerators - (1) HRBA and gender transformative action; (2) partnerships; (3) digitalization and innovation; (4) data and evidence; and (5) HDP nexus – by type of factor, strategy and result.</p> | <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> <p>(3) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> | <p>Links to 3 middle boxes of the ToC.</p> <p>Links to AoI3.</p> |

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| <p>2.4 UNFPA has, across country, regional and global levels, identified and implemented mitigation measures for the external barriers to effective LNOB programming, being: (1) competing priorities for resources; (2) lack of quality disaggregated data; (3) unfavourable political environment; (4) unfavourable socio-economic context; (5) lack of available partners; and (6) concept of LNOB is complex and context-specific.</p> | <p>Evidence of identification and mitigation of external factors in the global LNOB strategic documents.</p> <p>Evidence of adaptation at regional and local levels of identifying and designing mitigation into programming.</p> <p>UNFPA staff perception of whether all locally applicable barriers to RFB have been considered within UNFPA programming.</p> <p>FGD participants from left-behind groups and civil society partners’ perception of whether all locally applicable barriers to RFB have been considered within UNFPA programming.</p> | <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> <p>(1) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> <p>(1) FGDs at country level with community members and civil society partners.</p> | <p>Links to the left-hand sidebar detailing external barriers.</p> |
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| 2.5 UNFPA meaningfully engages with, works with, and listens to, organizations led by representatives of left-behind groups at country, regional and global levels. | <p>Evidence of meaningful? UNFPA engagement with organizations led by representatives of left-behind groups at country, regional and global levels – by type of engagement and organization.</p> <p>Evidence of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion among partner organizations at country, regional and global levels – by type of partner, strategy used and result.</p> <p>Perceptions of organizations led by representatives of left-behind groups on working with UNFPA at country, regional and global levels (for example, strengths and weaknesses of working with UNFPA, strategies to foster engagement, and how their voice is heard).</p> | <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels.</p> <p>(1) FGDs at country level with community members and civil society partners, including observations.</p> | Links to pink box of ToC – foundational principles: “nothing for us without us”. |
| EQ3. Effectiveness - humanitarian. Has the LNOB operational plan been effectively adapted for humanitarian and crisis contexts? <i>Feminist principles applied: understanding changing power dynamics as contexts change</i> | | | |
| 3.1 UNFPA country offices in humanitarian and crisis/fragile contexts (including during COVID-19) have been able to continue LNOB programming, supported by the LNOB operational plan. | <p>Evidence of RFB factors identified and prioritized in humanitarian and crisis/fragile contexts.</p> <p>Evidence of UNFPA addressing barriers and facilitators for effective LNOB programming in humanitarian and crisis/fragile contexts – type of barrier, context, strategy used and result.</p> | <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (3) survey.</p> <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country</p> | Links to grey box at bottom of ToC. |

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| | <p>UNFPA staff perception on effectiveness of maintaining a RFB focus within humanitarian programming.</p> <p>FGD participants from left-behind groups and civil society partners’ perception of UNFPA’s enduring RFB focus within humanitarian contexts.</p> | <p>strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (3) survey. (1) UNFPA KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (2) FGDs at country level with community members and civil society partners, including observations.</p> | |
| <p>3.2 UNFPA COs in humanitarian and crisis/fragile contexts (including during COVID-19) were/are able to understand changing dynamics of vulnerability and identify emerging and new left-behind populations.</p> | <p>Evidence of strategies to reach new left-behind populations in humanitarian and crisis/fragile contexts – group/population, context, underlying drivers, strategy used and result.</p> <p>UNFPA staff perception of effectiveness of understanding new and changing vulnerabilities and intersectional vulnerabilities in humanitarian or crisis contexts.</p> <p>FGD participants from left-behind groups and civil society partners’ perception of UNFPA’s effectiveness of understanding new and changing vulnerabilities and intersectional vulnerabilities in humanitarian or crisis contexts.</p> | <p>(1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (3) survey. (1) UNFPA KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (1) FGDs at the country level with community members and civil society partners, including observations.</p> | <p>Links to grey box at bottom of ToC.</p> |

EQ4. Coherence, internally, and contribution to wider system. To what extent does the UNFPA LNOB operational plan align with, add value to, fill a gap in and contribute to broader development and humanitarian efforts?

Feminist principles applied: UNFPA contribution to transformative change

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| 4.1 The UNFPA LNOB operational plan is coherent with, and has continued over time to be aligned to, global UNFPA frameworks including the strategic plan. | Evidence of key points of alignment to the UNFPA strategic plan, and other UNFPA strategies and plans and global frameworks. Evidence of adaptations of LNOB approaches from 2018-2021 strategic plan to 2022-2025 strategic plan. | | Links to the top level of ToC – contribution to the three transformative results. |
| 4.2 The UNFPA LNOB operational plan adds value to a broader attempt to reach left-behind groups within the United Nations system, adding value specifically through the provision of disaggregated and localized data to government and the United Nations system. | Evidence of UNFPA contributing strategically with data to position LNOB and RFB principles in United Nations Country Teams (UNCT) coordination mechanisms. Perceptions of United Nations partners as to the value add of UNFPA to the United Nations eco-system, specifically with regard to disaggregated data. | (1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (3) survey. (1) External KIIs at global, regional and country levels. | Links to the second level down of ToC – vision. |
| 4.3 UNPFA's normative policy and advocacy interventions with governments, particularly through HRBA and promoting human rights instruments, increases interventions aimed at reaching those furthest behind. | Evidence of UNFPA's normative policy and advocacy work contributing to the advancement of human rights for furthest behind groups at country levels – type of policy/advocacy work with governments, focus group and result. UNFPA staff perception on UNPFA's influencing ability for RFB through a normative role at country level. | (1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (3) survey. (1) UNFPA KIIs at global, regional and country levels. | Links to the third middle box of ToC. |

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| | Civil society partners’ and government partners’ perceptions of UNFPA’s influencing ability for RFB through a normative role at country level. | (1) External KIIs at global, regional and country levels. | |
| EQ5. Efficiency. To what extent has UNFPA efficiently allocated resources – financial and human – to furthering the LNOB operational plan and goals? <i>Feminist principles applied: empowerment and capacity building questions on human rights and employing persons from left-behind groups; and social justice and accountability for financial resource allocation</i> | | | |
| 5.1 The internalization of LNOB principles, including specifically: (1) allocation of earmarked funds; and (2) allocation, and training of staffing for operationalization of LNOB across different modes of engagement has been implemented consistently and efficiently across different levels of UNFPA (country, regional and global). | Total amount and percentage of funds specifically allocated to RFB activities. and changes over time; number of staff at global, regional and country levels dedicated to RFB activities; amount of training for all staff and number of staff attending training on RFB , the operational plan and any other related training provided. | (1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. | Links to the second of the middle boxes of ToC. Links to AoI4. |
| 5.2 UNFPA systematically and proactively seeks to employ persons from left-behind groups. | Existence of proactive recruitment policies for those from left-behind groups at global, regional and country levels; evidence of meaningful strategies used to employ persons from left-behind groups (by type of strategy at global, regional and country levels). | (1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. | Links to the second of the middle boxes of ToC. Links to AoI4. |

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| | <p>Percentage of UNPFA staff at global, regional and country level who identify as being from a left-behind group.</p> <p>Percentage of UNPFA staff at global, regional and country level who identify as being from a left-behind group and work within an area of UNFPA not focused on RFB.</p> <p>Evidence of groups and forums established to support staff from left-behind groups.</p> | (1) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. (2) survey. | |
| 5.3 UNFPA has an efficient organizational structure for the implementation of LNOB strategies and approaches. | Evidence of logical and efficient human resources and organizational structure for LNOB at HQ, regional, and country levels. | i) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. ii) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. | Links to bottom pink box of ToC. |
| 5.4 UNFPA recognized and efficiently addressed the internal barriers to the LNOB approach, including: (1) people-related: change of mindset, insufficient staffing, vertical working, guidance fatigue, lack of clarity on priority groups; and (2) organizational issues: lack of strategic focus, inclusivity gaps, lack of clarity on support from United Nations Headquarters, and the fact that the United | Evidence of identification of key Internal barriers and facilitators of the LNOB and RFB approach at global, regional and country levels – by type of barrier, evidence of internal barriers addressed and results, and ongoing gaps and opportunities. | (1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. | Links to the right-hand side bar of ToC – internal assumptions to be tested. |

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| Nations does not speak with one voice. | | | |
| 5.5 UNFPA has the capacity to monitor, collect and disaggregate its data/results to assess existing inequalities and ensure UNFPA reaches specific groups who are the furthest behind. | <p>Evidence that UNFPA have the capacity to support the generation, analysis and use of disaggregated data for advocacy and decision making, evidence-based public policy, and programming</p> <p>Evidence that UNFPA tracks all SP indicators related to LNOB and RFB.</p> | (1) Document review – UNFPA global, regional and country strategies and reports; regional and country case studies. (2) KIIs at global, regional and country levels. | Links to the right-hand side bar of ToC – internal assumptions to be tested. |

Annex II. List of positions consulted

| Position | Organization | Country |
|---|--|------------|
| Indigenous Woman | Indigenous Person | Costa Rica |
| Activist Calypso | Activist | Costa Rica |
| Youth leadership | Activist | Costa Rica |
| Activist. (Former Parliamentarian) | Activist | Costa Rica |
| Activist. (Former Commissioner for People of African Descent) | Activist | Costa Rica |
| Activist, Women Ocean Guardians | Activist | Costa Rica |
| President | Talamanca Indigenous Women's Association - ACUMITA | Costa Rica |
| Secretary | Talamanca Indigenous Women's Association - ACUMITA | Costa Rica |
| First Secretary and Head of Cooperation | Embassy of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg | Costa Rica |
| Gynaecologist | Costa Rican Social Security Fund | Costa Rica |
| Head of Integrated Care and National Care and Support Secretariat Coordinator | Joint Institute for Social Assistance - IMAS | Costa Rica |
| Social Worker - Community Projects and Services Unit | Limón Municipality | Costa Rica |
| Social Worker - Community Development Unit (former Vice-Minister for Youth) | Limón Municipality | Costa Rica |
| Promoción de la Igualdad de Género | MEP | Costa Rica |
| Adviser | Ministry of Health | Costa Rica |
| Head of the Foresight Unit | Ministry of National Planning and Economic Policy - MIDEPLAN | Costa Rica |
| Gender Equality Unit Adviser | Ministry of Public Education | Costa Rica |
| National Coordinator of the Local Committees for Indigenous Education | Ministry of Public Education | Costa Rica |
| Social Worker | National Child Welfare Agency - PANI | Costa Rica |
| Responsible for International Affairs and External Cooperation | National Council of Persons with Disabilities - CONAPDIS | Costa Rica |
| Economic and Social Planner | National Institute of Statistics and Census - INEC | Costa Rica |

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| Design, Analysis and Output Coordinator, National Census | National Institute of Statistics and Census - INEC | Costa Rica |
| Ombudswoman | Ombudsman's Office | Costa Rica |
| Commissioner for Social Inclusion | Presidency of the Republic of Costa Rica | Costa Rica |
| Social worker | Public Library Limón Municipality | Costa Rica |
| Adviser | Vice-Ministry of Youth | Costa Rica |
| Vice-Minister | Vice-Ministry of Youth | Costa Rica |
| Parliamentarian | National Parliament | Costa Rica |
| Parliamentarian | National Parliament | Costa Rica |
| Senior Specialist and Coordinator of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment | UNDP | Costa Rica |
| Officer Democratic Governance | UNDP | Costa Rica |
| Programme Specialist for Social and Human Sciences and Gender Focal Point for Central America | UNESCO | Costa Rica |
| Senior Associate for Protection | UNHCR | Costa Rica |
| Programme Manager | UNICEF | Costa Rica |
| President | United Nations Permanent Forum on People of African Descent | Costa Rica |
| Resident Coordinator | United Nations Resident Coordinator Office | Costa Rica |
| Consultant | UNFPA Costa Rica Country Office | Costa Rica |
| Asociado de Programa UNFPA Costa Rica | UNFPA Costa Rica Country Office | Costa Rica |
| Programme Associate | UNFPA Costa Rica Country Office | Costa Rica |
| Head of Office | UNFPA Costa Rica Country Office | Costa Rica |
| Activist | Foro Afropanameño | Panama |
| Country Director | HIAS Panama | Panama |
| Staff | International Committee of the Red Cross | Panama |
| Staff | International Committee of the Red Cross | Panama |
| Staff | International Committee of the Red Cross | Panama |

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| Activist | Los Santos Afro-Santeño Family Centre | Panama |
| Activist | The Society of Friends of the West Indian Museum of Panama | Panama |
| President | Voces de Mujeres Afrodescendientes en Panama | Panama |
| Coordinator | Health Centre Santana | Panama |
| Coordinator Directorate for Medicines and Health Supplies | Ministry of Health | Panama |
| Maternal House Staff | Ministry of Health | Panama |
| Childhood and Adolescent Health Coordinator | Ministry of Health | Panama |
| Sexual and Reproductive Health Coordinator | Ministry of Health | Panama |
| Maternal house staff | Ministry of Health | Panama |
| Vice-Minister | Ministry of Health | Panama |
| Regional Subdirector | Ministry of Health | Panama |
| Regional Director | Ministry of Health | Panama |
| Pharmacist | Ministry of Health | Panama |
| Responsible for the Metropolitan Region | Ministry of Health | Panama |
| National Coordinator for the Elderly | Ministry of Social Development | Panama |
| Minister's Office | Ministry of Social Development | Panama |
| Social Policy Director | Ministry of Social Development | Panama |
| Comprehensive Care Centre Coordinator | Ministry of Women's Affairs | Panama |
| Minister | Ministry of Women's Affairs | Panama |
| International Cooperation Specialist | Ministry of Women's Affairs | Panama |
| International Cooperation Coordinator | Ministry of Women's Affairs | Panama |
| Human Rights Specialist | Ministry of Women's Affairs | Panama |
| Specialist | Ministry of Women's Affairs | Panama |
| Director | National Institute of Statistics and Census - INEC | Panama |
| Executive Director | National Secretariat for Afro-Panamanian Policy and Development | Panama |
| Minister | Social Development Ministry | Panama |
| Officer | UNHCR | Panama |
| Resident Coordinator | United Nations Resident Coordinator Office | Panama |
| Coordinator | UNOCHA | Panama |
| Gender Programme Specialist and Focal Point for Indigenous Peoples | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Regional Technical Adviser on Sexual and Reproductive Health | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Adolescents and Youth Specialist | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Adviser | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |

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| Regional Mobilization Adviser | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Programme Specialist | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Humanitarian Regional Adviser. Office in Charge – Venezuela Country Office | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Deputy Regional Director | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Project Coordinator | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Humanitarian Consultant | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Programme Specialist | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Regional Gender Adviser | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Population and Development Adviser | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Regional Director | UNFPA Latin American and the Caribbean Regional Office | Panama |
| Consultant | UNFPA Panama Country Office | Panama |
| Sexual and Reproductive Health Officer | UNFPA Panama Country Office | Panama |
| Representative | UNFPA Panama Country Office | Panama |
| Head of Office | UNFPA Panama Country Office | Panama |
| Consultant | UNFPA Panama Country Office | Panama |
| Youth Analyst | UNFPA Panama Country Office | Panama |
| Consultant Gender | UNFPA Panama Country Office | Panama |
| Consultant Communication | UNFPA Panama Country Office | Panama |
| Communication Officer | UNFPA Panama Country Office | Panama |
| Service User- Health Centre | Service User | Peru |
| Afro-Peruvian Teacher, Yapatera | Activist | Peru |
| Director | Asociación Benéfica PRISMA | Peru |
| Sub-director | Asociación Benéfica PRISMA | Peru |
| Specialist | Asociación Benéfica Prisma | Peru |
| Health for Vulnerable Population Specialist | Asociación Benéfica PRISMA | Peru |
| Programme Manager | Care Peru | Peru |
| Specialist | Care Peru | Peru |
| Programme Manager | Care Peru | Peru |
| Executive Director | PROMSEX | Peru |
| Director | Roundtable for the Fight against Poverty (MCLCP). | Peru |

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| Member | Roundtable for the Fight against Poverty (MCLCP). | Peru |
| Gender Coordinator | Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AECID) | Peru |
| Responsible for Indigenous Children and Young People | Centre of Indigenous Cultures of Peru (CHIRAPAQ) | Peru |
| MM ENoC Specialist - Executive Directorate Sexual and Reproductive Health | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Specialist - Health Centre Los Algarrobos Piura | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Specialist - Health Centre Los Algarrobos Piura | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Specialist - Health Centre Los Algarrobos Piura | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Gender-based Violence Specialist - Regional Directorate of Health Piura | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Specialist - Health Centre Los Algarrobos Piura | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Sexual and Reproductive Health Specialist - Health Centre Los Algarrobos Piura | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Executive Directorate Sexual and Reproductive Health | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Planning Specialist - Executive Directorate Sexual and Reproductive Health | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Sexual and Reproductive Health Specialist – Regional Directorate of Health Piura | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Director - Regional Directorate of Health Piura | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Adolescent and Youth Pregnancy Specialist – Executive Directorate Sexual and Reproductive Health | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Specialist - Yapatera Health Centre | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Family Planning Specialist - Executive Directorate Sexual and Reproductive Health | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Gender-based Violence Specialist - Executive Directorate Sexual and Reproductive Health | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Specialist - Health Centre Los Algarrobos Piura | Ministry of Health | Peru |
| Specialist | Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations | Peru |
| Specialist | Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations | Peru |
| Specialist | Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations | Peru |
| Specialist Women's Emergency Centre Morropon Piura | Ministry of Women and Vulnerable Populations | Peru |
| Coordinator | National Institute of Statistics and Technology | Peru |
| Specialist | National Institute of Statistics and Technology | Peru |

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| Director | National Institute of Statistics and Technology | Peru |
| Specialist | National Maternal and Perinatal Institute | Peru |
| Specialist | Ombudsman's Office | Peru |
| Head of International Cooperation Office | Ombudsman's Office | Peru |
| Director Women's Direction | Ombudsman's Office | Peru |
| Commissioner for Women's Rights | Ombudsman's Office | Peru |
| Director - Children and Adolescent's Direction | Ombudsman's Office | Peru |
| Judicial Gender Justice Commission | Justice Commission | Peru |
| Parliamentarian | National Parliament | Peru |
| Adviser | National Parliament | Peru |
| Protection Unit Coordinator | International Organization for Migration | Peru |
| Deputy Head of Office | OACNUCH | Peru |
| Resident Coordinator | Resident Coordinator Office | Peru |
| Head of Office | Resident Coordinator Office | Peru |
| Psychologist | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Psychologist | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Social Norms Analyst | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Interpreter | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Psychologist | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Brigadier | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Sexual and Reproductive Health Analyst | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Representative | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Project Coordinator | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Interpreter | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| RMB and Strategic Partnerships Specialist | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Deputy Representative | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Brigadier | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Gender Officer | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Consultant | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Psychologist | UNFPA Peru Country Office | Peru |
| Coordinator | Cotidiano Mujer | Uruguay |
| International Consultant | Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean (FILAC) | Bolivia |
| Chief Demography and Population Information Area | Latin American and Caribbean Demographic Centre | Chile |

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