



Case Studies of Best Practice Evaluations by UN Agencies in Asia and the Pacific

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FOREWORD

One of the biggest challenges in the world of development is to demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of our interventions in bringing change for people and the planet. Evaluations remain a critical tool for the assessment of our interventions, generating objective evidence, demonstrating relevant change, documenting lessons learned and making recommendations for the future.

With the impact of, and recovery from the pandemic, development is even more important and so is evaluating its impact. The staff and teams of the United Nations in Asia and the Pacific adapted and innovated to be able to provide information for decision makers to overcome the setbacks created by COVID19. The country offices in our region continued to undertake robust evaluations as we adjusted to a new reality where COVID19 has impacted the lives of all citizens, and more heavily women and children everywhere.

This report has been established with funding from UNDP and UNICEF – and is the result of a collaboration with UN agencies in Asia and the Pacific. We have endeavoured to bring to the reader's attention our experience over the last two years and reflect on successful examples that can be replicated globally. The report highlights case studies with key lessons learned that can be of use to development practitioners and all citizens to identify best practices in the post pandemic world. We hope this report provides inspiration for strong, locally adapted evaluations that can in turn be used by decision makers for effective programmes for people, prosperity, planet, and partnerships.

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INTRODUCTION

This report is a collaborative effort highlighting the best practices of evaluations undertaken by UN agencies in the Asia and the Pacific region during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim is to better understand how UN systems adapted to the changing environment during the 2020–2021 period—a period which saw unprecedented impacts on the conduct of evaluations—and to facilitate the growth and professionalism of evaluation practice in the region by examining selected UN agency evaluations from the region, showcasing good practices and demonstrating emerging techniques, tools and technologies.

Supported by the United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific (UNEDAP), a regional interagency network that brings together regional UN evaluation, the report demonstrates multidisciplinary and inter-agency learning across agencies and countries. UNEDAP currently has 10 member agencies with regional offices in Bangkok and 8 of these agencies submitted evaluations for analysis in this report: United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and World Food Programme (WFP).

The methodology entailed a desk-based review and analysis of pre-selected evaluations, followed by semi-structured interviews with managers of the evaluations, including UNEDAP members and Country Office colleagues, using the information gleaned to develop case studies of best practice and outline the key lessons learned. The target audience is evaluation officers and practitioners, as well as members of the development community.

By informing management and stakeholders of the emerging practices and conduct of evaluations, and by focusing in particular on the adjustments and innovation made necessary by widespread COVID-19 restrictions, it is hoped that this report will help institute, through the application of lessons learned, improvements in the design and approach to conducting evaluations during the pandemic and beyond.

CASE STUDIES

Partnership for a Tolerant, Inclusive Bangladesh (PTIB) Project



Photo © UNDP Bangladesh

This evaluation which received an Excellence Award from UNDP's Independent Evaluation Office, covers the project, *Partnership for a Tolerant, Inclusive Bangladesh (PTIB)*, and was commended for its preparatory work, as well as for turning COVID-19 restrictions into an advantage. The project was launched in 2017, in the wake of the 2016 Holey Artisan Bakery terrorist attack in Dhaka. A programme such as this, taking place at

Innovative Evaluations in 2020, partly in recognition of the way that elements of inclusion in general, and Leaving No One Behind (LNOB) and gender equality in particular, were strongly embedded in the Terms of Reference (ToR) and applied in all aspects of the evaluation. Care was taken to ensure women's voices were represented in the selection of interviewees, and there was a good balance in the selection of different voices to be captured.

Perhaps the real innovation here, though, was the way the

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