Baseline and evaluability assessment on generation, provision and utilization of data in humanitarian assistance

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Foreword

Data on persons affected by humanitarian crises (refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, host communities and others) is essential to make informed decision, deliver timely and effective humanitarian assistance and demonstrate accountability to rights holders, partners and donors. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic further underlines the need for accurate, country-owned and disaggregated data.

In a context marked by the multiplication of humanitarian crises, and building upon its widely recognized expertise and leadership in population data, UNFPA is increasingly contributing to the generation, the provision and the utilization of humanitarian data, notably through its support to the development of Common Operational Datasets for preparedness and contingency planning in high-risk countries.

This baseline study and evaluability assessment serves a dual purpose. Firstly, the report takes stock of the strategic positioning of UNFPA, provides a comprehensive mapping of UNFPA supported interventions and proposes key building blocks for the development of a theory of change for the work of UNFPA in the field of humanitarian data. Secondly, the report lays the groundwork for the forthcoming centralized evaluation of the UNFPA support to data for humanitarian action, through a determination of the scope as well as an assessment of the technical feasibility of the evaluation.

It is my hope that, besides the preparation of the evaluation to come, this report and, in particular, the 'options for action' which it contains, will be used by UNFPA business units and the Humanitarian Office in particular to inform the current and future programming of UNFPA with regard to humanitarian data.

The Evaluation Office would like to express its appreciation to Brian O' Callaghan and the evaluability assessment team for their expertise and their professional commitment in the conduct of this exercise.

I would also like to acknowledge the support and contributions from UNFPA colleagues who represented all levels of the organization in the reference group, for their valuable inputs as well as the time and efforts they have dedicated to the evaluability assessment.

Special thanks to my colleagues in the Evaluation Office, Hicham Daoudi (Evaluation Adviser), who managed the evaluability assessment on behalf of the Evaluation Office, and Sanne Frankin (Evaluation Analyst), for her support throughout the study process.

Marco Segone
Director, Evaluation Office

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Acronyms

3RP	Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
AOR	Area of Responsibility
APRO	Asia-Pacific Regional Office
ASRO	Arab States Regional Office
BNPB	Indonesia National Disaster Response Agency
CCA	Common Country Assessment
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CO	Country Office
COD	Common Operational Datasets
COD-AB	Common Operational Datasets-Administrative Boundaries
COD-HC	Common Operational Datasets-Humanitarian Coordination
COD-PS	Common Operational Datasets-Population Statistics
COVID	Coronavirus Disease
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EECARO	Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
ESA	East and Southern Africa
ESARO	East and Southern Africa Regional Office
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GBVIMS	Gender-Based Violence Information Management System
GIS	Geographic Information System
GPS	Global Programme System
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Coordination Team
HDX	Humanitarian Data Exchange
HFCB	Humanitarian and Fragile Contexts Branch
HSC	Humanitarian Senior Committee
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HNO	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HO	Humanitarian Office
HQ	Headquarters
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IASC	Inter-Agency Steering Committee
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IM	Information Management
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IP	Implementing Partner
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean

LACRO	Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office
LGBQTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer Transgender and Intersex
LoU	Letter of Understanding
MARA	Monitoring and Reporting Arrangements
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MIRA	Multi-Cluster/Sector Initial Rapid Assessment
MISP	Minimum Initial Service Package for sexual and reproductive health
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NO	National Officer
OCHA	Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PD	Population and Development
PDB	Population and Development Branch
PS	Population Statistics
PSB	Procurement Services Branch
RC	Resident Coordinator
RH	Reproductive Health
RMRP	Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan
RO	Regional Office
RRM	Rapid Response Mechanism
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SG	Secretary General
SIS	Strategic Information System
SP	Strategic Plan
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TA	Temporary Appointment
ToC	Theory of Change
TPM	Third-Party Monitor
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNHCT	United Nations Humanitarian Country Team
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WCA	West and Central Africa
WCARO	West and Central Africa Regional Office
WG	Working Group
WHO	World Health Organization

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this baseline study and evaluability assessment is to take stock of the current strategic positioning of UNFPA in the field of data for humanitarian assistance and to help inform the scope and overall approach of the forthcoming evaluation of UNFPA support to the generation, analysis, dissemination and utilization of data in humanitarian assistance.

The specific objectives of the assignment are to:

- Provide a comprehensive mapping of UNFPA strategies, programmes, interventions and partners as far as data for humanitarian assistance is concerned.

- Review existing structures, systems and processes pertaining to UNFPA work in data for humanitarian assistance, with a view to identifying strengths, weaknesses and potential gaps to be addressed.

- Critically analyse existing results frameworks pertaining to UNFPA humanitarian assistance data.

- Assess the feasibility and determine the requirements of the evaluation of the UNFPA work on data for humanitarian assistance (data availability, information needs, scope and tentative timeline).

Through this research, the baseline evaluability assessment covers the following questions:

1. To what extent are the intended results of UNFPA in the field of data for humanitarian assistance clearly articulated, at both the strategic and programmatic levels? Is there a theory of change (either explicit or implicit) pertaining to the work of UNFPA in the field of data for humanitarian assistance?

2. To what extent are UNFPA-supported interventions in the field of data for humanitarian assistance relevant to identified needs? To what extent are they aligned to the UNFPA strategic plan?

3. What are the information needs to be addressed within the framework of the evaluation on the support to the generation, provision and utilization of data in humanitarian assistance?

4. To what extent are adequate monitoring frameworks, processes and resources (including human resources) in place to enable data collection and the assessment of results?

The report provides an overview of who does what and where with respect to the generation, contribution to and/or use of humanitarian data by UNFPA in its programming over the geographical and temporal scope of the assessment, i.e., globally and from 2010 to 2020. The analysis is drawn from a variety of research methods, including an online desk review, review of materials provided by UNFPA country offices, survey and direct interviews with UNFPA staff and external partners/ stakeholders.

Key baseline findings

The following are some of the key features of UNFPA humanitarian data work globally identified as part of the baseline research.

- Humanitarian data initiatives to which UNFPA contributes are limited but growing, as are the synergies between development- and emergency-specific data.

- At country level, most UNFPA offices contribute to major interagency data-related initiatives, in accordance with Grand Bargain commitments to coordination. This includes interagency coordination bodies such as Information Management Working Groups.

- Data collected at sub-national and national levels is not necessarily fully reflected across the broader initiatives that aggregate data.

- A substantial proportion (almost one-third) of humanitarian response countries have no or limited dedicated humanitarian data staff, with a wide variation in skills and experience in this area exhibited across country offices.

- A strong positive example of coordination around humanitarian data is seen with respect to the UNFPA mandate area of gender-based violence, to a lesser (but still positive) extent with sexual and reproductive health and rights, and to the least extent with youth.

Key evaluability assessment findings

Articulation of the intended results of UNFPA in the field of data for humanitarian assistance

Finding 1: UNFPA has clearly articulated the role of data in programming across its strategic and operational plans over successive strategic planning cycles since at least 2009. While this role is predominantly in relation to population data for development, most plans also reference the role of data in humanitarian response.

Finding 2: While UNFPA applies a wide range of clear and measurable indicators across humanitarian programming and initiatives, these are strongly influenced by donor programming priorities. This leads to a reactive and fragmented approach to humanitarian data collection.

Finding 3: UNFPA supports, contributes to or utilizes a range of long-term development initiatives in country programmes that can support generation of humanitarian data. However, the refreshing of many of these datasets (once or twice per decade) is an inherent challenge to their usefulness for humanitarian response.

Finding 4: While the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan does contain references to data for crisis preparation and response, UNFPA has not, to date, institutionalized the practice of developing theories of change governing humanitarian response work. Few countries have theories of change associated with their programme plans, with limited references to humanitarian work and none to humanitarian data specifically.

Relevance of UNFPA-supported humanitarian data interventions to identified needs

Finding 5: There is some (limited) articulation of humanitarian data needs in UNFPA strategies at global and regional levels. This is changing over time to a more comprehensive acknowledgement of humanitarian data.

Finding 6: A wide range of humanitarian data initiatives by UNFPA country offices are geared towards the assessment/identification of humanitarian needs for preparation and response to humanitarian crises. Common Operational Datasets – Population Statistics and similar initiatives are viewed as increasingly essential to management and coordination of humanitarian response, crucially needed at the onset of crises.

Finding 7: Existing data initiatives are tailored towards and linked to the UNFPA main mandate areas of SRHR and GBV (and more recently, COVID-19), but less so for youth and vulnerable groups (elderly, people with disabilities, LGBQTI people), reflective of the limited amount of investment of UNFPA in these areas.

Information needs to be addressed by the evaluation of data in humanitarian assistance

Finding 8: The quantity, sectoral scope and geographical spread of humanitarian data initiatives being implemented by, on behalf of, and with the support of UNFPA at national, regional and global levels are adequate to support an evaluation of the generation, sharing and use of this data.

Finding 9: The strategic basis for humanitarian data – both retrospective and prospective – and the quantity of data across locations, sectors, time and groups can be captured via a testable theory of change. A draft of this theory of change accompanies this report.

Finding 10: In the absence of a definitive humanitarian data policy or a humanitarian data portal, data is collected via a range of methods and tools, analysed and collated into a wide and disparate range of databases, reports, dashboards, etc. This presents interoperability challenges and concerns on data security and safety.

Adequacy of monitoring structures, processes, resources for data collection and assessment of results

Finding 11: With a diversity of data systems, partners, tools and technologies across countries and regions, monitoring, data collection, management and results tracking is well embedded in UNFPA programming.

Finding 12: UNFPA integrates humanitarian components into wider monitoring frameworks and also has developed individual monitoring and results measurement frameworks specific to humanitarian response.

Finding 13: The number, types, seniority level and experience of MEL/data staff varies greatly across locations and time in UNFPA. Evidence indicates that it is determined by the availability of programme resources that can be invested in data staff and data initiatives.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: UNFPA has increased its focus on and guidance to country offices on humanitarian response, but incorporation of humanitarian data across global, regional, and national levels remains limited.

Conclusion 2: Humanitarian data efforts at UNFPA are not explicitly governed by a formal theory of change.

Conclusion 3: UNFPA conducts numerous humanitarian data interventions in preparedness, planning and response, some of which are substantive. However, quality and quantity challenges remain for all efforts within the spectrum of intervention.

Conclusion 4: The humanitarian data initiatives that UNFPA contributes to or implements cut across all UNFPA mandate areas.

Conclusion 5: UNFPA processes and systems at country level are in place to manage humanitarian data related to UNFPA mandate areas. However, these processes are not well documented, not optimal and often do not form part of a systematized country or regional-level strategy or monitoring, evaluating and learning framework.

Conclusion 6: Only a subset of UNFPA staff is skilled in the management of humanitarian data.

Conclusion 7: Issues around responsible data, data security and interoperability are not driven by centralized coordination, policies, tools or guidelines but are the responsibility of staff implementing the solutions.

Conclusion 8: The UNFPA humanitarian information management systems are fragmented and decentralized.

Short-term options for action by UNFPA

1. The Strategic Information System is currently the gateway for critical information about the profiles, performance and results of UNFPA departments. While potentially a comprehensive data tracking and analytical tool that covers all aspects of UNFPA management and programming (including humanitarian performance), it does not currently allow UNFPA staff to work closely with it to become an active tool allowing for data extraction to serve humanitarian programming needs. Analysis in the short term could assess the extent to which the SIS (or similar/successor system such as the Enterprise Resource Planning system) could be leveraged as a more practical tool for humanitarian data, or whether another solution would be more effective.

2. Key to the gathering and use of humanitarian data (and indeed all data) are considerations around data safety and security, particularly when the security situation on the ground becomes difficult and increasingly fragile. The absence of up-to-date, relevant, technically strong and specific direction, guidance and support to UNFPA responses may be exposing rights-holders to real risks. The extent to which such considerations form part of decision-making and the practicalities around humanitarian data is an option for immediate action and also an important part of the future evaluation.

3. Many UNFPA country offices have undertaken individual data initiatives related to COVID-19 to complement the UNFPA-supported programmatic interventions specific to COVID-19 in addition to the global-level dashboard. However, the assessment identified a lack of awareness of some country office staff members with regard to the specificities or implementation of various data initiatives. There is an opportunity for improved internal (and potentially external) communication around special projects of timely and global significance.

Future areas of inquiry

1.   There is clear evidence of the substantial breadth of the UNFPA humanitarian data ecosystem. At the same time, data that is collected at various levels in-country is not necessarily reflected in the broader initiatives that aggregate data. A future evaluation of humanitarian data should explore the scope for systematization and inclusion of such measures, both within UNFPA systems and in communication and coordination with national stakeholders (for crisis response and long-term development) and international aid agencies.

2.   Humanitarian data efforts at UNFPA are not explicitly governed by a formal theory of change but are referred to via elements in successive UNFPA strategic plans. However, these elements can form the basis of a testable, forward-looking global theory of change for humanitarian data across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and taking into account different standards that are applied to humanitarian data and population data. This should be a key pillar of the forthcoming evaluation.

3.   The future evaluation should explore UNFPA reliance on ad-hoc humanitarian data staffing resources secured through non-core funding (and the risks that accompany this). This aspect could also consider the implications on practical resource allocation for more explicit and robust humanitarian data workstreams for the future, including data related to monitoring of and reporting on humanitarian programming for both compliance and accountability purposes (including for strategic planning and accountability to affected populations).

4.   While the Population and Development Branch has conducted research on the application of COD-PS data sets by humanitarian stakeholders (during 2018-2020), further research on the direct application of these datasets by country offices by humanitarian stakeholders might prove useful to optimize their utility.

5.   The wide range of humanitarian data initiatives that UNFPA implements or contributes to across all mandate areas (albeit mostly SRHR and GBV) suggests a need for further research on how humanitarian data work could be mainstreamed across other thematic areas, given the strength of existing thematic networks within UNFPA on topics such as low fertility and ageing, adolescents and youth, disability and inclusion, and others.

6.   UNFPA stakeholders reported that, prior to the establishment of the Humanitarian Office, humanitarian data issues, spanning program, evaluation and population data, were routinely discussed at the Interdivisional Working Group on Humanitarian Action. Future evaluation should explore the current role of the IDWG-HA (and its synergy with the Humanitarian Office) with respect to humanitarian data work.

2. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

Valid, reliable, timely, culturally relevant, disaggregated and internationally comparable data are critical for the development and implementation of policies, monitoring of progress in the implementation of goals and ensuring that "no one is left behind".

UNFPA has provided support to longer-term development data initiatives (notably population censuses) since the 1970s. However, it was in 2005 when the UNFPA Executive Board emphasized its role in emergency and crisis situations regarding several elements: "with regard to meeting the needs of women and young people, addressing reproductive health and gender issues, including sexual violence, and generating accurate demographic and health data for humanitarian assistance activities and for rehabilitation and reconstruction programmes".[1]

The purpose of this evaluability assessment and baseline is to take stock of the current strategic positioning of UNFPA in the field of data for humanitarian assistance and to help inform the scope and overall approach of the forthcoming evaluation of UNFPA support to the generation, analysis, dissemination and the utilization of data in humanitarian assistance.

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The scope of the baseline and evaluability assessment has three dimensions:

- *Geographically:* Globally, and specifically for fragile-context countries or those that are (or have) experienced a humanitarian crisis – 80 countries in total. One country from each UNFPA region has been chosen as specific points of focus for the primary research: **Yemen, Turkey (within the framework of the Syria regional response), Indonesia, South Sudan, Venezuela** and **Cameroon**.

- *Thematically:* The assessment considers all types of humanitarian settings/contexts to which UNFPA contributes or has contributed a response, including IASC L1, L2 and L3/Scale-Up[2] emergencies, rapid onset emergencies, and protracted crises in terms of preparedness and response.

- *Temporally*: The assessment covers the 2010-to-2021 period, specifically dating from the publication of the 2010 *UNFPA Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations*. In some cases, documentation produced over the course of 2021 (i.e., as this analysis and report was being prepared) has been included.

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[1] UNFPA, Annual Session of the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA, 21 Jun 2015, 2015.
[2] The IASC Principles have agreed that major sudden-onset humanitarian crises triggered by natural disasters or conflict which require system-wide mobilization (so-called 'Level 3/L3' emergencies) are to be subject to a Humanitarian System-Wide Emergency to ensure a more effective response to the humanitarian needs of affected populations. In 2018, the IASC decided to no longer label as "L3" the major sudden-onset crises and/or substantial deterioration of a humanitarian situation triggered by natural and human-induced hazards or conflict, which require system-wide mobilization, but instead activate the newly created "Scale-Up" protocol.

The primary intended users of the baseline and evaluability assessment are:

- UNFPA Humanitarian Office (HO).
- UNFPA Technical Division.
- Policy Strategic Information and Planning Branch.
- UNFPA Regional Offices and Country Offices (ROs/COs).
- UNFPA senior management [Humanitarian Senior Committee (HSC)].

3. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

MAP: UNFPA Humanitarian Response Countries 2010-2020
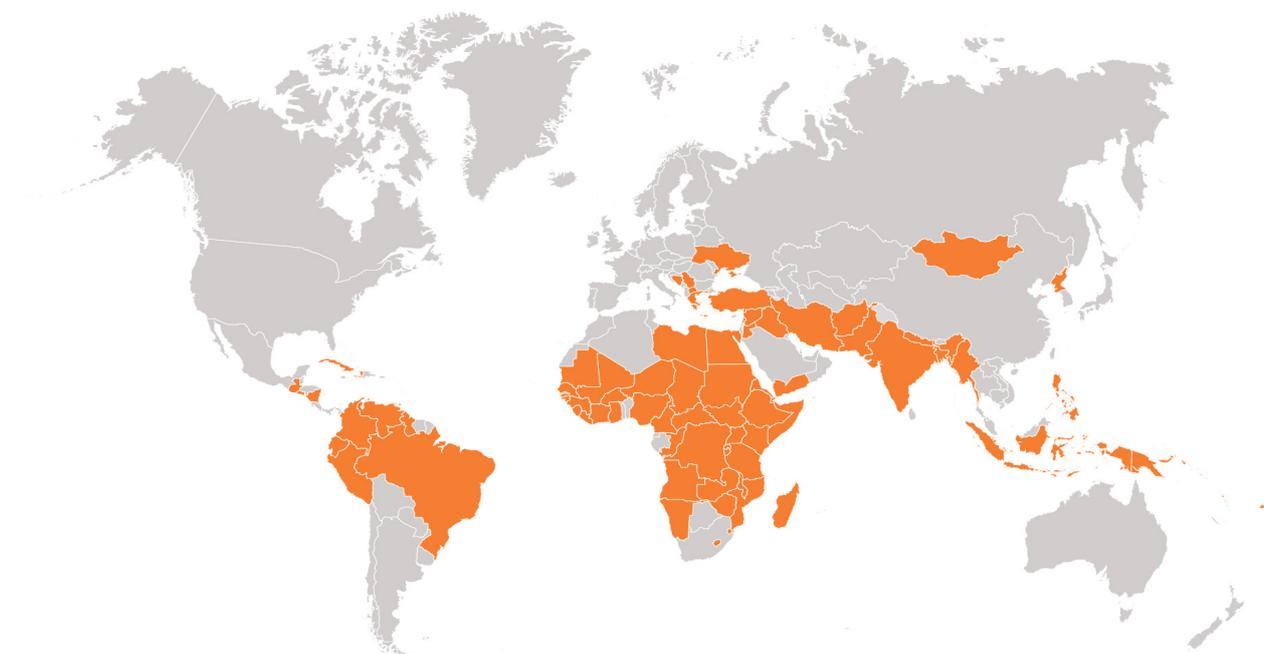
Map disclaimer: The designations employed and the presentation of material on the map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UNFPA concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Since 2010 – the starting point for this research – UNFPA has implemented humanitarian response activities in 80 separate countries or territories across its six regions. Some of these countries have transitioned from their emergency contexts while others continue to experience protracted crises. All of these countries contribute in some form to the body of data that is (or has been) generated for use in humanitarian preparedness or response activities.

As of 2021, UNFPA has an operational presence in 155 countries, territories, and other areas worldwide.[3] The UNFPA humanitarian appeal for 2021 anticipates that UNFPA will respond to emergencies in over 68 countries.[4]

The role of data in humanitarian response

Data plays a crucial role in delivering timely and effective humanitarian assistance. Data on persons affected by crises, (refugees, internally displaced persons, stateless persons, host communities and others), including their needs and services available to them, are derived from a range of sources[5] and capture a wide array of information including an ever-growing amount of metadata. Utilization of this data within the humanitarian response community leads to more informed and responsive decision-making, improved accountability and coordination, and increased transparency. The ongoing COVID-19 crisis further underlines the need for accurate, country-owned and disaggregated data.

In 2014, UNFPA noted that reliable data – "about the size, health, needs, income, housing, age and sex of affected populations – is crucial to planning an effective and efficient response to a crisis. However, crises often disrupt the systems that collect and archive such data". Further, UNFPA noted that the effectiveness of humanitarian programming is often hindered by a lack of timely, reliable data about crisis-affected populations, their needs, their protection and their ability to access aid. In 2011, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee adopted the Transformative Agenda, which focused on accountability, stronger leadership and improved coordination.

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[3] UNFPA Vision and Agenda 2030; see https://www.unfpa.org/strategic-plan
[4] https://www.unfpa.org/publications/HAO2021
[5] Including service delivery points, censuses, household surveys, rapid assessments and implementing partners.

This has strengthened the humanitarian community's commitment to ensuring that humanitarian action is based on reliable and mutually agreed-upon sources of data and information.[6]

Data in UNFPA

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme for Action, which underpins much of the work of UNFPA, noted that valid, reliable, timely, context-specific, appropriate, disaggregated and internationally comparable data are critical for the development and implementation of evidence-based policies. The Programme of Action has been supported by subsequent initiatives – including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their successor the Agenda 2030 and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – that emphasize the importance of timely, accurate, reliable, disaggregated data to monitor progress in the implementation of the SDGs and ensuring that "no one is left behind".

UNFPA has provided significant support to longer-term development data initiatives (notably population censuses) since the 1970s. In 2005, the UNFPA Executive Board acknowledged that "the growing recognition of data, gender and RH[7] needs in emergencies has resulted in increased demand for UNFPA technical and programme support in crisis situations."[8] The role of data in emergency situations is emphasized in all phases of emergencies: "Accurate demographic and health data are the cornerstone of effective humanitarian response, national reconstruction, emergency preparedness and conflict prevention." A special focus was set on recovery: "Reliable data is critical for effective recovery planning; UNFPA is a recognized leader in this area."[9]

UNFPA and other partners have undertaken various initiatives to improve the generation, provision, and usage of operational data, including the 2010 publication of *Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situation* and other similar guidance. UNFPA supports the development of Common Operational Datasets for preparedness and contingency planning in all high-risk countries. In 2018, UNFPA and OCHA formally agreed to leverage UNFPA expertise and partnerships to increase the availability and quality of COD-PS datasets around the world. As per the agreement, UNFPA Regional Offices together with HQ and CO colleagues will identify the best available sex- and-age disaggregated dataset for each country and discuss their findings with OCHA's IM at the global, regional (and country) level. Through close coordination at the global level, UNFPA and OCHA provide teams for quality assurance and the agreed dataset is then presented to the IMWG/IM network for further validation and adoption. If adopted, the dataset becomes the official COD-PS for a particular country and is uploaded to HDX. In most cases, the COD-PS will be publicly available at HDX. The IM network should include representative(s) from UNFPA; if this is not possible, UNFPA should always be consulted in regards to the population statistics COD[10]. Based on these datasets, UNFPA provides support for the estimated needs of people likely to be affected by a crisis – such as women of reproductive age, children, pregnant women and girls, youth and adolescents and elderly persons. During preparedness/post recovery, UNFPA also helps build the capacity of partners to use reliable data sources for planning. During acute phases of emergencies, UNFPA participates in the implementation of the Multisectoral Initial Rapid Assessments and helps design and implement sector-specific assessments[11] including the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for sexual and reproductive health that offers a MISP calculator, which has been widely used by UNFPA country offices as a tool for estimating population SRHR needs. During crises, UNFPA also leads or contributes to the GBV Information Management System, Common Country Assessments and Humanitarian Needs Overviews.

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[6] https://www.unfpa.org/resources/assessment-emergencies
[7] Reproductive health.
[8] UNFPA's Response to Humanitarian Crisis, Transition and Recovery: Proposal to the Executive Committee. 1st June 2005
[9] UNFPA Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations, 2010
[10] https://humanitarian.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/imtoolbox/pages/2493349951/Population+Statistics+COD+COD-PS
[11] https://www.unfpa.org/resources/assessment-emergencies

4. METHODOLOGY

Approach

To achieve the objectives of the baseline and evaluability assessment, the research team, in consultation with the assessment reference group and the UNFPA Evaluation Office, developed an analytical framework and associated methodological approach (articulated within the inception report) that detailed the key assessment questions (as outlined in the terms of reference) alongside assumptions, illustrative indicators and means of verification (i.e., research tools). The analytical framework is available in Annex 5: Analytical framework.

The overall research approach to this baseline and evaluability assessment was based on an in-depth investigation of the UNFPA data ecosystem, building on a desk review-based outline mapping undertaken during the inception phase of the research. The desk review identified UNFPA humanitarian data policies, stakeholders and data initiatives, and informed the design of the research tools and targets for the main research phase.

Subsequent review of a wide range of data and documentation available online provided further contextual analysis, including preparation of 80 country profiles[12] that summarized key humanitarian data outputs.

In line with the agreed analytical framework, the research team adopted following research approaches:

1. An in-depth desk review/mapping of stakeholders, databases/data sets, documents, etc., related to humanitarian programming and humanitarian data at UNFPA at the global, regional and country levels since 2010. This was conducted for all humanitarian response countries during this timeframe and in more depth among six case study countries.

2. Key informant interviews with representatives of UNFPA, partners and other stakeholders at global, regional and country levels.

3. An online survey with key pre-identified UNFPA staff in each country office responsible for humanitarian programming within the assessment timeframe identified during the data and stakeholder mapping process.[13]

A detailed description of the tool design and application is presented in the assignment inception report.

Sampling

The research team utilized a three-step sampling approach:

Step 1: Identification of all UNFPA operational countries since 2010. (This comprised approximately 150 countries.)

Step 2: Identification of all countries that experienced a humanitarian response since 2010. These countries (80 in total) were the primary sample among which the global-level research was conducted and to which secondary (desk review) and primary (survey) tools were applied to build a comprehensive map of humanitarian data-related activities.

Step 3: Selection of six case study countries representing the six UNFPA regions by the assignment reference group. Cameroon, Indonesia, South Sudan, Turkey's cross-border response on Syria,[14] Venezuela, and Yemen were selected for more in-depth research based on the following criteria:

- Location: One per UNFPA region of operation.
- Type: Conflict, natural disaster, complex, sudden or slow onset.
- Size: Large, multi-agency international – i.e., full L3 (or Scale-Up) multi-agency mobilization – to smaller national responses with in-country actors only.
- Duration: Prolonged responses (5+ years) to smaller, discrete responses (≤ 1 year).

These countries were selected to best represent the aims and objectives of this assessment. The key objective of the case study approach was to complement the overall global investigation of the UNFPA data ecosystem with more comprehensive and context-specific data on the reality of humanitarian data in real-world responses. The selected case study countries allowed the research team to collect data from the most substantial, best-resourced and longest-lasting UNFPA humanitarian responses (e.g., Syria or Yemen), as well as responses to recently emerged crises (e.g., Venezuela), more targeted and nationally focused responses (e.g., Indonesia), and more complex, long-lasting, and under-resourced crises (e.g., Cameroon).

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[12] These were produced for each country (80 in total) in which UNFPA mounted a humanitarian response between 2010 and 2020.

[13] As some UNFPA offices (e.g., the Asia-Pacific Sub-Regional Office) are responsible for multiple country programmes, they were not asked to complete multiple surveys, hence the discrepancy between the 75 survey countries and 80 desk review countries.

[14] While Syrian refugees are found in more than one hundred countries, Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan and Egypt have hosted millions for a decade. The Regional Refugee and Response Plan was established in 2015 to provide support to refugees and vulnerable host communities by channeling aid. This baseline reviews the efforts of the Turkey CO's efforts and the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2533 authorized cross-border assistance via Turkey's Bab al-Hawa border crossing into northwest Syria.

TABLE 1: List of Case Study Countries

Cameroon (West and Central Africa region)	**Turkey** (Eastern Europe and Central Asia region)
Indonesia (Asia-Pacific region)	**Venezuela** (Latin American and the Caribbean region)
South Sudan (East and Southern Africa region)	**Yemen** (Arab States region)

FIGURE 1: Assessment Sample Design

150+ — 150+ UNFPA Operational Countries

80 - 75 — Desk Review of 80 Humanitarian Response Countries / Online Survey of 75 Response Countries

6 — 6 Case Study Countries
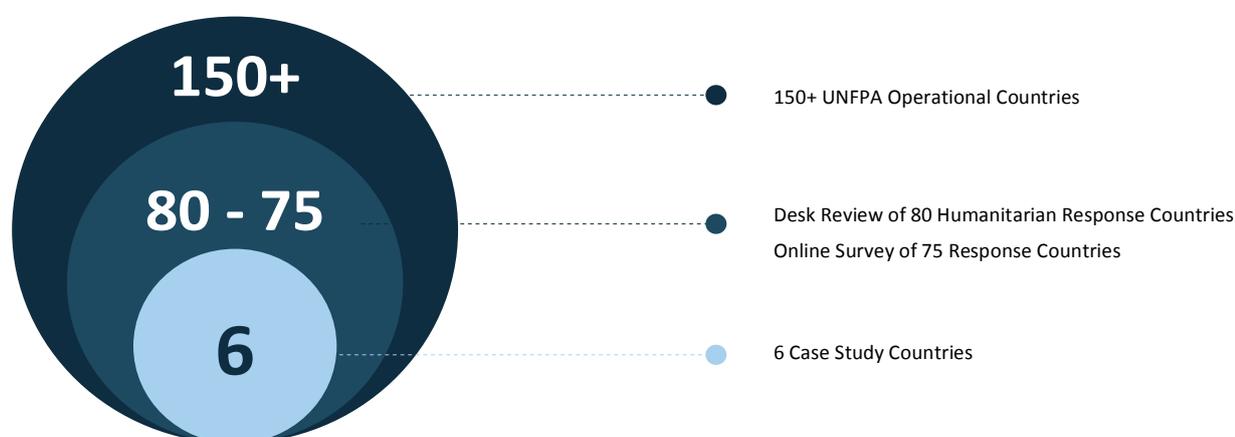
Data collection outcomes

A summary of data collection activities is available in Table 2, below.

Key informant interviews were conducted with a total of 60 individuals from UNFPA and key data partners across the six countries, the six regional offices and the UNFPA Humanitarian Office between February and June 2021. The semi-structured interviews focused on assessment questions and assumptions and questions were tailored to the key informant's experience. Interviews were held with a mix of individual and multiple respondents.

Interview guides and a full list of key informants interviewed are available in Annex 4b: Key informant interview questions – UNFPA staff and Annex 4c: Key informant interview questions – Non-UNFPA stakeholders.

An online survey was administered to pre-identified UNFPA staff in each country office responsible for humanitarian programming within the assessment timeframe. Survey responses represented the 75 targeted countries.[15] The online survey is available in Annex 4a: Online survey.

TABLE 2: Data Collection Activities [16]

|	
Number of countries surveyed	**75 (survey responses were mandatory, so a 100% response rate from the 75 targeted countries was achieved)**
Number of people interviewed	60 (via 38 interviews)
Number of desk review countries	80
Institutions included in the assessment interviews	UNFPA, UNOCHA, UNHCR, national data partners

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[15] As some UNFPA offices (e.g., the Asia-Pacific Sub-Regional Office) are responsible for multiple country programmes, they were not asked to complete multiple surveys, hence the discrepancy between the 75 survey countries and 80 desk review countries.

[16] A list of key informants, documentation and data sources, and list of countries covered by the assessment are available in the annexes.

Constraints/limitations and mitigations

- The major limitation to this baseline and evaluability assessment was the remote nature of the research methodology necessitated by the COVID-19 travel restrictions. Thus, country visits to the six case study countries and to UNFPA head offices were not planned. The inability of the research team to travel to any of the UNFPA operational countries, or indeed regional or division headquarters, imposed challenges in ensuring quality and quantity of data for the assessment.

- All interviews were undertaken virtually via Skype/Microsoft Teams and Zoom, and follow-up discussions were held via email. In some cases, several follow-up interviews were conducted to mitigate the challenges of access to individuals. This approach, although time-consuming (insofar as additional time was required in scheduling and rescheduling interviews) proved to adequately mitigate this challenge.

- Remote data collection meant that primary data was prone to availability bias – those stakeholders that could be contacted remotely may have been over-represented in the sample of data sources. To mitigate this, the assessment team undertook the following strategies:

    o Use of a combination of primary and secondary data collection approaches to maximize opportunities for triangulation of findings from different sources.
    o A focus of the study on summative research that builds on existing data, documentary evidence, systems, etc., rather than formative research that is more susceptible to bias.
    o Consistent and diligent engagement and follow-up with stakeholders to ensure comprehensiveness in the surveying and mapping components.

5. BASELINE ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

5.1. MAPPING OF UNFPA HUMANITARIAN DATA-RELATED INTERVENTIONS

Overview

This section of the assessment provides an overview of WHO does WHAT and WHERE with respect to the generation, contribution to and/or use of humanitarian data by UNFPA in its programming over the geographical and temporal scope of the assessment, i.e., globally and from 2010 to 2020. The analysis is drawn from a variety of research methods including an online desk review, review of materials provided by UNFPA country offices, survey and direct interviews with UNFPA staff and stakeholders. The section provides a detailed analysis and presentation of findings related to the specific baseline assessment assumptions articulated in the analytical framework.

There is a considerable body of data-related initiatives being conducted by, or on behalf of, UNFPA across humanitarian responses worldwide. These initiatives contribute – to a greater or lesser extent – to the body of humanitarian response data available to UNFPA and its partners to plan, implement, analyse and refine their humanitarian response programming. These initiatives represent a very substantial amount of data that cuts across the full humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

The figure below details the major humanitarian-related data initiatives that UNFPA leads or supports. This representation aims to summarize the array of humanitarian data initiatives worldwide.

FIGURE 2: Humanitarian Data Initiatives – What and Where

	Sub-national	National	Regional	Global
Internal (mostly UNFPA generated and used)	SIS			
	MISP		Humanitarian Master Sheet	
		MPRs/MPAs		
	UNFPA COVID-19 Dashboard			
	IP surveys and reports	Donor reports	Regional strategies	Global thematic evaluations
	Digital surveys	CPD results frameworks	Regional evaluations	Meta evaluations
	Qualitative surveys	CPAP results frameworks		Global Programming System
	Hotlines	CPEs		ATLAS
	Suggestion boxes	COARs		Humanitarian Dashboard
	Project results frameworks	SOPs (GBV)		UNFPA Transparency Portal
	Project-based evaluations			
External (UNFPA jointly generated and/or published externally)		CODs		
		MRSPs		
		UNDAFs		
		CCAs		
		GBVIMS		
		MARA		
		Voices		
		UNHCR registration data		
				COVID-19 Global HRP
	GBV dashboards	5W/4W	3RP	MIRA
	SRH dashboards	HNO	RMRP/R4V	Displacement Tracking Matrix
	WGSS dashboards	HRP		INFORM index
	Social service dashboards	National data portals		
	Humanitarian dashboards	Censuses		*Preparedness*
	Geo-mapping initiatives (GIS, satellite, remote)			*Response*
	COVID-19 monitoring/dashboards			*Both*

However, it cannot capture the substantial number of smaller, less publicized, national, sub-national or regional initiatives that UNFPA country offices may undertake or participate in (often using a variety of different data platforms, on an ad-hoc basis, often lacking standardized tools and structured implementation).

The range of individual sub-national sectoral data initiatives reviewed as part of the six case study country analyses, in addition to the substantial number of additional initiatives noted by respondents to the online survey (summarized in Table 3 below) is clear evidence of the breadth of the UNFPA humanitarian data ecosystem.

The data that is collected at sub-national and national levels is not necessarily fully reflected across the broader initiatives that aggregate data. For example, outcome-level data collected as part of donor reporting or small-scale surveys or evaluations will not be reflected in organization-wide data systems such as the Strategic Information System (SIS) or the Humanitarian Master Sheet. In addition, there are currently ongoing exciting and innovative data initiatives undertaken by UNFPA COs (notably the current One Data Indonesia initiative, which is founded on the importance of quality and credible information that is easily accessible to the public) and future evaluation of humanitarian data can explore the scope for systematization and inclusion of such measures.

Interagency global humanitarian data initiatives

Desk research conducted for the 80 country profiles revealed that the humanitarian data initiatives to which UNFPA contributes are limited but growing, as are the synergies between development and emergency-specific data. For the purpose of this assignment, a humanitarian 'data initiative' is understood to involve internal UNFPA or interagency coordination and management of information, within UNFPA sectors of expertise (Gender Equality, SRHR, Population and Development), to allow for informed and evidence-based decision-making, communication and cooperation among humanitarian actors in preparation for and during crises.

As illustrated in the chart below, the most common initiatives as of 2020 were the increasing number of countries represented in the Common Operational Datasets (COD) including the COD for Administrative Boundaries and the COD-Population Statistics (COD-PS), the latter to which UNFPA is the main contributor (see box, below).

This is a fast-growing area for UNFPA, which aims to support both development and humanitarian initiatives across the United Nations system. A review of the COD/COD-PS updates by country[17] indicates that both of the datasets were in place in over half of the countries as of 2020.[18] Compared to 2019, when UNFPA produced an average of 10 COD-PS updates and 18 in 2020, this is strong evidence of the fast-paced acceleration of interest (and harnessing of internal expertise) in the update of operational data to support UNFPA programming. UNFPA also contributes to the GBVIMS as well as HRPs, HNOs (the latter two instruments are only prepared in countries where there is a significant humanitarian response by many actors). Despite the limited prevalence of these initiatives in aggregate, it is important to note that not all humanitarian crises warrant the development of HNOs/HRPs. As noted above, more than 50 per cent of the countries in which UNFPA has mounted responses since 2010 have had support for five years or less and, in

> **Common Operational Datasets**
>
> The CODs are authoritative reference datasets needed to support operations and decision-making for all actors in a humanitarian response. CODs are 'best available' datasets that ensure consistency and simplify the discovery and exchange of key data and enable a common operational picture (COP) of the crisis.
> The CODs reduce duplication of work on baseline data by partnering organizations and facilitate informed decision-making both pre- and post-crisis.
> The **COD-Population Statistics (PS)**, which UNFPA is heavily invested and engaged in, are the baseline population figures of a country pre-crisis situation, often developed by a government during a census, but can also be derived from estimated figures. Population statistics are used to estimate the potential number of affected people or as a reference/resource in the development of needs assessments and in analysis. COD-PS datasets can be linked by database or GIS to COD-administrative boundary (COD-AB) datasets, when available.
> In an ongoing emergency, COD-PS are specifically used:
>
> - To estimate the potential # of affected people by all partners (UN and NGOs) who are responding.
> - To plan emergency assistance to pregnant women in areas affected by a crisis.
> - As a basis for another of the three core CODs: the humanitarian profile COD.
> - As a reference/resource in the development of needs assessments and in the analysis.
> - As a framework for data collection.
> - To gain understanding of population breakdown (sex/age) to prepare and respond appropriately.

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[17] https://cod.unocha.org/

[18] It should be noted that, at least in operational response countries, UNFPA must provide a substantial investment towards the preparation of the COD-PS (as compared to countries in which humanitarian operations are focused on preparedness). Constructing and maintaining high-quality humanitarian datasets in operational response contexts is substantially more technically challenging, labor-intensive and politically sensitive. In some contexts, such as Cameroon and South Sudan, in the absence of updated censuses/population censuses but ongoing population movement, efforts to implement hybrid censuses and provide population estimates are coupled with years of high-level trust building with government.

many cases, responses are to different crises at different times and are not single protracted crises that would trigger the requirement for an HNO/HRP.

As part of the baseline assessment, a country-by-country scanning of key humanitarian data initiatives indicates that there is an increasing number of interagency initiatives to which UNFPA country programmes have been, and are, contributing to over the past decade. The research involved a review of the year-by-year availability and update of data available on the public portals and websites.

One key initiative not included in the figure below is related to COVID-19 reporting: the COVID-19 global HRP, which all but two of the countries under study responded to in 2020.

FIGURE 3: UNFPA Response Countries with Major Humanitarian Data Instruments (From Desk Review)[19]
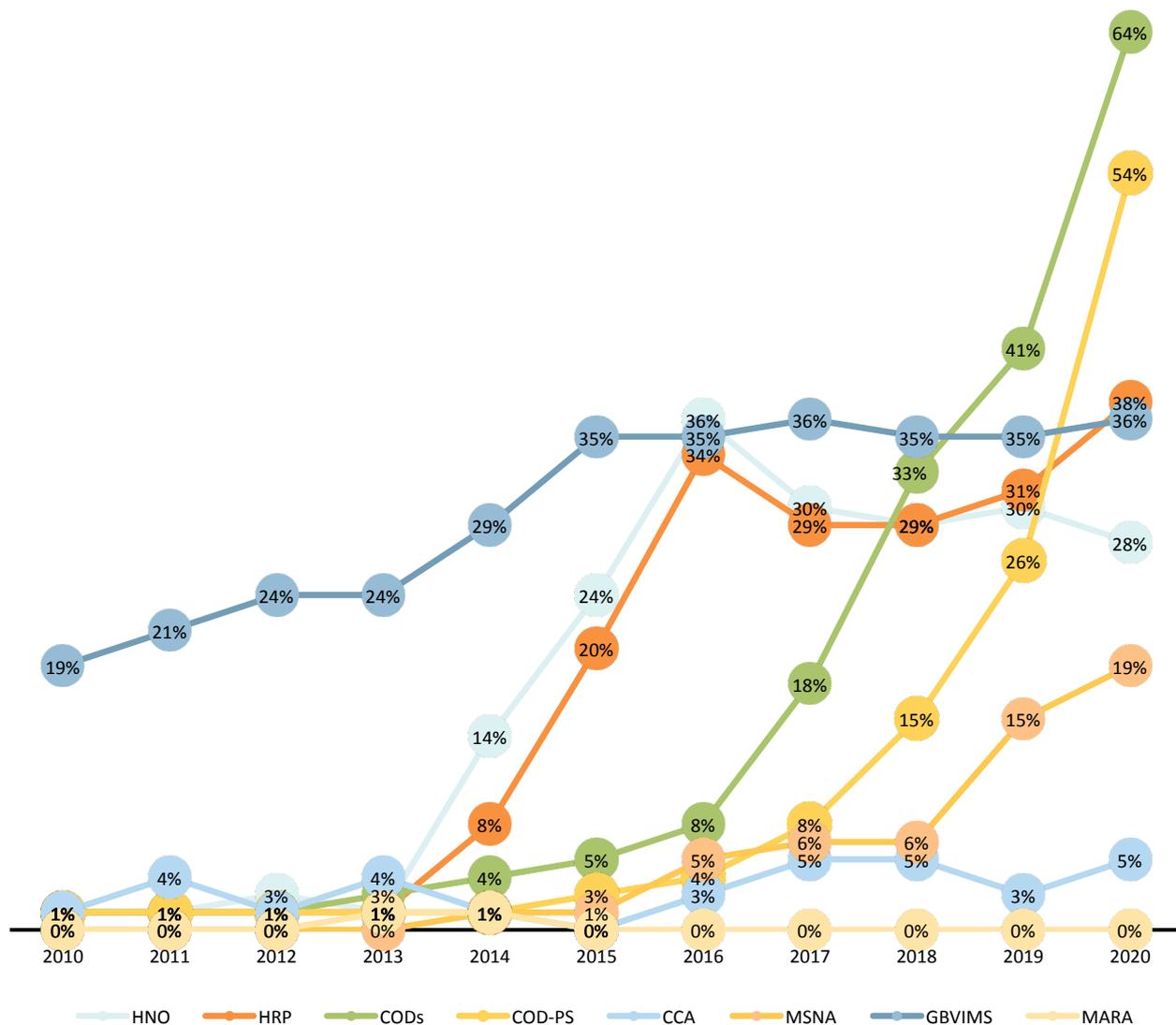
[19] The chart refers to the three mandatory CODs (population statistics, administrative boundaries and humanitarian caseload) for all humanitarian settings) and is based on a scanning of COD, COD-PS portals and HNO, HRP, etc., reporting from OCHA sources between 2010 and 2020. The chart also references the availability of HNOs/HRPs in each of the countries in which UNFPA has operated since 2010 as well as the availability of MSNAs, GBVIMS, the MARA and CCA in each of these countries, based upon a similar scanning. Variations in administrative management of these resources may explain discrepancies between absolute numbers. The individual case studies developed as part of this assignment provide more detailed information on UNFPA contributions to each of these data initiatives.

The figure above shows the growth in the number of humanitarian data initiatives to which UNFPA country programmes have been and are contributing. The figure charts the availability of these initiatives through a scan of the relevant portals that have hosted the individual initiatives over the past decade.

The chart below illustrates this trend between 2010 and 2020 for a selection of data initiatives.

Only one-quarter of response countries were recorded as having supported any of the above-mentioned interagency humanitarian data initiatives as of 2010, but there has been a steady rise since then, particularly since 2014/2015. By 2019, all active response countries were publishing at least one or more major data initiatives, and the number of countries with five or more increased dramatically in 2019/2020, a reflection of the coordinated global response to the COVID-19 crisis.

UNFPA contributions to interagency global humanitarian initiatives

The following chart indicates the individual initiatives that UNFPA country offices (self) reported their contribution to interagency global humanitarian data initiatives via the online survey. The results are somewhat in line with the desk review results, albeit with a significantly higher level of reported contribution to HRPs (85 per cent in 2020) – this may be a result of respondents counting "non-standard" interagency response plans rather than formal HRPs or HNOs and staff involved in the survey being unaware of some ongoing initiatives – specifically the preparation of COD/COD-PS outside a humanitarian response context.[20] As noted above, not all humanitarian responses warrant the preparation of a HRP, whereas COD/COD-PS are prepared for countries on an operational as well as preparedness basis (30 active operational vs 130 preparedness countries as of 2021), a considerable investment of time and technical resources.

FIGURE 4: Data Initiatives Per Response Country 2010-2010 (Desk Review Data)

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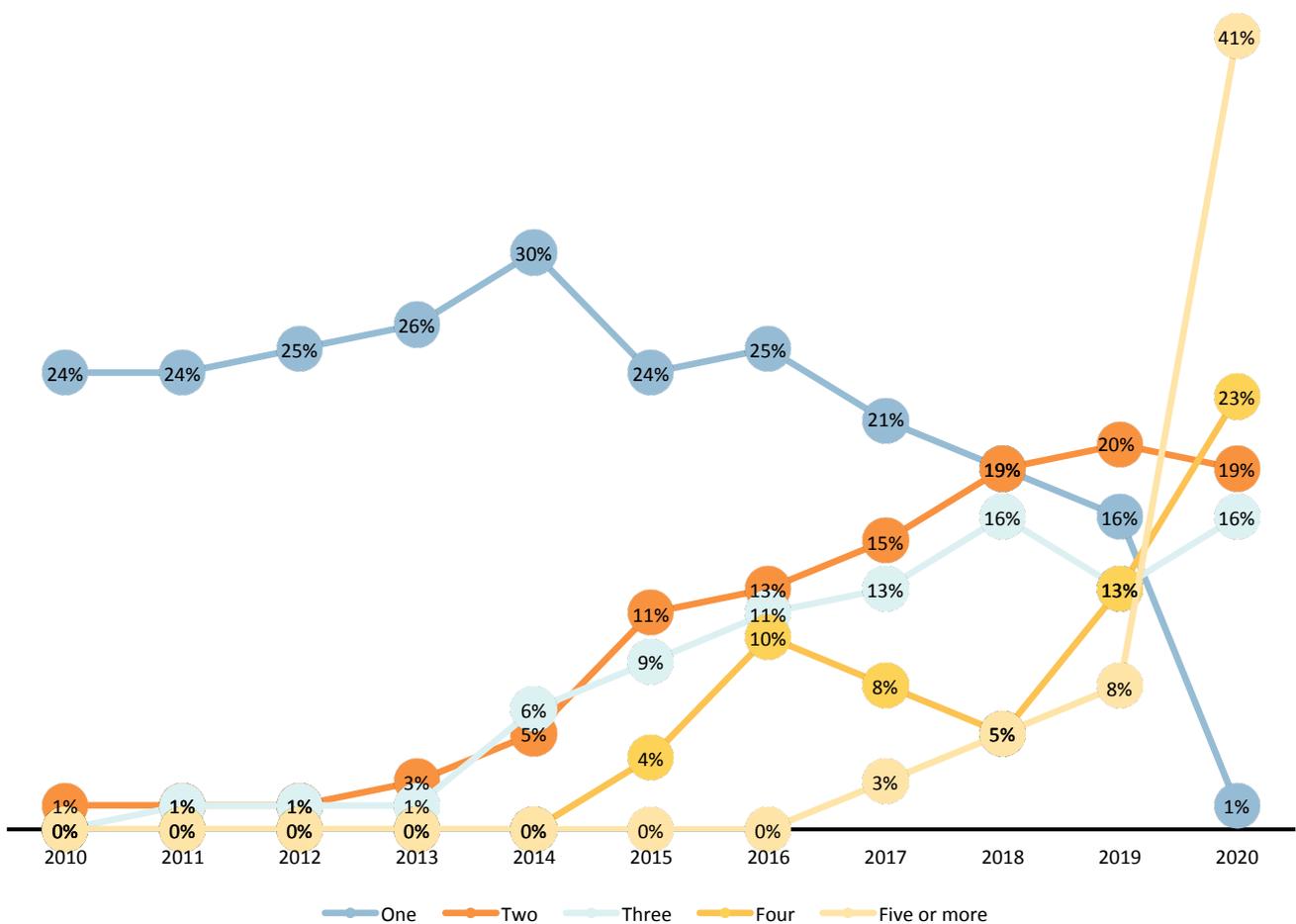
[20] For example, in 2020, OCHA published an interagency "Needs and Priorities" plan for the DPRK for the 2020 humanitarian programme cycle which, while not a formal HRP, was recorded by the DPRK country office in the online survey as counting against this measure.

MSNA — 41% (2019 or earlier), 55% (Currently 2020-2021)
HRP/3RP — 45% (2019 or earlier), 85% (Currently 2020-2021)
MARA — 17% (2019 or earlier), 23% (Currently 2020-2021)
COD — 16% (2019 or earlier), 29% (Currently 2020-2021)
GBVIMS — 23% (2019 or earlier), 51% (Currently 2020-2021)
HNO — 47% (2019 or earlier), 68% (Currently 2020-2021)
UNFPA Covid-19 Dashboard — 0% (2019 or earlier), 83% (Currently 2020-2021)
Hum.Master Sheet — 52% (2019 or earlier), 91% (Currently 2020-2021)

■ 2019 or earlier   ■ Currently (2020-2021)
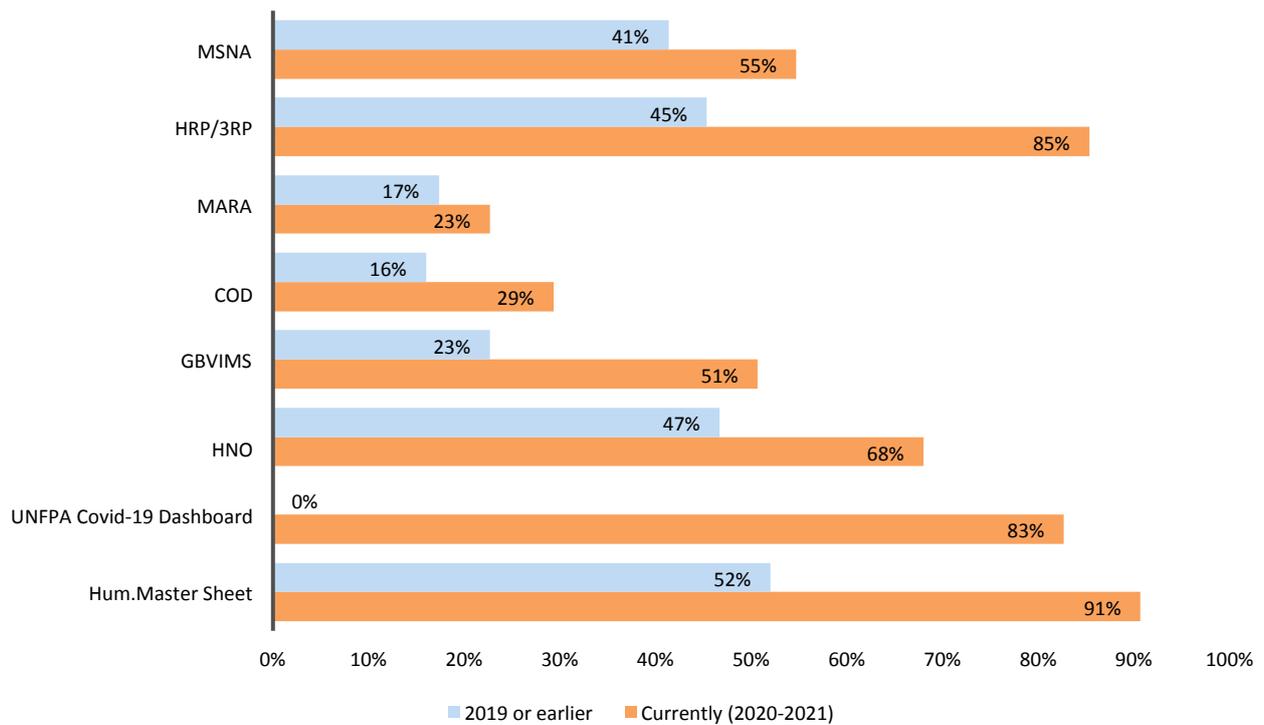
This reporting by country offices includes data provided for the UNFPA COVID-19 dashboard and the Humanitarian Master Sheet, two important internal tracking systems for basic data related to humanitarian response activities. All countries with active humanitarian responses noted contributing to the Humanitarian Master Sheet, which provides a biannual update on key humanitarian management indicators (discussed further below). The country case studies explore the contributions by UNFPA in each of the following data initiatives listed below.

UNFPA contributions to national-level initiatives

At the country level, most UNFPA offices contribute to major interagency data-related initiatives, in accordance with Grand Bargain commitments to coordination. There are also many national and sub-national initiatives that are in many cases varied and disparate and they use a range of different modalities and technologies to achieve their aims. However, there is some congruence in the types of data collected and the means for collection, analysis and reporting. Table 3 below presents a non-exhaustive sample of the various initiatives cited by country offices.

TABLE 3: Humanitarian Data Initiatives Reported by COs (via Online Survey Data)

Examples of humanitarian data initiatives reported by UNFPA country offices
International/Regional/Global Initiatives
One UN COVID-19 response
Voices from Syria (related to the HNO/HRP)
INFORM Index
Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V)
Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (RMRP)
WHO SRH indicators in humanitarian setting
"REACT" group, an interagency coordination process using the MIRA
Multi-cluster/sector initial rapid assessment (MIRA)
5W/4W/3W matrix
One UN Report
Grupo de Trabajo de Refugiados y Migrantes (GTRM)
Humanitarian dashboards
Interagency Working Groups
GBV Subcluster/sector, Health Cluster/Sector Bulletins
UN Inter-Agency Humanitarian Working Group
Humanitarian/subcluster dashboards
Information Management Working Group
National/Country Office-Led Initiatives
Pocket book on data collection during preparedness, response
Development of one data disaster framework
KIRA - Kenya Inter-Agency Rapid Assessment
Rapid Response Mechanism
Report of SG on assistance to refugees returns and IDPs in Africa
Health and Protection Sectors Situational Reports
Geo-mapping of SRH and GBV vulnerabilities

FIGURE 6: Reproductive Health Working Group Service Mapping Dashboard – Turkey Cross-Border
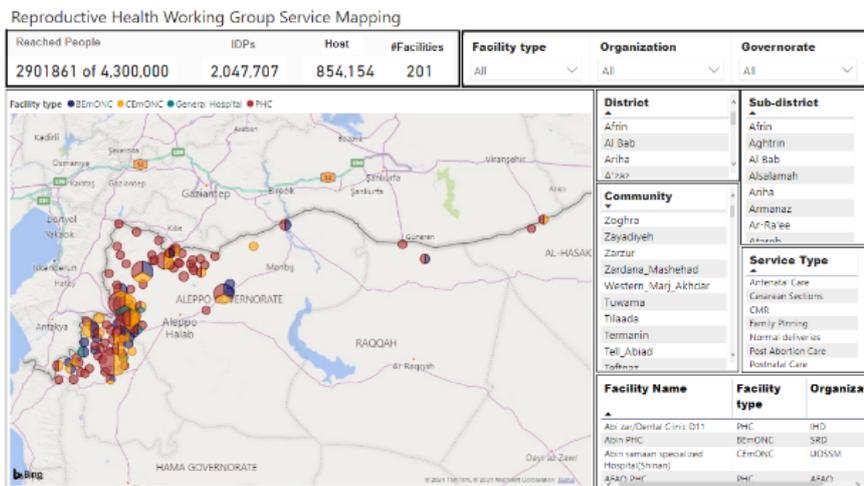
More in-depth research at the individual country level further illustrates the breadth and complexity of the humanitarian data initiatives for which UNFPA is responsible, contributes to or substantially utilizes. For example, UNFPA is responsible for or contributes to a range of data initiatives for the Turkey humanitarian response to the Syrian crisis (both the refugee response within Turkey and cross-border response). The figure below is one of a range of dashboards maintained that track services, activities, beneficiaries and other metrics to facilitate information flows between humanitarian actors.

Similar initiatives have been noted across all six case study countries, tailored to the country contexts. A common feature of these applications is that they are largely standalone initiatives insofar as they utilize different datasets or different technologies or are designed within different national frameworks or strategies and have different audiences.

While many of the individual initiatives can be linked to via external online portals such as the OCHA-managed Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX), the different circumstances that prevail across different countries and regions are a challenge to the various initiatives being substantially integrated as part of any overarching humanitarian data strategies. Country offices present themselves as being largely accountable to their national priorities first (i.e., the country programme document (CPD), donors, coordination mechanisms such as the cluster/sector or humanitarian country team and/or government partners), then joint response mechanisms, then to UNFPA strategic plans or approaches.

UNFPA contributions to regional- and global-level initiatives

At regional and global levels, UNFPA implements or contributes to several humanitarian data initiatives. The type of initiative or national-level data they aggregate and are built on, however, is predominantly activity or output level, with little capacity (as yet) to systematically (i.e., beyond ad-hoc studies or evaluations) provide information on humanitarian outcomes or impacts that can be communicated at a global scale.

The research team noted two examples of where these various applications are part of an integrated regional system: the Syria regional response and the Inter-Agency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants from Venezuela (R4V)[21].

The most significant example of regional coordination managed by UNFPA is with respect to the Syria response, which is coordinated from the UNFPA Hub in Amman, Jordan. This was established in 2013 to facilitate more effective UNFPA representation at the different humanitarian coordination forums, to increase the effectiveness and visibility of humanitarian response activities and to enhance resource mobilization efforts.

A 2019 evaluation of the UNFPA response to the Syria crisis noted that the "Whole of Syria programmes (Syria Country Office and cross-border) benefited from investment in data management and information management at the regional response hub-level for GBV".[22]

Rapid Response Mechanism in Yemen

Hosted by UNFPA, this mechanism is in operation in most districts in Yemen (328 of a total of 333 districts) where data is hosted both on administration and facility level with an online and real-time dashboard that collects first-hand information on the displaced populations. This data is then used to target front-line assistance (commodities/supplies, food, cash) to the most at-need populations. The RRM is led and hosted by UNFPA in coordination with UNICEF and WFP to provide support to the newly displaced IDP population and to inform multiple indicators around their movement and vulnerability.

One Data Indonesia/Satu Data Indonesia disaster framework

UNFPA collaborates with the Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) on national coordination on "one-population data" and its application for cross-ministerial development planning. UNFPA assists in technical support and coordinating collaboration between BNPB and BPS Indonesia, as well as relevant stakeholders from other line ministries and agencies. The **Indonesia One Disaster Data** covers data management and statistics on classification of disaster hazards and occurrences, setting the threshold of disaster events and financing of disaster management activities at all stages. BNPB is the disaster data custodian (*Walidata Bencana*) through a disaster data portal mechanism, which facilitates data coordination among various ministries and agencies who produce data.

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[21] In April 2018 the UN Secretary-General provided direction for IOM and UNHCR to lead and coordinate the regional response to the situation of refugees and migrants from Venezuela seeking access to basic rights and services, protection, as well as self-reliance and socioeconomic integration. Further to this direction, the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform was established as a forum to coordinate the response efforts across 17 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, with a particular focus on achieving coherency and consistency throughout the response. At national and sub-regional levels, the regional platform is complemented by local coordination mechanisms. Dedicated national and sub-regional platforms, collaborating closely with host governments, are charged with the operational coordination and implementation of the regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan (RMRP). Such coordination platforms are in place in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru - at national levels - and in the Caribbean, Central America & Mexico and Southern Cone - at sub-regional levels. Their configuration is based on each situational context and the operational capacities of governments and RMRP partners, taking into account existing coordination structures.
[22] Evaluation of the UNFPA Humanitarian Response to the Syria Crisis 2011-2018, UNFPA, 2019

Further, the Hub produces "Voices", a qualitative research publication on the reality of women's experiences of GBV in Syria and the surrounding areas. Voices is a component of the Whole of Syria GBV subcluster needs assessment tools, which sit under a comprehensive strategy, with a detailed overall results framework. Voices draws from a robust evidence base that is used to inform programming and advocacy efforts.[23] It also is responsible for publishing a series of knowledge products for UNFPA (the "Knowledge Series"), which include:

- Beyond Numbers (to assist countries in replicating Voices from Syria).

- Informed Programming [to assist countries in collecting programme data, avoid double counting, and guidance on third-party monitoring (TPM)].

The Hub also designs and promotes the use of harmonized indicators and definitions for multi-country donor proposals for the Syria crisis. It also maintains a real-time dashboard of the numbers of services provided and partner interventions from each of the whole of Syria inter-agency hubs (Gaziantep, Amman and Damascus) and for building robust information management systems and remote monitoring capacity among UNFPA offices and partners in the region. This includes a real-time GBV dashboard.

The Asia-Pacific Regional Office (APRO) maintains a centralized humanitarian resource site for UNFPA country offices in the region that has a specific section on humanitarian data. This is primarily related to the use and provision of data for CODs (specifically to the CODs on population statistics)). As of 2021, it includes a text (Google Sheets) database of UNFPA and external information management guidance and a range of examples and practices among country offices in the region (population data, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks, needs assessments, data collection, analysis, communication and management tools).

The two primary *internal* mechanisms that country offices reported for providing humanitarian response activity data from country level to global level are the UNFPA SIS and the **Humanitarian Master Sheet**.

The **SIS** is the "overarching gateway for critical information about the profiles, performance and results of UNFPA departments".[24] It consists of three modules: a dashboard for data and analytics; a platform for planning, reporting and results monitoring; and a risk assessment platform. The system purports to cover all departments, branches, divisions, and offices of UNFPA and is designed around office and programme results frameworks with associated outputs/outcomes, milestones, and indicators. As such, it is a reflection of a strong, comprehensive data tracking and analytical tool that covers all aspects of UNFPA management and programming, including humanitarian performance. However, discussions with UNFPA stakeholders indicates that in fact, the tool serves mainly as a "box-ticking" exercise. It does not currently allow UNFPA COs and staff to extract useful information to serve programming needs. Staff recommended that it would be better presented as a dashboard that offers information on delivery and weaknesses.

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[23] Ibid.
[24] SIS home page, https://applications.myunfpa.org/SIS/

The **Humanitarian Master Sheet** is an internal humanitarian data tool that is updated biannually with data from active UNFPA humanitarian responses. Country-level data is passed through regional offices/hubs and entered into the online text database (Google Sheets). It contains information on the following areas:

- Projected humanitarian needs
- Estimated population targeted (disaggregated by demographic, ethnic and vulnerability characteristics)
- Humanitarian funding required and received
- Snapshot of results achieved.

While the tool is updated biannually and is comprehensive (i.e., has data on every UNFPA humanitarian response), it is focused on top-level numbers – people in need, people reached, funding required/expended and selected output/activity data only. Although the guidance around completing the Humanitarian Master Sheet implies that measurement of impact-level results is included in this tool, this is not the case.

Evaluations make up the final component of the body of UNFPA data initiatives with relevance to humanitarian programming. Typically, UNFPA commissions formal external evaluations of individual country programmes (country programme evaluations – CPEs) on conclusion of the period of a CPD – typically four to five years. They are not a requirement for every cycle but must be conducted every two cycles. The intention is to provide an independent review of the performance of a given country programme and make forward-looking recommendations for elements of the succeeding CPD. As such, countries with humanitarian programming elements should incorporate some measure of evaluative analysis of these elements within their CPDs. This should include clear identification of humanitarian programming and specific interventions (based on need), and analysis (both qualitative and quantitative) around outputs and outcomes as relevant, and beneficiary feedback.

An analysis of the body of CPEs available in the UNFPA document repository indicates that, for the 80 humanitarian response countries, 114 CPEs have been conducted between 2010 and 2020. Over the same timeframe, approximately 160 CPDs should have expired, with CPEs conducted for each. This mismatch in the quantity of CPEs is largely due to the extension of the CPDs of various country programmes beyond their nominal dates, obviating the requirement for a CPE and due to the fact that CPEs are not required at the end of each cycle.[25] In Yemen, for example, the current country programme is governed by the 2012-2015 CPD, which has seen five sequential annual extensions. The last CPE of Yemen was conducted in 2011.

An analysis of the content of the completed CPEs for the 80 countries under review across the 2010-2020 period for specific references to humanitarian response (i.e., humanitarian programming was included as part of the scope of the evaluation research and/or findings referred to such programming) is presented in the chart at right. The trendline makes clear that there is an increasing trend of inclusion of such elements within CPEs, with some years (2017 and 2020) seeing references to humanitarian response included in every CPE published (albeit a small sample size – in 2017 and 2020 there were seven and six CPEs published, respectively).

This indicates potentially useful data among such sources for the future humanitarian data evaluation.

FIGURE 8: Country Programme Evaluations with Humanitarian References

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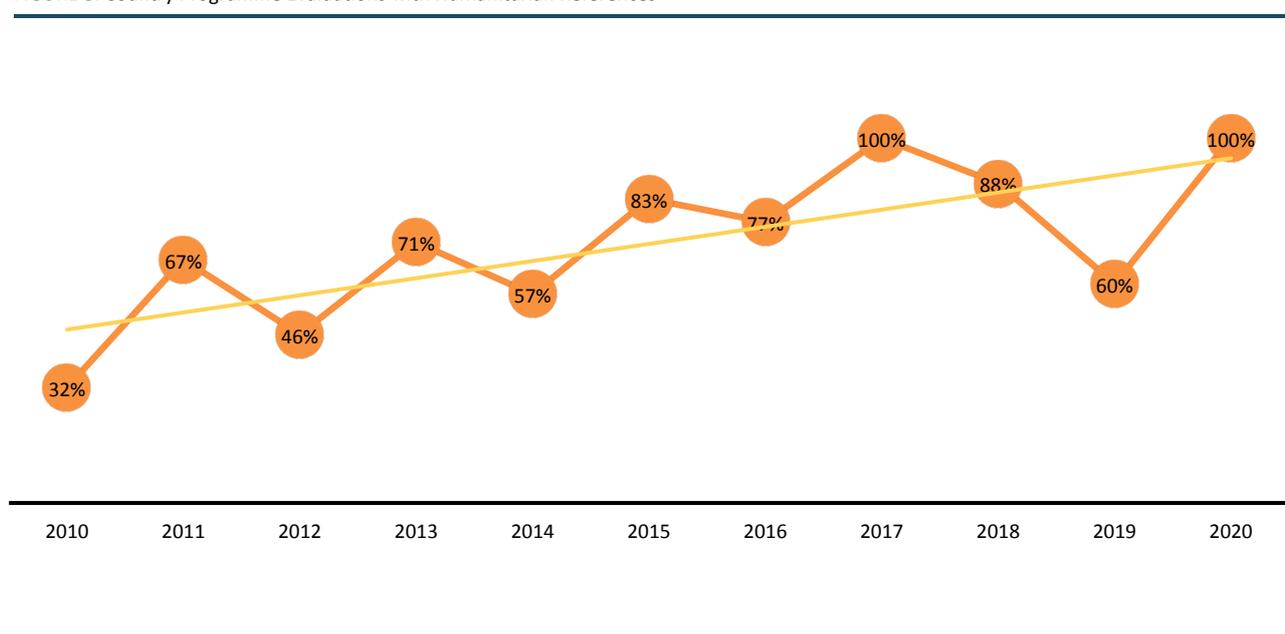
[25] For example, in January 2021 the UNFPA Executive Board approved extensions of between six months and one year for 11 countries, many of them the second or more of such extensions to their country programmes.

Leveraging technology for humanitarian data

The emergence of online data aggregation and presentation tools has become a significant feature of humanitarian responses worldwide. In particular, many country offices (and hubs) reported use of online dashboards linked to reporting by implementing partner or third-party monitors to enable rapid communication and sharing of data across a wide variety of humanitarian stakeholders for individual crisis responses at national or regional levels.

There is no integrated or overarching humanitarian data strategy from which these initiatives are derived or inspired; rather, they have evolved as a response to the sub-national, national or regional needs for data sharing among a variety of stakeholders.

The chart below shows the range of technologies and tools cited by UNFPA country offices responding to the online survey. A wide range (approximately 40) of different examples were presented by 53 of the 75 participating countries. Most of these technologies were proprietary software solutions that are available for commercial licensing. However, a small number of countries use or work with custom software provided to them by key partners such as government agencies.

A further level of complexity is seen in some countries (e.g., Venezuela), where the political situation means that accessing humanitarian data via conventional means is carefully controlled by government partners and UNFPA ability to engage in programming is predicated upon respecting and operating within these constraints.

FIGURE 9: Data Collection and Analysis Technology/Tools Cited by country offices[26]

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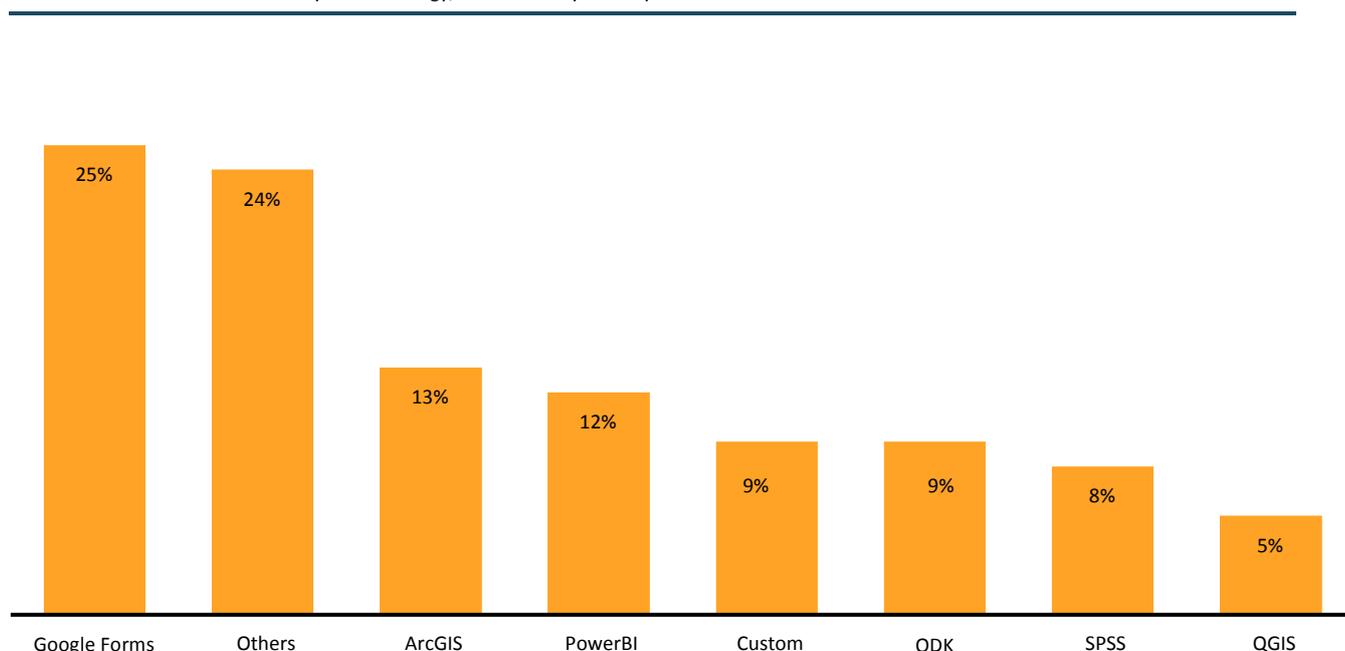
[26] Examples of other technology and tools used include: Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator, CSPro, GBVIMS, Humanitarian Information System (HumanIS), IMG, Magpi, Microsite, Ona.io, PAPI, Pipo, R, STATA, SurveyMonkey, WhatsApp, WizMonitor, and ZOHO Creator.

COVID-19 data initiatives

COVID-19 data initiatives in Iran

In Iran, UNFPA is supporting the Government on a range of COVID-19-related data initiatives, such as:

1 Development of an online data dashboard on the status of female heads of households for humanitarian and development response with the Ministry of Cooperatives, Labor and Social Welfare.

2 Assisting the Statistical Center of Iran with a national survey on the impact of COVID-19 on households, including the impact on fertility and mortality, education, employment and psychological well-being.

3 A rapid assessment with the Ministry of Health on the impact of COVID-19 on older persons.

The Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) for COVID-19 is a joint effort between the IASC and coordinated by OCHA. It was launched in March 2020 to address the immediate humanitarian-related effects of the pandemic. The plan highlights the importance of disaggregating and analysing indicator data by sex, age and disability to both measure the impact of as well as response effects on key groups (e.g., women and girls, elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, etc.). Monitoring indicators related to COVID-19 were identified, along with associated responsible entities for each, of which UNFPA were responsible for 11 indicators related to sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, and health service and systems more generally (e.g., supply chain), as well as information campaigns to anticipate and address risks of violence, discrimination, marginalization and xenophobia towards refugees, migrants, IDPs and people of concern.[27]

UNFPA launched its own Global Response Plan (GRP) in April 2020. The GRP contributes to the collective United Nations response - including the GHRP, the WHO COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Responsive Plan, and the UN framework for immediate socioeconomic response to COVID-19.[28] A total of 60 of 62 UNFPA offices are involved and the initiative is an interesting case of practice in collaboration around identifying data-related issues and priorities and the importance of regular data input during crisis as ways to monitoring continuity.

The research team identified good evidence of participation in data initiatives related to COVID-19, with up-to-date (2020) information being available on COVID-19 for all but one (the exception being DPRK) of the 80 countries studied via desk review. Of the countries participating in the online survey, six reported not contributing to the UNFPA GRP global-level dashboard in 2020 – though it is unclear why the discrepancy exists between the almost universal country-level reporting available on the UNFPA online dashboard and direct country-level reporting via the survey (it may be due to lack of awareness of country office respondents that their colleagues report to this initiative).

Many of the UNFPA country offices globally are also undertaking individual data initiatives related to COVID-19 to complement the UNFPA-supported programmatic interventions specific to COVID-19. A total of 46 countries (61 per cent) of country offices participating in the survey reported on specific initiatives that they undertake or support in relation to COVID-19 monitoring or response.

The charts below present a brief analysis of the types of data initiatives (including communication outputs) reported. Most of them are being implemented at the national level (e.g., support to monitoring or surveillance systems, data collection in relation to specific vulnerable groups), with several countries noting contributions to regional sitreps and others to data aggregation at global level.

Most of the specific types of data collected are in relation to those affected by COVID-19 – typically morbidity or mortality data collection and analysis. Other types of data collected (reported by 13 countries, 28 per cent of respondents) include socioeconomic surveys, data collection in relation to vulnerable groups such as refugees, female-headed households or youth/adolescents. A small proportion (15 per cent each) of initiatives specifically relate to the impact of COVID-19 on the UNFPA mandate areas of sexual and reproductive health and GBV.

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[27] UN OCHA and IASC, Global Humanitarian Response Plan, COVID-19, Final Progress Report, 22 February 2021, 2021.
[28] UNFPA INFORMATION NOTE, Update on UNFPA response to COVID-19 and strategic, programmatic and operational level impacts, August 2020

5.2. MAPPING OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE FIELD OF DATA FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Underpinning the body of data-related initiatives undertaken, supported, utilized or contributed to by UNFPA across humanitarian responses worldwide are a cadre of administrative, managerial, technical, and programme staff who are responsible for designing, managing and contributing to these initiatives.

Table 4 below graphically represents the major stakeholders and staff positions that provide, manage, share and use humanitarian data within and outside UNFPA at the field, country, regional and global levels.

The subsequent analysis explores roles, responsibilities, and practices for collection and management of humanitarian data within UNFPA and participation in information-sharing forums for coordination of data externally.

TABLE 4: Humanitarian Data Initiatives – Who and Where

Programmatic level	Data types	UNFPA staff	External contributor/user
Global HQ/ Branch level	All	Hum. data adviser	
			OCHA
		PDB technical specialist	IASC
		Humanitarian technical specialist	GBV AoR
		IM officers	Global Protection Cluster
		P&D technical specialist	Global Health Cluster HNHR Headquarters OCHA headquarters
Regional level	All	Regional data specialist	OCHA regional offices
		Humanitarian coordination advisers Humanitarian programme data specialist	Other UN agency regional offices
		Humanitarian specialists	IOM
		M&E advisers, SRH, commodity securities (CS), gender, HIV and youth advisers Population and development adviser	OCHA RO UNHCR RO Regional IMWG
Country level	Project data	M&E specialist staff	OCHA RO, UNHCR RO, UNCT/HCT, IOM CO, RC/HC Cluster/Sector/Subcluster/WG members IMWG within UNHCT/CT National Statistics Offices Government partners
	Programme data	Data specialist staff	
	GIS/satellite data	Humanitarian coordination staff	
	Admin data	PDB specialist staff	
	Financial data		
Field level	Population /Household data	IM officer	Government partners
	Beneficiary #s	Programme officers	Sister United Nations agencies field staff
	Services delivered	Technical specialists	Service providers
	Population needs	Consultants (tech/surge)	Implementing partners
	Services available	Humanitarian specialists	Third-party monitors
	Service usage		NGO field staff
	Facilities supported		Subsector/cluster/WG members

UNFPA humanitarian, data, and humanitarian data roles

Generally, there is distinct differentiation of roles and responsibilities between UNFPA staff that have humanitarian OR data responsibilities (which may or may not include humanitarian data elements).

- It is clear from the research (presented in detail below) that there is wide variation across country offices in the number and types of these roles they maintain. In some country offices, humanitarian-focused staff comprises the majority of programme staff while other country offices have a negligible number of or no full-time humanitarian-focused staff, despite sizeable humanitarian resources.

- A substantial proportion (almost one-third) of humanitarian response countries have no dedicated humanitarian data staff. In some cases, UNFPA humanitarian-only positions explicitly include (albeit limited) responsibilities for providing or managing data. In others, data positions include limited humanitarian responsibilities. Overall, however, humanitarian data-related responsibilities are typically allocated to very specific technical roles.

A review of a sample of **humanitarian** position descriptions (full-time appointments and consultancies at global, regional, and national levels) advertised by UNFPA in 2020 and 2021 was undertaken to assess the level of demand for data for M&E-related skills or experience among candidates[30]. The results, presented in the table below, indicate that there is limited articulation of such responsibilities within these roles, at least with respect to the advertised (and hence required) skillsets and experience levels. Half of the descriptions had no reference to data or M&E, with only two descriptions (of 12) explicitly requiring skills and/or experience in data and M&E. The remaining descriptions referred to M&E only, to population data only or had only brief references to data or M&E.

A similar analysis of a sample of **M&E** position descriptions in advertisements for the same timeframe, presented in the table below, shows similar results – half of position descriptions do not reference humanitarian responsibilities or skills/experience requirements (whereas they do note experience and skills in "international development"). One position noted extensive humanitarian responsibilities, while the remaining positions had brief references to humanitarian work within the respective office or a single specific area of work related to humanitarian response.

TABLE 5: UNFPA Humanitarian Staff Positions

Position	Level	Data inclusion in description
Regional humanitarian adviser	P5	No data/M&E references
Humanitarian coordinator	P4	References data in role, M&E skills/experience required
Humanitarian programme data specialist	P4	References to research role and skills, including information management
Humanitarian specialist	TA	References M&E in role
Gender-Based Violence in Emergency Specialist	P3	Population data only
Regional humanitarian project coordinator	P3	References M&E in role, M&E skills/experience required
Global humanitarian SRH adviser	P5	No data/M&E references
Regional programme coordinator	P5	M&E skills/experience required
SURGE ROSTER - SRH in emergencies specialist	Consultant	No data/M&E references
SURGE ROSTER - Humanitarian coordinator	Consultant	No data/M&E references
SURGE ROSTER - Senior emergency coordinator	Consultant	No data/M&E references
Humanitarian and gender- based violence coordinator	P4	Data & M&E role and skills required
Programme specialist, GBViE	P4	Brief reference to data

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[30] Sampling was convenience-based, i.e., non-exhaustive and based on the availability of job descriptions in the UNFPA online archive. Not all relevant positions are represented here.

Position	Level	Humanitarian inclusion in description
Technical adviser, M&E	P5	No humanitarian reference
Consultant: M&E technical adviser	Consultant	One brief humanitarian ref.
Monitoring and evaluation analyst	NOB[31]	Humanitarian data a responsibility
Monitoring and evaluation specialist	P3	Humanitarian workplan formulation
Monitoring and evaluation specialist	P4	One brief humanitarian ref.
Monitoring and evaluation analyst	NOB	No humanitarian reference
Monitoring and evaluation specialist	P3	No humanitarian reference
Monitoring and evaluation adviser (RO)	P5	No humanitarian reference
Programme specialist, M&E	P4	No humanitarian reference
Monitoring and evaluation manager	Service Contract	Humanitarian evaluation responsibility
Regional M&E adviser	P5	No humanitarian reference
Monitoring and evaluation analyst	NOB	Extensive humanitarian responsibilities
Population development adviser	P5	References advanced skills in demography, statistics, population studies, economics
Population and development technical specialist	P3/P4	References to quantitative social sciences and information sciences

As can be seen above (with the exception of a few, traditionally development or pre-emergency data-related positions[32]), this data, along with the presence of various data-specific positions advertised by UNFPA[33] suggests that humanitarian and data responsibilities are not prioritized as cross-cutting responsibilities within roles but are more "siloed" within specific positions.

Data gathered via interviews with country-based humanitarian staff indicate that working with humanitarian data is viewed as an implicit part of most peoples' roles. Further, a comparative review of a sample of more detailed position ToRs (i.e., those that form part of the contract for the position, rather than the advertised position descriptions) shared directly by country offices indicates that references to data (within humanitarian positions) or humanitarian responsibilities (within M&E positions) may be more explicit, particularly when an active humanitarian response is underway.

This analysis indicates that there is a widespread appreciation for humanitarian data experience and skills but the lack of clear articulation of these responsibilities at the outset (when positions are being recruited for) means that the skills necessary for understanding and managing data are not necessarily explicitly demanded, and therefore cannot be assumed. This may well contribute to an overall low level of expertise in humanitarian data outside a very small subset of UNFPA staff.

A second point is that, while there has been significant recent progress by the development data section (population data) at UNFPA, including the COD-PS workstream in supporting population data in service of humanitarian action, this work is largely concentrated at HQ Technical Division and regional office level. It is also still considered, just like the DHS and MICS survey, as development data initiatives that have important bearing on planning around humanitarian action at the beginning of an emergency. According to UNFPA staff, if cross-cutting data efforts are undertaken, this is mainly due to country office leadership interest and acumen.

Further analysis of the level of skill in relation to data management among humanitarian positions and the degree to which data responsibilities are being actualized and cross-cut among development and humanitarian staff should be a key element of the forthcoming evaluation.

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[31] National (professional) officer – grade B (of four grades: A-D, corresponding to increasing duration of relevant experience).

[32] Both the population and development specialist roles, as outlined, represent an attempt to create improved synergy between population data responsibilities and humanitarian intervention. UNFPA staff noted that this shift in defining ToRs and hiring within the PopDev network began in 2017/2018 shortly before the adoption of the UNFPA-OCHA LoU on COD-PS and has accelerated since and become a standard practice by UNFPA Population Development Branch/Technical Division and UNFPA ROs.

[33] UNFPA maintains an archive of job listings on its website, see https://www.unfpa.org/jobs/archived-jobs-listing

Different data roles in country offices
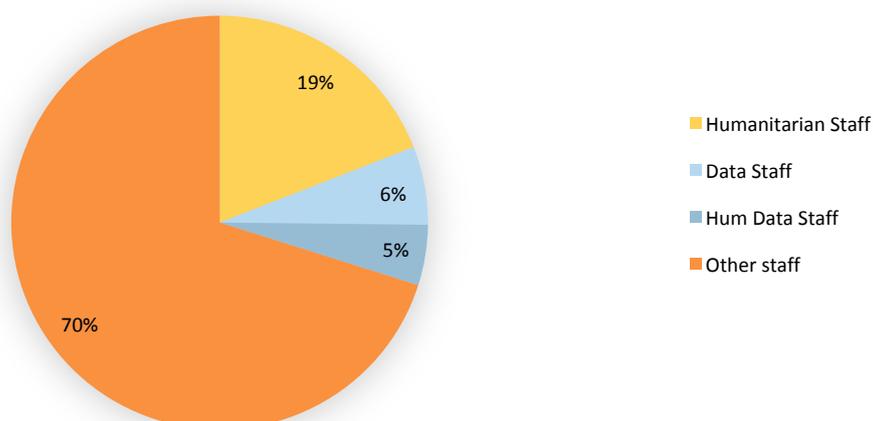
The chart at right illustrates the average proportion of full-time staff roles across the 75 offices[34] that participated in the assessment online survey.

As shown, on average, 5 per cent of the staff members of each country office have full-time humanitarian data roles. For the purpose of this evaluability assessment, staff who work on humanitarian programming (full- or part-time) and who are involved in the management of data within these programs were considered to have a humanitarian data role.

This corresponds to an average of two staff members per country office, although responses ranged from zero humanitarian data positions (29 country offices) to nine humanitarian data staff (Somalia Country Office).

The median number of humanitarian data staff per country office (the 'midpoint' value, less susceptible to skewing by outliers), a better measure than a simple average, is <u>one</u> staff member per office.

This is suggestive of a low level of investment in humanitarian data by country offices. An absence of humanitarian data staff has some, but limited, correlation with the size of a given response or its duration (as is seen above).

Of the 29 countries with no humanitarian data staff, nine had humanitarian expenditures for 2020 of more than USD1.5M and 20 experienced multiple consecutive years of humanitarian response preceding 2020. Of the case study countries, Indonesia at the time of research employed the lowest number of staff (one full-time humanitarian staff member and no full-time humanitarian data staff), at an incoming fund level of $980,927 for 2020, while Turkey, at an incoming fund level of $14,841,615, had seven humanitarian staff members on call.

Humanitarian Data Resources in Yemen

Despite the scale and complexity of the UNFPA humanitarian response (in addition to the leadership role the Yemen CO has taken on the Rapid Response Mechanism), there are no core staff members dedicated to humanitarian response data. This function is managed by two staff on temporary appointment/individual consultant contracts and two surge/other staff. The proportion of staff dedicated to humanitarian data (3%) is in line with the global UNFPA average (4%), although the use of temporary/surge contracting mechanisms has been identified as a constraint to effective programming

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In comparison, Yemen employed the most full-time humanitarian staff members compared to all the other countries (23), and two full-time humanitarian data consultants with a 2020 budget of $62,373,454. Cameroon had no full-time humanitarian response staff and South Sudan, with a budget of $3,376,595, had 10 staff (but no dedicated humanitarian data staff). Venezuela, with a budget of $3,201,97 had one full-time humanitarian staff. Both Indonesia and Cameroon had not recently received surge support while Yemen

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[34] The 75 country offices included 74 single-country offices and one office covering Fiji, FSM, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

(12) and South Sudan (5) had. The findings from the six country case studies correspond with those from the desk review. Humanitarian staff accounted for just under one-fifth (19 per cent) of total country office staff, and data staff (i.e., development data) accounted for 6 per cent of total country office staff. That said, it is important to note that the total staff numbers included support and administration staff, so the ratios of these staff members to other *programme* staff may be higher.

Further, a considerable number of staff positions double-hat or otherwise share responsibilities across a humanitarian and long-term development portfolio. The chart below presents the average proportion of country office staff who engage in humanitarian, development data or humanitarian data work in some capacity within those country offices with active responses as of 2020.

Per the figure below, the proportion of humanitarian data staff remains roughly the same (4 per cent average) as the above chart during June/July 2021, when the survey was conducted, but the average numbers of data staff and humanitarian staff increase, indicating that there are many country office staff members that have part-time humanitarian or development data responsibilities.

A final level of analysis of data roles (explored further under Assessment Question 4) is with respect to the proportions of staff within country offices assigned responsibilities for humanitarian data, presented in the chart below. This is a proxy for level of engagement of country programmes with humanitarian data. As discussed above, 29 country offices reported having no staff with formal humanitarian responsibilities (24 countries with active responses as of 2020). A further 37 country programmes (33 active responses) reported having less than 10 per cent (but more than zero) of staff dedicated to humanitarian data and 9 (6 active responses) with between 11 per cent and 25 per cent of their staff working on humanitarian data.

FIGURE 12: UNFPA Staff in Active Response COs with Data/Humanitarian Responsibilities
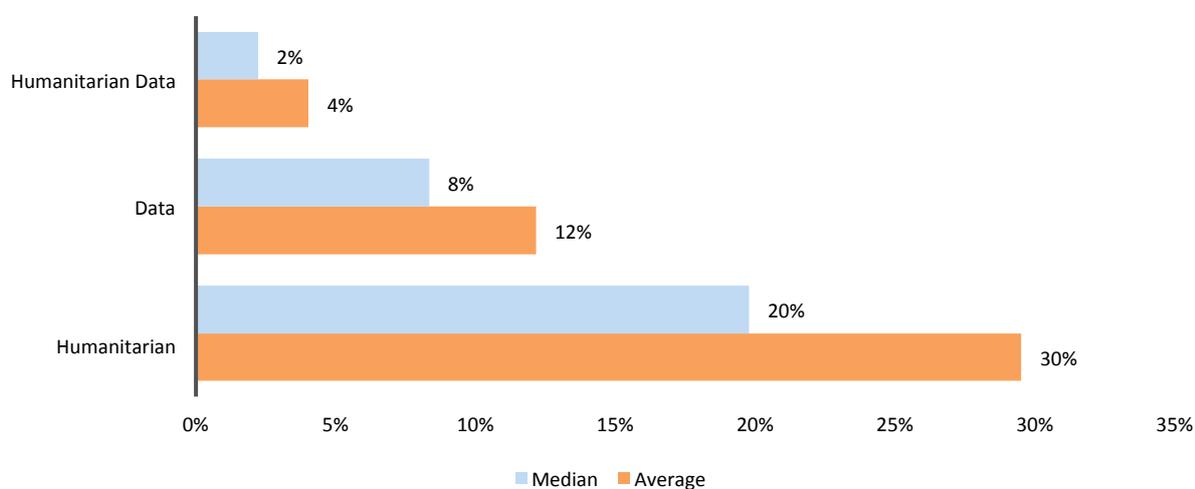
FIGURE 13: Country Office Staff with Humanitarian Data Responsibilities
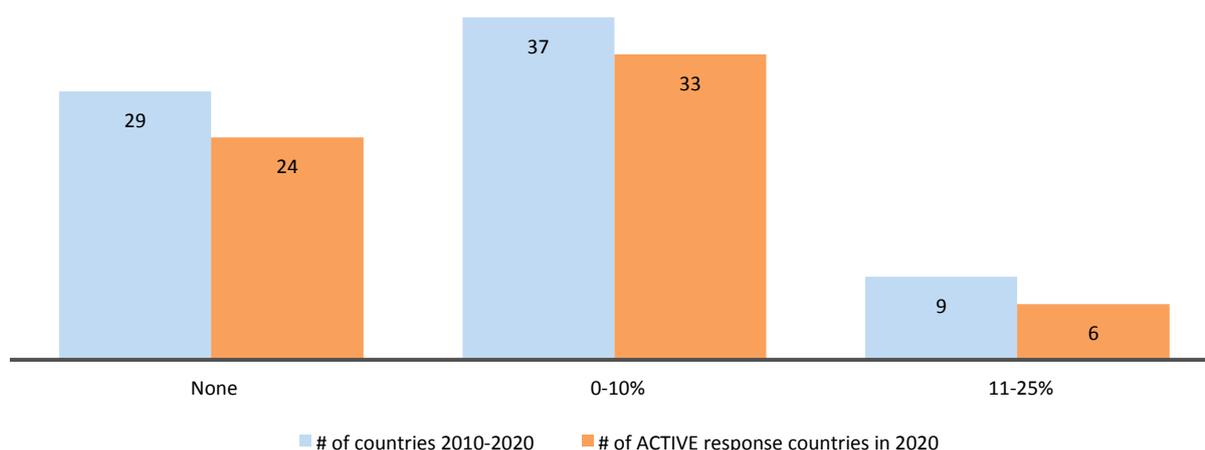
Data collection responsibilities

The chart below illustrates the different modalities of basic humanitarian data collection among UNFPA country offices. UNFPA implementing partners and staff members are responsible for the majority of data collection/reporting, currently and in the past, with a high level of reliance on external consultants, including third-party monitors. Key informants at country level highlighted the use of temporary consultants for discrete data collection activities such as qualitative data exercises or ad-hoc outcome/impact data collection exercises, including evaluations.

> The data show an increasing focus on the collection of data by implementing partners and staff over time. Anecdotal findings from staff interviewed at country office level ascribed this to two main reasons:

1. Greater leveraging of technology among country offices to collect and share data digitally, improving efficiencies of data collection, analysis, and communication.
2. Increasing skill levels among implementing partners, in particular in the use of these digital tools.

The use of third-party monitors for data collection appears to be largely predicated on logistical and security considerations – if a country office has insufficient capacity to collect humanitarian data themselves or cannot safely access programming locations to conduct monitoring (e.g., cross-border Syria). On average, countries that make use of third-party monitoring services have more substantial humanitarian responses than those that do not. Evidence from interviews with staff at country office level, however, indicates that third-party monitoring services are more focused on validation and verification of activities rather than on collecting data more related to programme outputs or outcomes.

However, it is important to note that, whereas humanitarian programme data is overwhelmingly collected by IPs, development data, for example for the COD-population statistics, or census data, is almost wholly undertaken by UNFPA staff in partnership with national and United Nations stakeholders.

FIGURE 14: How Humanitarian Data is Collected in Country Offices (Survey Data)
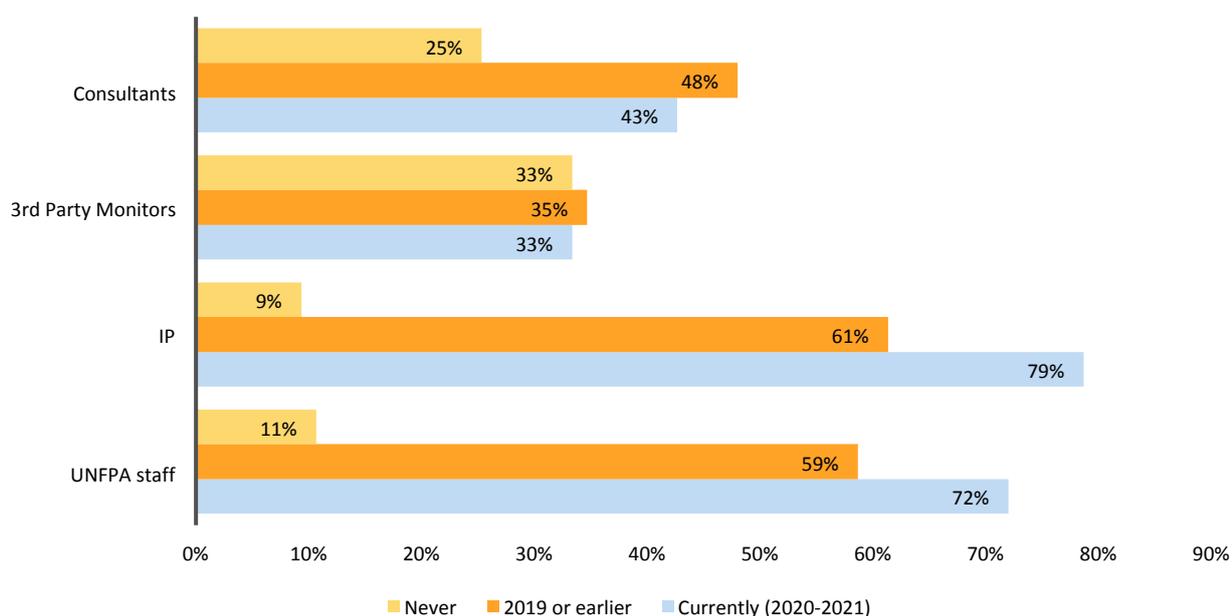
Humanitarian coordination and data sharing

A final dimension to UNFPA humanitarian action, and with particular relevance to the generation and sharing of humanitarian data, is the level of coordination in place between different stakeholders. Desk research on the 80 countries included in this assessment concluded that there is a mixed level of coordination performance with respect to the different cluster/sector coordination bodies relevant to the UNFPA mandate areas over the past decade. There is a clear trend of increasing coordination including in data, with respect to coordination around GBV (via the GBV subcluster, subsector, working group or equivalent) over time, with over 50 per cent of countries having this body active[35] by 2020. There is also an increasing trend of activity with sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) coordination and data sharing –SRHR/reproductive health (RH) working group (or equivalent) activity was very limited in 2010 (5 per cent of countries), with little change between 2010 and 2016, with an increase to approximately 10 per cent of countries from 2017 to 20 per cent in 2020. Youth working group (or equivalent) coordination was not recorded for 2020 and was detectable in 5 per cent of countries by 2020.

> **Humanitarian Data Resources in South Sudan**
>
> UNFPA contributes to the extent possible to a range of internal and interagency humanitarian data initiatives within South Sudan. However, limited stakeholder capacity, high staff turnover and limitations on resources mean that humanitarian data collection in South Sudan is rudimentary and does not take advantage of more sophisticated approaches in use in other countries. Due to a lack of coordination among humanitarian actors and the government, there are parallel systems for data collection and management. This is compounded by data gaps due to a delayed census, population estimates and other population-based data initiatives that can contribute to preparedness and implementation.

Responses from UNFPA staff participating in the online survey for this assessment, presented in the chart below, are somewhat more positive, with respondents indicating active GBV subclusters in 74 per cent of countries, RH working groups in 64 per cent and youth working groups in 22 per cent. The discrepancy between the two results may reflect the level of activity of these groups in terms of their publishing of documentation and communication on open forums (see footnote above) but the analysis served to present the contrast between the level of coordination of the programme sectors within the UNFPA mandate area.

FIGURE 15: Response Countries with Active Coordination Bodies, By Type and Year

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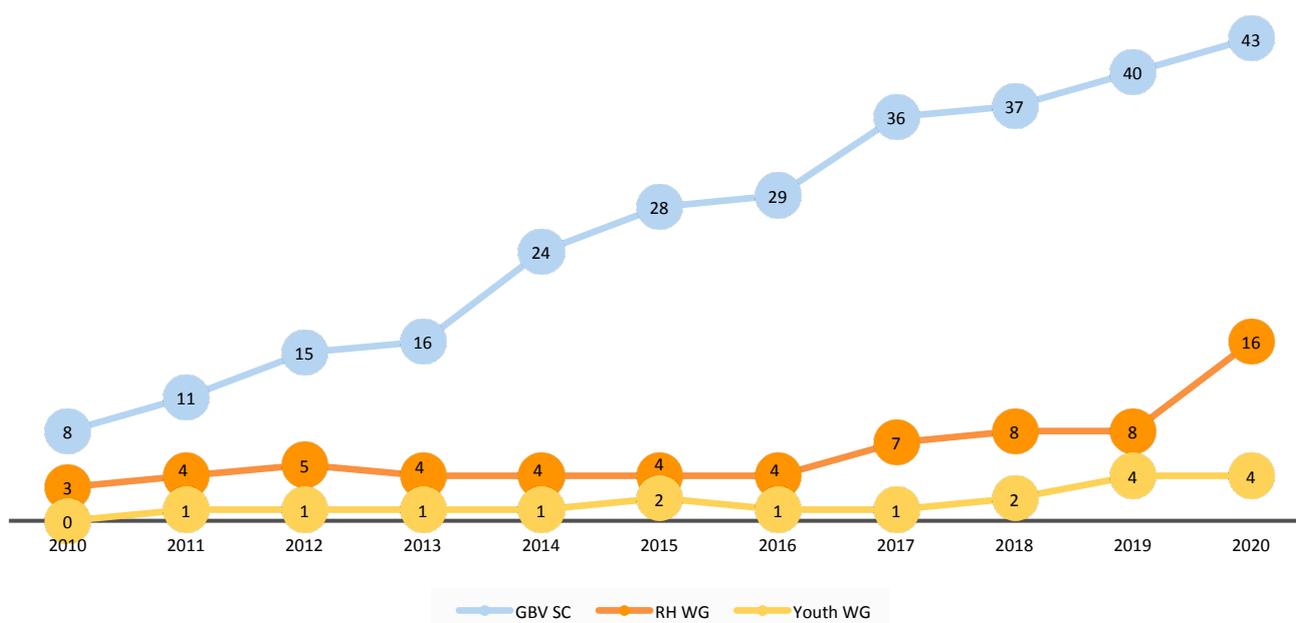
[35] The assessment team deemed a coordination body 'active' if any records of activity were available via online searching – e.g., meeting minutes, situation reports, strategies, reports, references in other programmatic reports, etc. This was by no means an exhaustive investigation but serves as a proxy for comparisons of the level of activation of these bodies.

Information Management Working Group, South Sudan

UNFPA South Sudan provides data to the COVID-19 dashboard and is a member of the Information Management Working Group (IMWG). Members of the Sudan IMWG regularly meet to facilitate the exchange of information; assess and build IM capacities and procedures on data sharing; facilitate standardization and harmonization of datasets among partners; and share best practices in coordinating assessments. The IMWG operates in line with the IASC Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/Sector Leads and OCHA Information Management.

UNFPA COs also participate in the Information Management Working Group (chaired by UNOCHA) at the global, regional and country levels with respect to CODs and specifically on COD-population statistics, more so since 2018. The Global Information Management Working Group (Global IMWG) is a forum of HQ information management focal points from humanitarian organizations. It has operated since early 2006, mostly as an informal body, as well as an IASC Task Force between 2009 and 2011. The aim of the IMWG is to strengthen humanitarian information management, assessments, and analysis to support improved decision-making in emergency preparedness and response. The IMWG welcomes participants from organizations working on humanitarian issues.

FIGURE 16: Response Country Coordination Bodies Reported by UNFPA Staff Active in 2021, by Type

	No response	Not now or previously	Not currently, but yes previously	Currently (2021) active
Youth Working Group	32%	39%	7%	22%
SRH Working Group	5%	24%	8%	64%
GBV Subcluster	7%	9%	11%	74%

Youth Working Group SRH Working Group GBV Subcluster
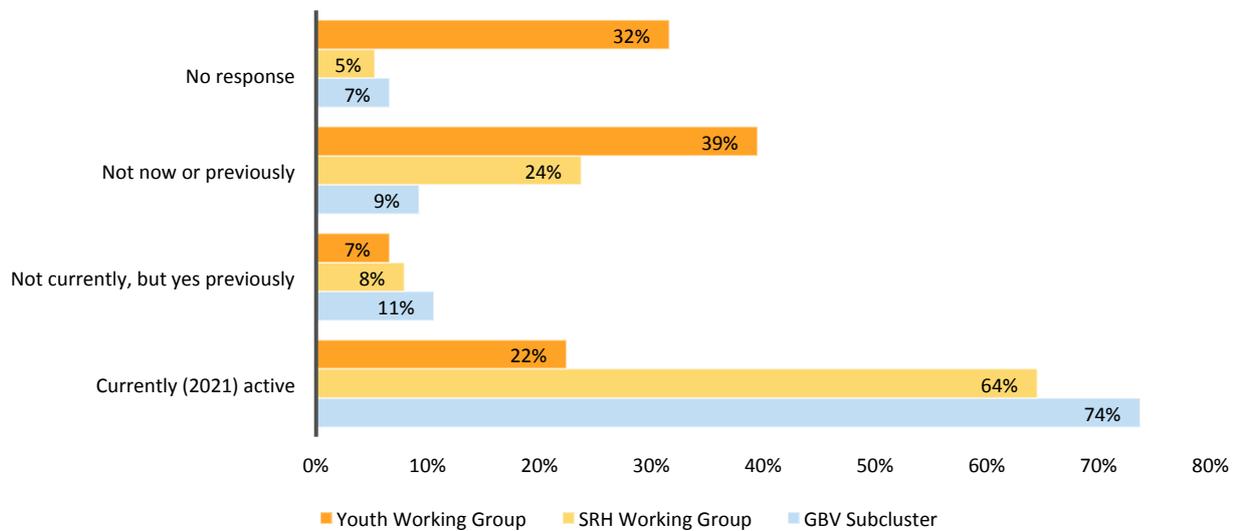
As discussed under findings 5 and 6 below, humanitarian data efforts at UNFPA are not explicitly governed by a formal theory of change. Existing theories of change, such as they are, have some elements that refer to data in a humanitarian context. These, combined with relevant references within strategic plans (both retrospective and prospective, i.e., the recently published 2022-2025 UNFPA Strategic Plan and associated humanitarian vision/strategy) can form the basis of a testable, forward-looking theory of change for humanitarian data.

The diagram below presents the different elements of a theory of change for humanitarian data. To progress from the current situation (situational statement, foundational requirements,) through to the ultimate goal or impact, the theory of change identifies modalities of work, activities (inputs) based on these work modalities, direct outputs and then outcomes.

Overall strategies/principles

The elements of this reconstructed theory of change for the future evaluation of UNFPA support to the generation, provision and utilization of data in humanitarian assistance are grounded primarily in the successively articulated mandate and purpose of UNFPA across different iterations of its strategic plans, specifically:

- The UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008-2012
- The UNFPA Strategic Plan 2013-2017
- The UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021
- The UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025.

Of key importance to humanitarian data is the overall strategy of UNFPA with respect to its humanitarian programming, both the retrospective strategy and the prospective strategy, i.e.:

- UNFPA Second Generation Humanitarian Strategy, 2012
- UNFPA Humanitarian Vision Paper, 2020.

Goal statement

The goal statement of the reconstructed theory of change is a high-level impact statement of what UNFPA aspires to contribute to or achieve via its humanitarian data work. While the overall organizational goal incorporates all aspects of UNFPA activities, that governing humanitarian data should be based on the successive organizational goals of UNFPA (rooted in the ICPD) but should also include specific elements related to the foundational humanitarian principles of saving lives.

Sample Goal Statement: **Core humanitarian data standards, humanitarian principles and agenda for humanity, particularly "leave no one behind", are achieved within all humanitarian settings, contribute to saving lives and capturing the needs of the most vulnerable women, girls, boys and men in crises to ultimately ensure their lives are without fear of violence and their human rights fully respected**

Situational statement

The **situational statement** is an inverse articulation of this goal, grounded in a foundation of understanding how humanitarian crises materialize across conflict settings, non-conflict settings, and refugee and migration situations in recipient countries. The problem statement therefore recognizes that humanitarian principles require strong data systems that allow disaggregation and identification of the specific situation and needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups and indeed all people affected by humanitarian crises.

The Grand Bargain commitment to making humanitarian aid more effective and efficient also relies fundamentally on good data about needs and results, which saves time and resources through improved prioritization and targeting. The necessity of improved humanitarian data is widely recognized.

Foundational requirements

The **foundational requirements** of the theory of change are those elements that are specific to areas of responsibility and accountability held by UNFPA rather than general requirements within the overall humanitarian system. A strong humanitarian data system should address the needs of all the vulnerable and non-vulnerable individuals and allow for a quick flow of information so that those involved in humanitarian settings do not need to resort to outdated information to solve the current problems. The system should comprise a sufficient number of partners who have shared data goals in using the system so that data can be used better and more frequently in making critical decisions in a humanitarian response. The system should offer data and related insights that are accessible to non-technical people. The principles and processes of the data system should be human-centred to effectively improve lives and reduce suffering, and it should be agile and able to adapt to demand and new innovations.

Examples of these requirements are:

- Strong M&E systems at global, regional and country levels adapted to the collection and analysis of humanitarian data that allow interoperability among country offices and stakeholders

- Clear quality standards for robust, verified, utilization-focused, geo-referenced and sex-, age- and other-diversity-disaggregated data (SADDD)

- Clear global-level strategic acknowledgement of the significance of humanitarian data

- Strategy for consistent data sharing at country, regional and global levels to position UNFPA as data expert.

Work modalities

The **work modalities** of UNFPA explain the "how" that guides the translation of the principles and foundational requirements into action. They are the fundamental means whereby UNFPA delivers inputs to be translated into outputs and, ultimately, outcomes and impacts, contributing to the overall goal.

UNFPA works, at its most fundamental, at three levels – country, regional and global levels, reflecting its organizational structure. There is some blurring of these levels when individual humanitarian responses cut across country borders; for example in the case of the Syria crisis, or even a reflection of global crises, such as the COVID-19 global response. Typically, however, the following work modalities apply to UNFPA in the area of humanitarian data:

Country level	Regional level	Global level
Strengthening national health data systems (including for health, population and protection/GBV-related issues)	Partnerships with other actors	Partnerships with other actors
Partnerships with other actors.	Leadership of data working groups	Positioning within comparative advantage value-add of UNFPA. = population dynamics expertise plus gender/inclusion expertise
Leadership of data working groups		Leadership of coordination/data-sharing bodies (AOR, IMWG)
Quality and ongoing assessments and trend predictions / revisions		

Activities

In terms of **types of activities**, the theory of change should reflect key strategic input areas as outlined in successive UNFPA strategic plans, but reflective of the long-term development focus of UNFPA,, which supports humanitarian data work, the UNFPA humanitarian programming work that is undertaken worldwide, but also elements that combine both dimensions of work, notably around how data is gathered, managed and utilized.

Key activities for consideration in the theory of change in this regard are:

- Longer-term development work

  - Population dynamics: Census data and work with national statistics offices
  - Global programmes for child marriage and FGM
  - Improved prevalence data for SRH, GBV and youth.
- **Humanitarian** response work

  - UNFPA response work (e.g., service delivery dashboards/portals)
  - Commodity procurement and distributions
  - Needs/situational assessments (HNO/ Voices)
  - Population tracking (COD-PS, DTM).

- **Development**/Humanitarian/Peace Nexus(including preparedness)
  - Humanitarian data strategies, tools and technologies (SIS, GPS, global strategies, CPDs, results frameworks, portals, MISP, CCA, MPAs)
  - Humanitarian data initiatives (e.g., supporting SRHR/GBV services continuity, building government and partner capacity)
  - Integrating development and humanitarian data systems and national capacity building in data management.

Outputs

These activities are then translated into resulting **output** areas, specifically relating to humanitarian data, but remaining aligned with the extant foundational strategies and principles. Key elements include:

- **Robust, up-to-date population data (internal/external)**

  - Census/national stats for SADDD/strengthened capacity for data in preparation for and during humanitarian crises
  - Includes provision for wider trends (climate change, ageing, migration, population increase)
  - Provision for rapid updating based on population movements in response to crises
  - Linked to new technologies as available (GIS, satellite, big data tracking).

- Prevalence and incidence data (internal/external)

  - Key unmet SRH needs, GBV, harmful practices, predicted trends in humanitarian contexts, based on evidence
  - Occurrence of new cases over a specified period of time, number of new cases in a community, number of new cases per unit of population
  - Based on robust evidence and updated regularly
  - Triangulated with and recognizing value of, qualitative data.

- Results data (internal)

  - Activity, output and outcome-level results clearly differentiated
  - Consistent across location and time (interoperable/aggregable)
  - Meaningful for purpose (programming, advocacy, resource mobilization)
  - Managed without compromise of rights-holder safety or security.

Outcomes

These outputs lead to two main **outcomes** that cover the breadth of humanitarian data, specifically:

- External outcome results

  - Achieving and reporting on external commitments to humanitarian principles
  - Generating quality sex, age, and other diversity-disaggregated quantitative data
  - Integrating different results, monitoring and reporting systems into a harmonized approach
  - Supported by robust and targeted qualitative data.

- Internal Outcome Results

  - Achieving and demonstrating key transformative results
  - Saving lives via quality sex, age and other diversity-disaggregated data
  - Supported by robust and targeted qualitative data
  - Efficient tracking and use of resources for maximum coherence, effectiveness and sustainability of results.

Underpinning principles

Underpinning the chain of causality from situational statement to goal are key factors that originate from the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit and link to the external and internal (within UNFPA) context of humanitarian response data:

3. The principle that humanitarian action and humanitarian data can no longer be "siloed" from development data or from peace processes, and so it is necessary to ground the theory of change within the development-humanitarian-peace nexus

4. The overall humanitarian framework emanating from the following key elements:

   - The World Humanitarian Summit
   - The Grand Bargain
   - The New Way of Working, including workstreams specifically on localization and accountability
   - The Core Humanitarian Standard
   - Other global humanitarian and refugee legal frameworks.

6. EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

6.1. QUESTION 1: ARTICULATION OF HUMANITARIAN DATA RESULTS

To what extent are the intended results of UNFPA in the field of data for humanitarian assistance clearly articulated, at both strategic and programmatic level? Is there a theory of change (either explicit or implicit) pertaining to the work of UNFPA in the field of data for humanitarian assistance?

Overall Response

While there is consistent reference to both data (for development) and humanitarian response programming, there is limited articulation of results in the field of humanitarian data across UNFPA global, regional and national strategic planning levels. This may contribute to the fragmented nature of much humanitarian data work which, while extensive across countries and regions, is not significantly horizontally or vertically integrated.

There is also limited explicit reference to humanitarian data within existing theories of change governing UNFPA strategic approaches or programming, but elements of such a theory of change can be inferred and reconstructed.

Finding 1: UNFPA has clearly articulated the role of data within its programming across its strategic and operational plans over successive strategic planning cycles since at least 2009. While this role is predominantly in relation to population data for development programming, most plans also include reference to the role of data in humanitarian response. This is typically with reference to the use of data in decision-making or planning, with limited further exposition of how data will support humanitarian response outcomes.

Global strategic documents

There are several high-level strategic documents that govern the implementation of overall programming within UNFPA over the 2010-2021 period, and one strategy specifically for humanitarian programming. A more detailed analysis of these plans is presented under Assessment Question 2 below but a summary of the main instruments and the role of data/humanitarian data within each is as follows:

TABLE 7: Humanitarian References Within UNFPA Strategic Documentation

Strategic document	Humanitarian data components
UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008-2011 (Extended to 2013)	Outcome 3 related to data (population and development) Several humanitarian references – primarily related to the MISP (Outcome 2.1).
UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017	Several references to development and population data; one reference to "up-to-date, disaggregated data" data in humanitarian settings for preparedness and a reference to opportunities for use of "big data" (not elaborated or defined).
UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021	Emphasis on development and population data, with acknowledgement of use of this data during humanitarian crises; noted the "humanitarian data strategy of UNFPA" related to building national capacity for disaster risk reduction (DRR); Outcome 4 supports the achievement of universal access to sexual and reproductive health, including during humanitarian crises by identifying population groups that are furthest behind through data production, emphasizing censuses and surveys, and, to some extent, civil registration and vital statistics.
2022-2025 UNFPA Strategic Plan	Strategy addresses data more generally and humanitarian data specifically in paragraphs 55 (scaling-up data in humanitarian settings), 56, 77 (strengthening data systems in humanitarian settings), and 118 (emphasizing and promoting real-time monitoring to provide decision-making data including for humanitarian emergencies).
UNFPA (First Generation) Humanitarian Strategy 2008	Noted "the importance of timely and reliable data for planning an effective and appropriate humanitarian response";
UNFPA Second Generation Humanitarian Strategy 2012	articulates a range of measures on humanitarian data and includes an outcome (#5) and output (#6) related to the leveraging of population data for humanitarian response; noted preparation and use of common operational datasets for preparedness.

While outside the scope of this evaluation with regard to the timeframe, it is important to note that the recently endorsed *UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025* notes a clear strategic shift in focus in, among other areas, humanitarian interventions, specifically noting its intensions in "expanding the humanitarian response capacity to better safeguard the lives of women, adolescents and youth, especially adolescent girls, while also addressing mental health and psychosocial issues". In addition, there is emphasis placed upon mainstreaming resilience, prevention, preparedness and early action, and emphasizing the complementarity between humanitarian, development and peace-responsive interventions. The new strategy contains an output dedicated to humanitarian intervention:

> *By 2025, strengthened capacity of critical actors and systems in preparedness, early action and in the provision of life-saving interventions that are timely, integrated, conflict- and climate-sensitive, gender-transformative and peace-responsive. UNFPA is on the ground before, during and after crises. The acceleration of the three transformative results cannot be realized without prioritizing preparedness, early and anticipatory action and the provision of life-saving interventions, focusing on humanitarian, conflict and post-conflict contexts. Under this output, UNFPA, in line with its comparative advantage in promoting the rights and choices of women and girls, will ensure complementarity across its humanitarian, development and peace-responsive efforts.*

UNFPA identifies a number of 'accelerators' to achieve its outputs, including data and evidence and specifically the focus on data is aimed at increasing the availability and use of data related to gender-based violence and harmful practices and health services in development and humanitarian settings.[36] Associated with each of the UNFPA strategic documents is a range of documents that operationalize their proposed strategic directions, specifically results frameworks that systematically link intended outcomes to outputs to indicators of achievement and, in most cases, targets and means of verification.

In addition, regional offices have produced their own results frameworks that tailor the provisions of the global-level strategic plans to their own circumstances. This is discussed in more detail below.

Regional programme documents

UNFPA regional offices have generally incorporated the provisions and structure of the global strategic plans for preparing their own strategic plans and frameworks. To a large extent, regional offices have articulated the relevant humanitarian data-related outputs similarly to the global level, with the exceptions of the EECA and ESA regions. Importantly, the EECA Regional Office does not include humanitarian response in its articulation of Output 13.[37] The following table summarizes the level of alignment and/or deviation across individual regional strategies:

TABLE 8: Humanitarian References Within UNFPA Regional Strategies

2018-2021 Strategic Plan	APRO	ASRO	EECARO	ESARO	LACRO	WCARO
Output 13: Improved national population data systems to map and address inequalities; to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the commitments of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development; and to strengthen interventions in humanitarian crises	Same	Small text difference	**Omits humanitarian**	Omits SDGs, ICPD	Small text difference	Small text difference

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[36] *UNFPA, The UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025*, United Nations DP/FPA/2021/8, 2021. Available: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/board-documents/main-document/ENG_DP.FPA_.2021.8_-_UNFPA_strategic_plan_2022-2025_-_FINAL_-_14Jul21.pdf

[37] One milestone has been offered in 2021: Programme Cycle Output 2.1 (under young people's SRHR): "Priority countries that included sex and age disaggregated data at subnational level in publicly available national preparedness or response plans to identify young people among manmade or natural disaster affected populations."

Country programme documents

The foundational strategies and plans at UNFPA country office level are the country programme documents (CPDs), which set out the overall strategic direction of UNFPA in individual countries for a three- to four-year timeframe. Some CPDs include more systematic detail on programmatic approaches via results frameworks, while others have accompanying country programme action plans that operationalize the strategic direction within the CPD.

The assessment reviewed the CPDs of all UNFPA humanitarian response countries between 2010 and 2020 for inclusion of references to humanitarian data to assess the quantity/quality of references to humanitarian response, population data and humanitarian data. The chart below presents the results of this analysis, with a higher score indicating a more substantive quantity or quality of references within the CPD text.[38]

As the chart indicates, there are substantially greater references to development data (i.e., population data) and humanitarian response within CPDs for all 80 countries researched. Indeed, for 2010 and 2011, no country offices made any reference to humanitarian data within their CPDs. This number has slowly increased over the course of the 2010-2021 period, with most countries demonstrating an improvement transitioning from "no reference" to "brief reference" to humanitarian data.

This is contrasted with a marked improvement in articulation of humanitarian response within CPDs over the time under review. Analysis of the published CPDs shows that, in 2010, extant CPDs from 33 countries had no reference to humanitarian response, whereas, by 2020, this had decreased to 10 countries.

References to development data within CPDs have remained relatively constant across the time period under review.

FIGURE 17: Quality of Humanitarian/Data references in CPDs 2010-2020 (0=worst, 5=best)

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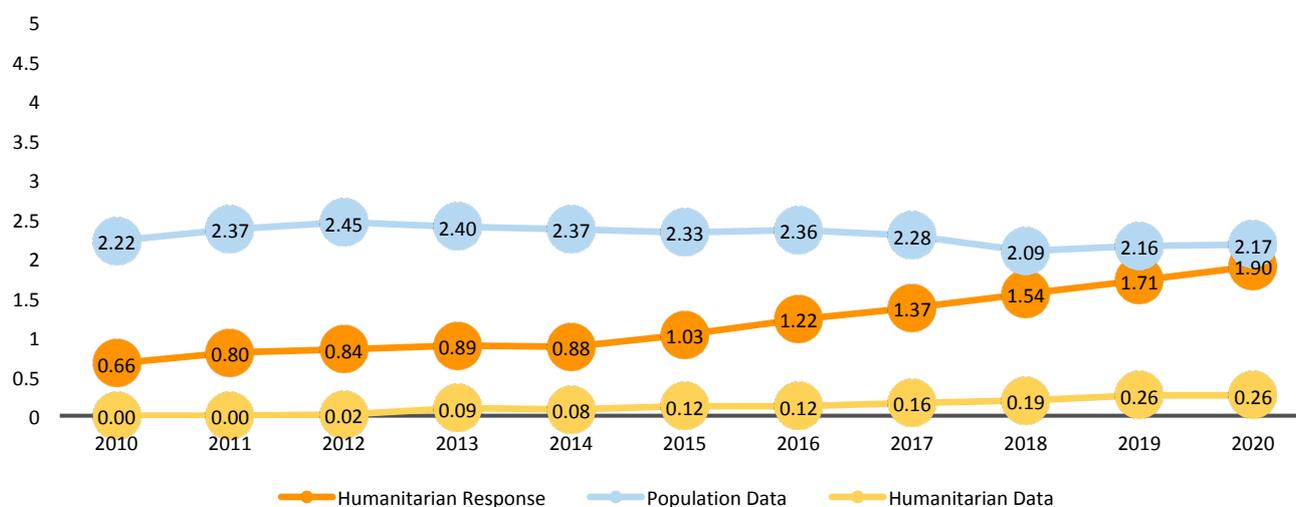
[38] The scoring rubric was:
4 = Specific objective and strategy related to humanitarian response/data/humanitarian data
3 = No objective or specific strategy, but approaches are explained
2 = Brief references throughout, with some explanation of approaches
1 = Only brief references, no specific explanation or detail (e.g., "including humanitarian response")
0 = No reference to data, humanitarian response or humanitarian data

UNFPA data strategies and supporting policies/tools.

The foundational strategy specifically related to humanitarian data in UNFPA (and the key point of reference for this assessment) is the 2010 *UNFPA Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations*. This is supported by a range of other standards or commitments that UNFPA has authored or has adopted over the course of the 2010-2020/21 period.

The following table lists the main policies and/or guidelines published (or with an operational lifespan) between 2010 and 2021 that govern or contribute to the strategic mandate for data in UNFPA. Some of these policies or guidelines are internal to UNFPA, while others are joint efforts or external.

TABLE 9: Polices and Guidance Governing Humanitarian Data

Year	Policy/Guidance title	Internal/ external	Global/regional/ sub-regional	Details
2008	*IASC Operational Guidance on Responsibilities of Cluster/ Sector Leads and OCHA in IM*	Non-UNFPA	Global guidance	Guidance on information management by cluster agencies and partners for humanitarian response
2010	*IASC Guidelines on CODs*	Non-UNFPA	Global guidance	Guidelines specify CODs should be accessible and support local information systems. The goal is to strengthen efforts of national governments.
2010	*UNFPA Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations*	UNFPA	Global guidance	Addresses key data issues related to preparedness, acute, chronic and post-crisis phases of humanitarian crises by providing direction to COs on what to do and with whom
2012	*ICT Vulnerability Management Policy*	UNFPA	Global policy	UNFPA policies and procedures - high-level policy statement and some measures on ICT security; no specific reference to humanitarian/programme data
2012	*ICT Security Policy*	UNFPA	Global policy	UNFPA policies and procedures - high-level policy statement and some specific guidance on ICT security; no specific reference to humanitarian/programme data
2014	*Socio-demographic information to be collected in LACRO*	UNFPA	Regional/sub-regional guidance	Rapid assessment guidance and tools: quick counts, spatial analysis, field obs., KIIs, FGDs, administrative records.
2015	*UNHCR Handbook on CODs and FODs*	Non-UNFPA	Global guidance	Describes roles in the FODs/CODs; part of the UNHCR Emergency Handbook
2016	*UNFPA Minimum Preparedness Actions*	UNFPA	Global guidance	Guidelines for COs, ROs, HQ to achieve a minimum level of emergency preparedness for effective, timely assistance at crisis onset
2017	*UNFPA Geospatial work and priorities 2020 census round*	UNFPA	Global guidance	Recommendation for more use of GIS at lower admin levels for the 2020 census, so that data is of higher-quality, more precise and can be better used in emergencies as baselines
2017	*ICRC Handbook on Data Protection in Humanitarian Action*	Non-UNFPA	Global guidance	Aimed at the staff processing personal data as part of humanitarian response, particularly those working on data protection standards
2017	*UNFPA Strategy for the 2020 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (2015-24)*	UNFPA	Global guidance	Guidance on methods and approaches to supporting national censuses
2018	Joint letter on cooperation between UNFPA and OCHA on CODs, 2018	UNFPA	Global policy	Commits to cooperation in collection, analysis and use of humanitarian data for preparedness planning, response and development; commits to CODs for administrative boundaries, population stats and humanitarian caseloads
2020/21	*COD-PS Technical Guidance Notes*	UNFPA	Global guidance	Suite of guidance for UNFPA staff and partners on the approach to constructing COD-PS based on the best available data standard applied to humanitarian contexts
2022-2025	*UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025*	UNFPA	Global guidance	Strategy addresses data more generally and humanitarian data specifically in paragraphs 55 (scaling-up data in humanitarian settings), 56, 77 (strengthening data systems in humanitarian settings), and 118 (emphasizing and promoting real-time monitoring to provide decision-making data including for humanitarian emergencies).
2022-2025	*UNFPA Data Task Team Report, 2022-2025*	UNFPA	Global policy	The data task team report recognizes the need to expand the quality and scope of population data within UNFPA programme countries and to increase the effective use of data to locate those left behind, accelerate progress towards the SDGs, support CCAs, and both target and evaluate programmatic investments. The strategy focuses on improving data in scope and quantity, access via the population data platform and use (demographic intelligence).

In addition, and specific to GBV in emergencies, the *Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies* references data collection and management through advice on application of participatory techniques when conducting assessments by involving affected populations in identifying priority needs of their communities and mapping of communities for existing community-based services, capacities and coverage. The *IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action* offer further advice on data security, management, safe and ethical data sharing among organizations. The *Handbook for Coordinating Gender-based Violence Interventions in Emergencies* reinforces IASC priorities to improve the quality of survivor-centred, support and offers best practice recommendations for PSEA, confidentiality. The WHO ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies provides guidance on information gathering and documentation, safety, confidentiality and consent.

The primary UNFPA-authored policies or guidance specifically addressing humanitarian data are the 2010 *Guidelines on Data issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations*. This has not been updated since then, nor does there appear to be any associated or supporting policies or guidance beyond a 2014 regional initiative in LAC on humanitarian data.

Usage and/or familiarity with the 2010 guidelines at country level was included as part of the assessment, via the country office survey. The results, presented in the chart below, indicate that, while a substantial majority (95+ per cent) of respondents at country office level are at least aware of the guidelines, there is a low level of usage of the guidelines. In total, 40 per cent of the country offices reported using the guidelines – with even fewer (33 per cent) country offices with active humanitarian response operations using them.

The proportions of country offices reporting frequent use of the guidelines was low, at 11 per cent overall and 9 per cent among country offices responding to crises in 2020.

There is a sizeable body of policies and guidelines supporting the preparation of CODs, both external to UNFPA (and dating from COD creation in 2010) and internal to UNFPA – produced by the UNFPA Technical Division, Population and Development Branch.

There is a good mix of general strategies, data policies and guidelines, internal and external to UNFPA, that contribute to data governance. External guidelines and policies are rooted in peer UN actors or interagency groups such as the IASC.

Most governance documentation is guidance on best practices or focus areas aligned to strategies. There does not appear to be clear oversight or monitoring of data requirements or initiatives, with the exception of CODs.

Within UNFPA, the Technical Division has developed, and continues to develop, guidance on using geographical information services (GIS), engaging with National Statistical Offices, and on data protection. This work appears to be nascent, with limited examples of initiatives at country level. UNFPA staff inform the research team of several important contributions made by the Technical Division and selected UNFPA COs on population and GIS data, in difficult L3 emergency countries. UNFPA supported government in undertaking a hybrid census for the whole of Afghanistan in 2015. Further, UNFPA provided support for the undertaking of a hybrid census in three provinces of DR Congo, undertaking two population estimation surveys in Somalia and the first ever population estimation survey in South Sudan. These census and survey efforts involved both substantial technical and resource mobilization efforts by UNFPA. In the case of population data initiatives in Afghanistan, South Sudan and Somalia, UNFPA directly engaged with the Office of the Prime Minister/President and deployed UNFPA technical assistance across UNFPA CO/ROHQ PopDev Network. The division has also advanced the use of geospatial mapping of health services in humanitarian/fragile context: Indonesia post-earthquake, Zambia, and also work by the Population and Development Branch (PDB) on geospatial mapping of emergency services.

FIGURE 18: Familiarity with the "UNFPA Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations"
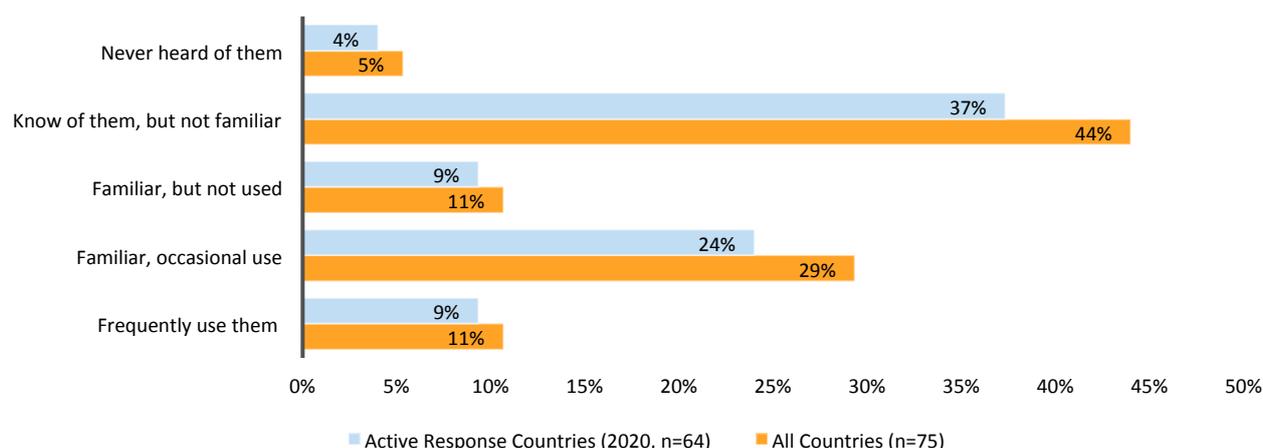
Most policies, rules and guidance are broadly applicable throughout the emergency phase, though some are explicitly developed for use during an emergency and others for preparedness.

There is little recent (i.e., past 3-4 years) global UNFPA guidance on data. UNFPA did, however, offer guidance and technical assistance to UNFPA COs/ROs on COD-PS and baseline population data as part of a five-part webinar series on data. The PDB/Technical Division also supplemented the five-part webinar series with in-person one-week workshops for Arab states and L3 COs as well as a comprehensive region-wide workshop for all WCA COs on COD-PS construction, data production and management, dissemination, and coordination and usage.

> **Finding 2: UNFPA applies a wide range of clear and measurable indicators across all humanitarian programming and initiatives, currently and previously. However, these indicators are predominantly output-related, with significantly fewer measures related to outcomes or impacts of programming.**

UNFPA country offices set out their intended results of both humanitarian and longer-term development programming via a range of planning instruments at country and initiative levels. At country level, results frameworks are associated with the CPDs and/or CPAPs that govern CO activities for their lifespan (on the condition that the assumptions on which these plans are devised do not substantially change).

Notwithstanding that humanitarian programming typically occupies a relatively limited portion of country-level strategies (CPDs and CPAPs) as discussed above, the desk review findings show there is a definite increasing trend of inclusion of humanitarian outcomes, outputs and/or indicators across countries studied since 2010 – rising from 15 per cent in 2010 to 71 per cent in 2020.

Reports from all 75 humanitarian response country offices participating in the assessment survey triangulate well with this finding. As the chart below illustrates, 83 per cent of country offices report having specific humanitarian indicators within their country-level results frameworks as of 2021 (either within the CPD or CPAP). A further 76 per cent claimed to have such indicators within other results frameworks (the specifics of these are discussed further below), and 68 per cent in both. These numbers also show a consistently increasing trend over time, with an increase of 12 per cent between pre-2019 and the 2020-21 period.

However a series of challenges were noted in the country case studies with regard to their M&E mechanisms:

South Sudan: UNFPA country programme strategies note that UNFPA and its partners will develop and implement a costed monitoring and evaluation plan and tools and these will guide both programme management and financial performance. Inaccessible areas were to be reached via remote means or third-party arrangements. Dedicated evaluation staff were to be assigned as a dedicated budget to support these functions. CO staff report that resource mobilization by UNFPA South Sudan always includes an M&E element for a particular project, with an overall budget estimate of USD$600,000 dedicated for monitoring and coordination as of 2021. Data is collected and reported on by UNFPA staff via IPs and occasionally via external consultants. However, the challenges with respect to security, access and resources mean UNFPA is not able to fully meet humanitarian data needs in South Sudan.

Cameroon: The current CPD, which has been extended until 2021 (originally covering the years 2018-2020), notes a number of performance monitoring mechanisms that require close cooperation and coordination with UNFPA partners, including field visits, regular reviews, evaluation and notably a three-year capacity building plan to improve on programme management and accountability with the support of the regional office and external consultants. The CPD, however, provides no additional guidelines and the most recent results framework (2018-2020) provides limited attention to humanitarian/data indicators. No theory of change is evident in UNFPA documentation with regard to data for humanitarian assistance. An independent country programme evaluation covering the period 2008-2011 recommended that UNFPA be supported by the headquarters with a sufficient allocation of funds to allow the establishment of a results-oriented monitoring system (guidelines, tools and control mechanisms). The country office should request the hiring of a monitoring and evaluation coordinator for the set-up, supervision and accompaniment to the M&E system. The CO audit (2019) notes a number of challenges associated with programme monitoring, specifically a need for the CO to better streamline the tracking of targets, programme implementation, and reporting for consistency with outputs. As well, the audit noted that the CO should review its structure and staffing arrangements for better alignment to programme delivery and operational requirements. The audit also considered risks associated to the SIS to reflect the nature of programmatic interventions undertaken by CO.
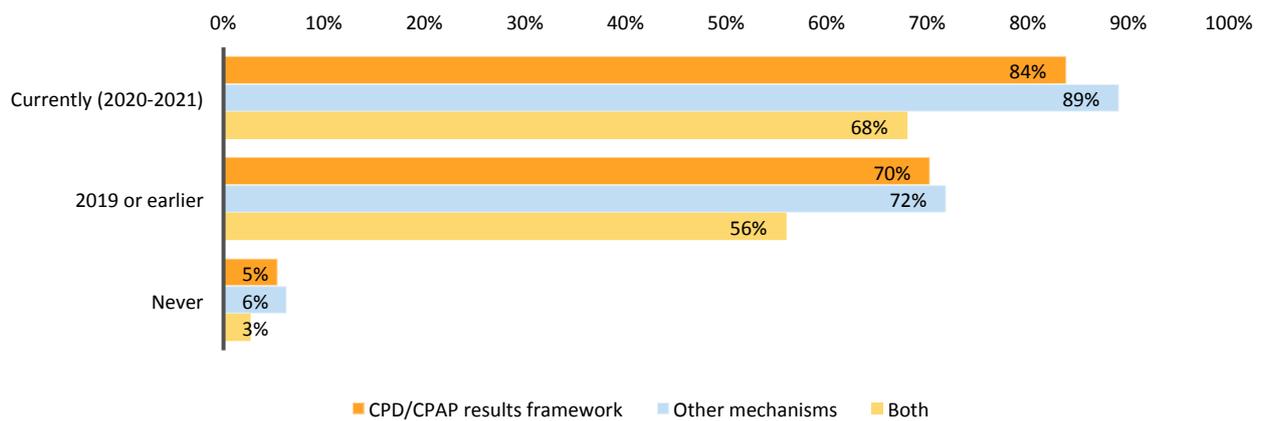
Indonesia: With respect to overall programme monitoring, the most recent country programme evaluation found that, while outputs were fully achieved or on the right direction, the internal monitoring and evaluation framework was "basic" (lacking disaggregation of the contribution of different partners) and did not offer clear guidance measurement of indicators beyond the output level. The evaluation recommended strengthening of the UNFPA results-based management approach to better use data to learn from results (specifically pilots) in a timely manner. This would facilitate increased demand and use of evidence by management in decision-making and preparation of frameworks to access and analyse data with ease.

Turkey: There is strong evidence of the effectiveness of data and information management at the regional response hub-level across all Syria-related initiatives, including those from Turkey. The evaluation of the UNFPA response to the Syria crisis found that UNFPA has effectively used existing assessment tools and developed new tools, e.g., the "Voices" report and the regional response GBV dashboard. However, the 2019 evaluation noted that data management function had not translated into support for country-specific refugee programmes. It also noted inconsistent use of data across time and locations and that UNFPA had not taken advantage of the tools, systems and data management capacity within the Whole of Syria GBV subcluster for increased data management within refugee responses.

Yemen: Data is fed into various initiatives including the HRP/HNO processes, the SIS, and a variety of dashboards, including the UNFPA humanitarian dashboard, Monitoring, Analysis, and Reporting Arrangements on Conflict-related Sexual Violence (MARA) and the GBVIMS. Data portals allow IPs and key stakeholders access to data entry and reporting (specifically regarding output-level information), which is disaggregated by governorate, administrative and facility level, as well as sex and age and, in some cases, vulnerability. Interviews with the CO highlight the importance of RRM data; "RRM data becoming the main resource for all humanitarian agencies in Yemen[39]". These efforts have allowed UNFPA to produce operational projections by age/sex disaggregated on subdistrict and village level and updated every six months. This data is not aggregated up to global levels because the nature of the data is very much on a country-level focus and is hosted via different platforms that are not integrated or interoperable.

Venezuela: The CO noted ongoing needs to build capacity of the IPs to take advantage of online technology for humanitarian data collection and management (existing UNFPA data collection utilizes mobile phones connected to online surveys) and ensure interoperability with the systems of other stakeholders (e.g., UNHCR/UNOCHA). Key to this is coordination with other stakeholders on system integrations and ensuring resources are in place for the licensing of the technologies involved. Evidence from stakeholders indicates that the existing team at UNFPA is technically strong and the variety of data initiatives is evidence of good efforts to meet programmatic needs. UNFPA reports being generally satisfied with the completeness of humanitarian data collected and partner capacity to do so, although there are reported gaps and most data is related to outputs and activities. The consensus of evidence is that gaps exist because the humanitarian emergency architecture is recently established, and there is a belief that the CO should connect more closely to frameworks that generate a stronger data management effort.

An analysis of the specific types of indicators reported to be measured by country offices, presented in the chart below, shows a definite preponderance of output indicators, with relatively fewer offices reporting the use of outcome and impact indicators. While 81 per cent of country offices reported current use of humanitarian output indicators, 61 per cent reported using outcome and 45 per cent reported use of impact indicators in their humanitarian programming across the board. While humanitarian interventions take several forms, each with its own shorter-term performance metrics, UNFPA operates with a clear focus on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. As such, while the leaning towards output measures is understandable in a purely short-term, early-onset, humanitarian response context, UNFPA CPDs do not tend to offer longer-term performance measures for longer-term engagement in protracted crises, that allow for a clearer synergy between its various interventions.

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[39] KII with country office, June 2021

Finding 3: Country offices frequently assign and report on performance indicators on the basis of the data requirements of individual initiatives which are, in turn, strongly influenced by donor programming priorities. This leads to a reactive and fragmented approach to humanitarian data collection.

A high proportion of country offices also noted that they reported on indicators within *specific* humanitarian response results frameworks – 83 per cent of country offices had results frameworks that were specifically for humanitarian initiatives, and another 63 per cent of country offices reported on humanitarian indicators as part of other initiatives.

Aside from the regional response hub for the Syrian crisis, these data are consistent with individual country-level data from the six case study countries. Discussions with key data personnel and a review of a selection of reporting instruments used by country offices, implementing partners or on individual initiatives indicates a robust suite of indicators related to humanitarian response. Many of these are set as and when specific humanitarian initiatives are designed and begun, i.e., on a project basis rather than as part of more systematic data-gathering and analysis.[40]

Country office humanitarian staff also report on indicators associated with more systematic initiatives [(UN development assistance frameworks (UNDAFs)], joint response plans, humanitarian response plans (HRPs), etc. This is discussed further below.

CO reporting against outcomes

Venezuela: An absence of reliable baseline data and challenges in triangulating across different sources means that tracking outcomes or impacts is challenging. Many project indicators are reported on a weekly basis, disaggregated as per project requirements. Depending on the donor, UNFPA may report on up to 25 indicators weekly. For the most part, the individual project indicators are linked to UNFPA strategic global reporting (although output and activity-level only). Further, CO reports indicate that UNFPA conducts focus groups and satisfaction surveys with beneficiaries to ascertain the result of its interventions and to identify gaps and lessons learned.

One Data Indonesia aims to ensure that data from various government ministries and offices is triangulated onto a portal and will include UNFPA-supported administration data. There is general agreement that this is a unique approach that will offer interoperability of data throughout the country. Another goal of this initiative is to focus on outcomes and ensure there is improved interaction between different data streams.

Turkey: The country programme evaluation of the Turkey programme highlighted that, although the CO utilizes "extensive monitoring tools and reporting mechanisms", they are functional and quantitative at the level of intervention and lack analysis of outcomes and/or qualitative triangulation. Further, the evaluation reported a lack of comprehensive data on some key outcome metrics such as child marriages or on underserved groups, posing a barrier to evidence-based programming. Statistics on the areas of UNFPA intervention in Turkey (sexual and reproductive health behavior and knowledge) are noted as outdated.

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[40] The regional response hub reported an annual regional Syria response impact assessment that is conducted in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey cross-border and Turkey. There is some focus on Covid 19 impact in the recent assessments.

Analysis of secondary documentation and data and qualitative evidence from country level indicates a preponderance of output/activity level data, and little in the way of systematically collected outcome or impact-level indicators reported against. Examples of the most commonly collected data are:

- Numbers of beneficiaries reached
- Numbers of facilities assisted
- Numbers attending or receiving services
- Attendance at trainings or activities
- Quantity of materials or commodities distributed
- Results of pre-post testing at training or awareness-raising sessions

Some country offices and regions noted specific data collection initiatives that enable reporting against outcomes or impacts of humanitarian response programming but these efforts are typically ad-hoc, challenging and highly localized and have limited capacity for generalization to wider populations.

> **Finding 4: UNFPA supports, contributes to or utilizes a range of longer-term development initiatives across all country programmes that can support generation of data for humanitarian response. However, the frequency of refreshing of many of these datasets (once or twice per decade) is an inherent challenge to their usefulness for humanitarian response.**

The initial mapping exercise conducted as part of the inception phase of the research and subsequent interviews with key UNFPA staff highlighted a selection of key longer-term data initiatives to which UNFPA contributes or utilizes for both its development and humanitarian programming mandates.

Three of the main development initiatives initially identified are the population census work that is central to the UNFPA mandate, the demographic and health survey and the multiple indicator cluster survey. The capacity to leverage these sources of development data in individual countries is an important element of demonstrating the outcomes of UNFPA long-term/development programming. Data from these population-based surveys can be used as a baseline for target-setting or downstream outcome/impact measurement. Many of the UNFPA country programme results frameworks cite these as key means of indicator verification. However, up-to-date data for these surveys is an important consideration to ensure their usefulness for humanitarian programmes. It is important to note that they are crucial to inform preparedness measures and support strategic and operational decision-making processes during this phase. Frequently, there is a disconnect between data, decision-making, and response. Without the processes in place to gather, manage and analyse data, informed decisions (often within the first days of an emergency) will not be available to support these decisions.[41] Many UNFPA and non-UNFPA stakeholders interviewed as part of the case studies noted this as a key challenge. For example, census data that might be ten (or more) years out of date is not particularly useful for humanitarian planning or programming, particularly where populations might be highly mobile due to the onset of multiple crises.

A desk review of the dates of publishing of each of the initiatives for the 80 countries that have undertaken humanitarian response work since 2010 shows a relatively steady rate of production of both the DHS and MICS surveys at approximately 10-20 per cent of countries per year. Both surveys typically are conducted approximately every five years to allow comparisons over time.[42] The frequency of these surveys within UNFPA humanitarian response countries underscores their utility for humanitarian data purposes.

Less frequently published (compared to the MICS and DHS) are population censuses (typically once per decade). These are central both to the UNFPA mandate and to production of downstream data products used for humanitarian response, notably the COD-PS.

Since 2018, UNFPA is progressively increasing the availability, quality and usability of up-to-date population data in both preparedness and humanitarian settings. UNFPA noted that in 2021 the COD-PS have become one of the "most heavily downloaded datasets on the Humanitarian Data Exchange". Between April and June 2021, UNFPA COD-PS datasets were viewed 1,518 times and downloaded 2,220 times by at least 587 unique users. The Nigeria COD-PS, updated on 18 June 2021, has been downloaded 7600+ times and the Kenya COD-PS, updated on 7 June 2021, has been downloaded 3600+ times. Similarly, the COD-PS for El Salvador, updated on 4 August 2021, has been downloaded 3100+ times. These datasets include sex- and age-disaggregated projections and are high-resolution, i.e., disaggregated to Admin 2 level).

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[41] Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. SIGNAL PROGRAM ON HUMAN SECURITY AND TECHNOLOGY STANDARDS AND ETHICS SERIES 01. Data preparedness: connecting data, decision-making and humanitarian response. Nathaniel Raymond and Ziad Al Achkar
https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/data.pdf
[42] Or shorter timeframes for interim surveys: https://dhsprogram.com/methodology/survey-Types/DHS.cfm
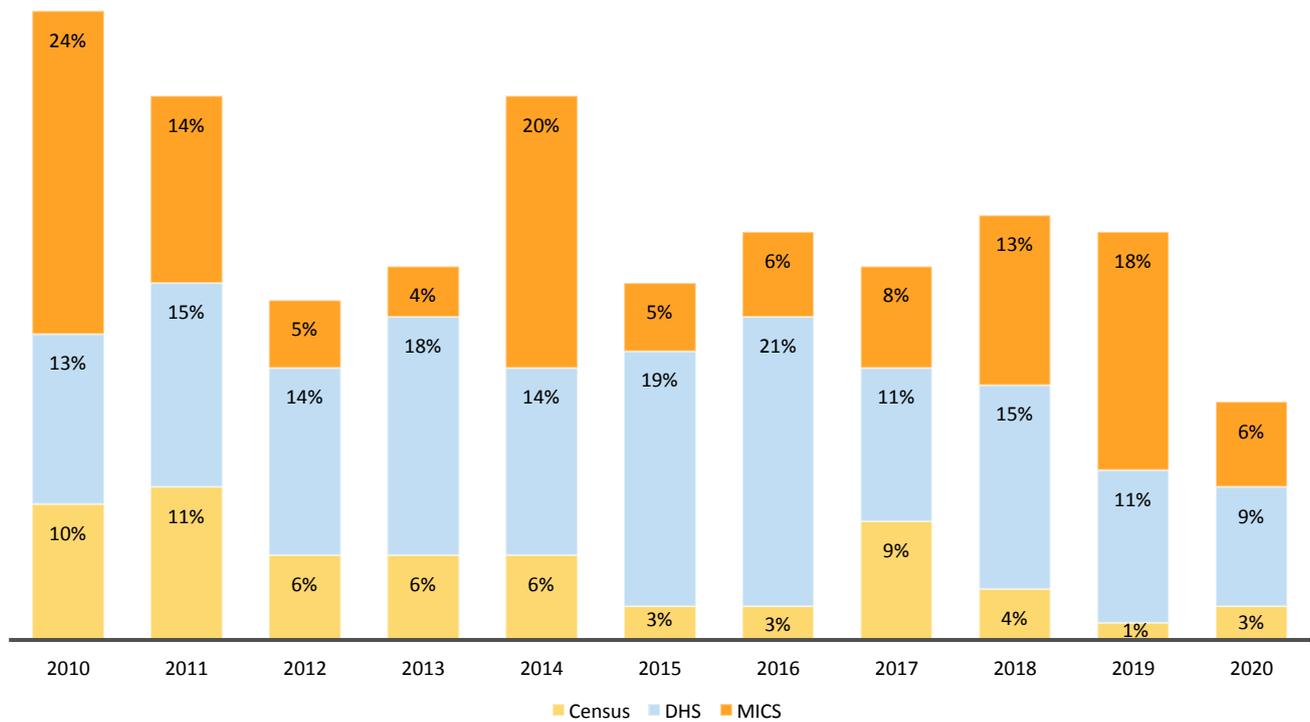
UNFPA has considerable investments in its operational countries on population statistics, a major undertaking both for UNFPA and the humanitarian system to generate up-to-date baseline population data, disaggregated by age, sex and geography, from the best available census, survey and admin data sources. While there is significant need for raw datasets, UNFPA efforts in targeting quality, up-to-date estimates and projections based on the best available data were considered key to informing humanitarian interventions at all stages by stakeholders. All but 4 per cent of UNFPA country offices responding to the survey (per the below chart) had contributed to census work in the previous decade, with two-thirds of countries being involved in the 2020-2021 period (which coincides with the latest census round for many countries).

Three-quarters of countries were involved in census work in the 2010-2019 period, underscoring the widespread nature of this work by UNFPA and its potential value to humanitarian programming.

These initiatives highlight the important progress by UNFPA on developing updated sub-national population projections by age, sex and high-resolution geographic areas — both in support of the UNFPA MISP calculator and the United Nations overall humanitarian system-wide efforts through HNOs, HRPs and preparedness actions.

FIGURE 22: UNFPA Humanitarian Response Countries Contributing to Census Work
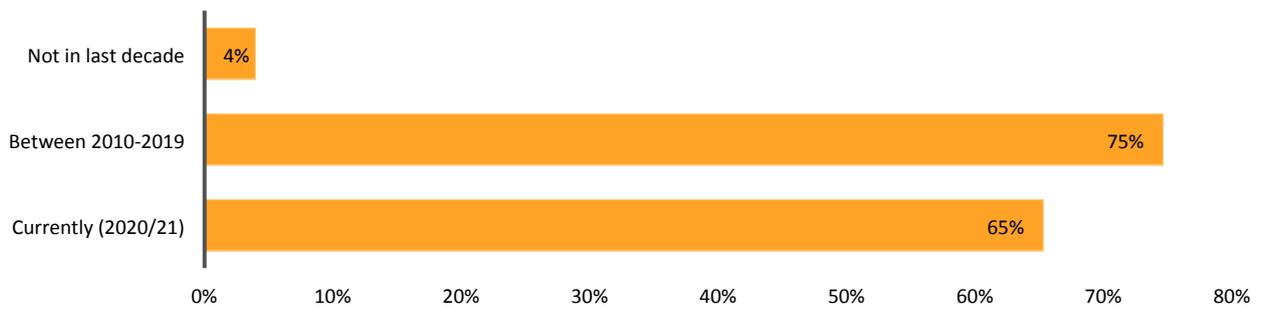
FIGURE 23: Country Offices Contributing to Development Data Initiatives
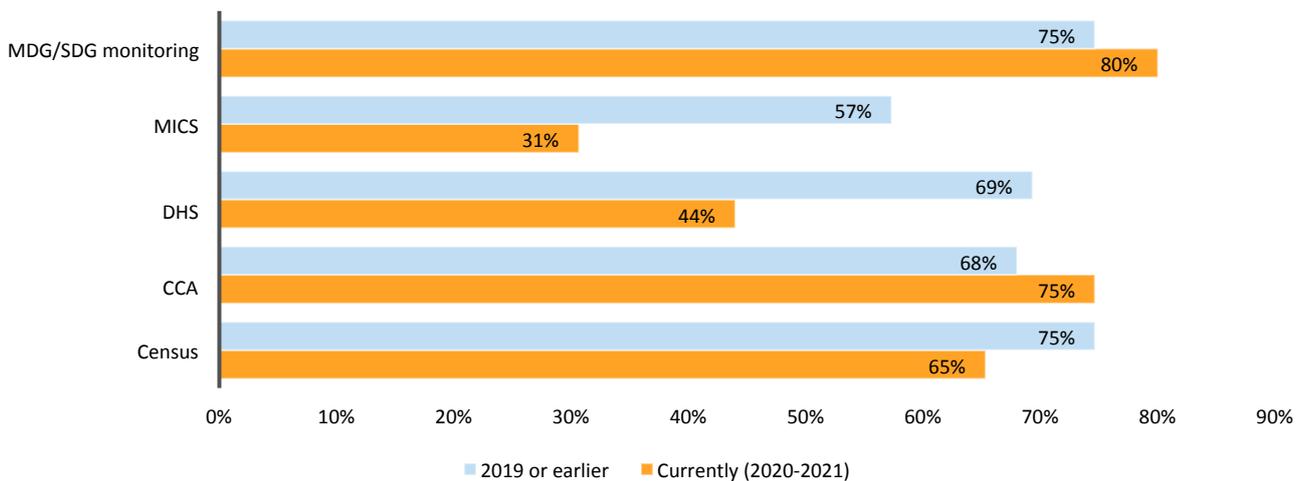
Population data and humanitarian preparedness and interventions

Cameroon: The UNFPA CO reported it has to date supported three censuses in Cameroon, with the most recent census held in 2005, 18 years after the previous iteration. As of 2021, UNFPA reported working with government partners and UNOCHA to plan a hybrid census in Cameroon, which it anticipates will be of significant utility to humanitarian programming. This census hopes to capture demographic changes due to the internal displacement of populations and host communities, with increasing numbers of women and children, unaccompanied children, and child-headed households. The approach will involve the application of statistical modelling techniques using demographic data, satellite imagery and other geospatial datasets to produce high-resolution mapped population estimates and using actual population data from a sample of locations.

South Sudan: UNFPA reported ongoing plans as of 2021 with the government and other stakeholders to conduct several data initiatives, including a detailed population estimation survey in the short term, and planning for a full national census (after planned national elections for 2022). UNFPA highlights a number of key concerns with regard to data availability:

● Limited data makes it difficult to identify those who are 'left behind' and who need immediate attention. Specifically, UNFPA South Sudan CO stated that only anecdotal information is available about women, girls and young people are most in need, particularly the rural and disadvantaged, first-time mothers and youth with disabilities.

● Existing population data is outdated because the 2014 population census was disrupted by the 2013 conflict.

● The lack of humanitarian and population data coupled with internal population movements and via borders of those returning, naturally creates gaps in quantity and quality of services supplied by UNFPA and its partners at their most vulnerable moments.

The chart at right presents CO reports from 75 survey response countries on their contribution to key development data initiatives (the above-mentioned initiatives plus common country assessments[43] (CCA) and MDG/SDG monitoring mechanisms). The most commonly cited initiative is MDG/SDG monitoring, followed by CCAs and census work.

Other development data initiatives

Approximately half of responding country offices also reported contributing to development data initiatives in addition to the above. The data generated by many of these activities is refreshed much more frequently than the more substantial initiatives mentioned above and thus can be of significantly more practical use for humanitarian preparedness and response. For example, demographic projections based upon representative population samples are implemented more frequently (and at less cost) than the "gold-standard" census reports and can therefore be of much greater use in the preparedness or response phases than data that may be several years out of date.

The following table lists the most commonly cited examples of other development initiatives that support the humanitarian data work of country offices:

TABLE 10: Country-Level Development Data Initiatives Reported by COs

Health Management Information System (DHIS2)	
GIS/spatial mapping services	CRVS/Civil and birth registration support
Multisectoral demographic and health surveys	COVID-19 surveys (related to GBV and key groups)
Health knowledge, attitudes, practices surveys	GBV/FGM surveys
SRH commodities and services surveys	Demographic dividend survey
Household multisectoral needs assessment	Multi-dimensional poverty index development
Population projections (in lieu of censuses when censuses are outdated)	Vulnerability assessments
Youth surveys	HIV surveys

> **Finding 5: While the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan does contain references to data for crisis preparation and response, UNFPA has not, to date, institutionalized the practice of developing theories of change governing humanitarian response work. Few countries have theories of change associated with their programme plans, with limited references to humanitarian work, and none to humanitarian data specifically.44**

Humanitarian response work in UNFPA is governed strategically by the 2012 Second Generation Humanitarian Response Strategy. This strategy does not incorporate an overall theory of change (ToC) that would govern previous or extant humanitarian programming.

The UNFPA overall 2018-2021 strategic plan has a published theory of change associated with it. This document contains several output-related references to data for humanitarian purposes, specifically:

5.   Outcome 4: Produced and disseminated quality population data, including in humanitarian settings.

6.   Outcomes 3 and 4: Strengthened national data systems and improved demographic intelligence to enable identification and planning for those left behind or affected by crises and natural disasters.

At the individual country office level, a desk review of published programme documentation identified country programme level ToCs for only six countries: Haiti, El Salvador, Eswatini, Sierra Leone, Turkey and Uganda. Within these, there were only brief references to humanitarian programme or population data and no specific references to humanitarian data were found. Evaluations that assessed these theories of change as part of country programme evaluations noted a range of structural shortcomings. For example, a country programme evaluation for Haiti covering 2013-2016 noted that the UNFPA Haiti theory of change had no explicit link between activities, outputs and impact.[45]

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[43] Country-based processes for reviewing and analysing a given national development situation and identifying key issues as a basis for advocacy, policy dialogue and preparation of the UNDAF.
[44] Note that the 2022 – 2025 UNFPA Strategic Plan was released following this evaluability assessment's data collection, analysis, and report writing.
[45] UNFPA, *2013-2016 Country Programme Evaluation*. 2016.

To underpin the 2020 global *Evaluation of UNFPA Capacity in Humanitarian Action 2012-2019*, the evaluation team reconstructed intervention logic for UNFPA humanitarian response work in general, linked to key strategic and programmatic outputs and outcomes of UNFPA and humanitarian actors globally.[46] This inferred ToC has clear data components – including explicit linkages between longer-term development (i.e., population) data and humanitarian data. The reconstructed ToC governing UNFPA humanitarian work notes data at both outcome and output levels, specifically:

1. Output 5: Improved availability of robust population data for UNFPA, GBV subcluster/RH working group/youth working group or task force and wider humanitarian evidence-based programming

2. Outcome 4: UNFPA and other humanitarian programmes are evidence-based using up-to-date population dynamics data to inform responses.

Albeit a reconstructed ToC, this working model was derived on the basis of all relevant strategic plans and guidance, both within and external to UNFPA, and was thus an accurate reflection of the reality of UNFPA humanitarian programming and tested via the subsequent evaluation questions and analysis framework.

Based on implied/reconstructed theories of change, there is clear scope for inclusion of data measurement and reporting elements across UNFPA humanitarian programming. Notwithstanding a lack of theory of change and recent documentation governing data management in humanitarian preparedness and intervention programming, UNFPA stakeholders indicate that, while at the regional and national levels this guidance may be lacking, there are some good examples of regional engagements around the centrality of data in humanitarian programming that are supported by staffing and workplans that include these efforts. For example, in 2021 UNFPA LACRO (with support from LAC COs and the Technical Division) provided updated COD-PS datasets for all but one country in the entire region. Further, as a preparedness action, UNFPA not only generated COD-PS datasets but produced high-resolution maps of key PINs for UNFPA programs (e.g., women of reproductive age, adolescents/youth etc.) at administrative level 2 or below. These efforts were to inform UNFPA preparedness activities through the provision of the best available data.

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[46] UNFPA, *Evaluation of the UNFPA capacity in humanitarian action (2012-2019)*, May 2020 Available: https://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/evaluation-unfpa-capacity-humanitarian-action-2012-2019

6.2. QUESTION 2: DATA INTERVENTION RELEVANCE TO NEEDS

To what extent are UNFPA-supported interventions in the field of data for humanitarian assistance relevant to identified needs? To what extent are they aligned to the UNFPA strategic plan?

Overall response

While there is not a substantial strategic underpinning of humanitarian data interventions, many of the substantive data initiatives that UNFPA contributes to at all levels are central to preparedness and the determination of the needs of crisis-affected populations. This is primarily focused on GBV and SRHR needs and less so on youth or other vulnerable groups.

Finding 6: There is some, but limited, articulation of humanitarian data needs in UNFPA strategies across global and regional levels. This is changing over time to a more comprehensive acknowledgement of humanitarian data.

As summarized under Finding 1, there is a range of strategies that govern the work of UNFPA across the entire humanitarian-development-peace nexus. To a large extent, they focus on the development end of the nexus, but humanitarian references and the need for good data to support humanitarian programming have been present since at least 2008 and are increasingly acknowledged as strategies are revisited and reformulated.

The following analysis details the references to humanitarian programming and data with the various UNFPA global strategic documents.

UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008-2011 (extended to 2013)

Within this strategic plan, outcome three is specifically related to data with reference to population and development data for policies and programme implementation. There are several references to humanitarian programming, although primarily in the context of mainstream UNFPA development work. The most prominent humanitarian-related activity articulated in this document is the promotion of the minimum initial services package (MISP) across humanitarian crises.

The most explicit reference to humanitarian data is under outcome three (outcome 2.4 in the associated results framework), which notes that "UNFPA will also play a key role to improve data collection, analysis and utilization before, during and after crises".[47]

UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017

This document makes several references to data, again mostly in the context of development and population data. There is one specific reference to data in humanitarian settings, as follows:

"Another focus will be on data in humanitarian settings, to use the Fund's comparative advantage in data analysis to ensure that planning is being done based on up-to-date, disaggregated data that enables vulnerable areas and populations to be identified in advance of crises."[48]

A second reference is an example of partnership opportunities that UNFPA may seek to explore in the arena of "big data" that is presented as a possibility to "generate information for decision-making rapidly (including in humanitarian settings)".[49] The nature of this approach (and the definition of 'big data' or what such an approach may entail) is not detailed further.

UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021

As with the preceding strategic plans, the emphasis on data by UNFPA within this document is on development and population data, specifically support to censuses and the need for strong population data to support ongoing programming. There are also references to data in the context of its importance to humanitarian programming, specifically:

"UNFPA will improve national population data systems to map and address inequalities. This will support the achievement of universal access to sexual and reproductive health, including during humanitarian crises…"[50] and *"The strengthening of national statistical systems will improve the capacity to: (a) produce population data, including in humanitarian settings"*.[51]

This document expands on previous commitments, however, by explicitly noting the "humanitarian data strategy of UNFPA",[52] which will focus on disaster risk reduction (per the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*) and leveraging its expertise and advantage in population data systems/demographic intelligence to build national capacity for DRR and humanitarian response.

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[47] UNFPA Strategic Plan 2008-2013, para. 2.2.4
[48] UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017, para. 31, p, 9
[49] UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017, para. 68, p, 17
[50] UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021, para. . 37, p. 11
[51] Ibid., para. . 38, p. 12

UNFPA Second Generation Humanitarian Strategy 2012

The UNFPA Second Generation Humanitarian Strategy 2012 builds on the first humanitarian response strategy from 2007-2009. That earlier strategy noted "the importance of timely and reliable data for planning an effective and appropriate humanitarian response"[53] with the second-generation strategy clearly articulating a range of measures on humanitarian data, including:

● Advocacy and collaboration with partners to incorporate data collection into national emergency planning

● Strengthening national capacity to collect and use sex- and age-disaggregated data needed for appropriate responses to emergency situations

● Taking appropriate remedial action where lack of progress on humanitarian results is noted

A specific programmatic outcome (#5) and output (#6) related to the leveraging of population data for humanitarian response are noted within the strategy. These focus on the use of such population data as a key element of humanitarian response, and also the preparation and use of "common operational data sets in selected vulnerable countries as part of data preparedness" and input in data collection and analysis for needs assessments. The fundamental approach articulated within this strategy is that UNFPA "emergency response is guided by the availability of relevant population and development data".[54]

Regional-level strategies, discussed above, are largely derived from the global-level strategy and, as such, incorporate most of the same provisions for humanitarian data (with one minor exception).

> **Finding 7: At the national level, a wide range of humanitarian data initiatives by UNFPA country offices are geared towards the assessment/identification of humanitarian needs for preparation and response to humanitarian crises. Although there may be challenges around the use of the common operational datasets – population statistics for ongoing humanitarian programming, these initiatives are largely viewed as increasingly essential to effective and efficient management and coordination of humanitarian response, crucially needed at the onset of crises.**

At the individual country level, an analysis of results frameworks associated with CPDs for outcomes, outputs and/or indicators related to development data, humanitarian response and humanitarian data (per the below chart) indicates a trend of robust (and relatively stable) presence of these elements in relation to development data across the decade. There is also an improving trend of such elements in relation to humanitarian response, to the extent of matching that of development data by 2020, but a very limited, although slightly improving trend of elements related to humanitarian data. By 2020, 93 per cent of country offices reviewed had CPDs/results frameworks[55], 71 per cent had humanitarian response outcomes, outputs and/or indicators and 13 per cent of UNFPA country offices had concrete elements related to humanitarian data in their CPD results frameworks, up from 4 per cent in 2010.

Of the many initiatives reported via the online survey and through interviews with UNFPA and other agency staff at CO level in the six case study countries, it is clear that many of them, in particular those linked to regular monitoring activities, are closely linked to the ongoing needs of affected populations in as close to real-time as possible. For example, the MISP – as guidance for SRHR programming and also the online 2019 MISP calculator[56] - has been widely used by UNFPA country offices as a tool for estimate population SRHR needs. In 2020, the *Evaluation of the UNFPA Capacity in Humanitarian Action* noted that "UNFPA has successfully promoted the global minimum standard for SRHR – the MISP – across all contexts."[57]

The range and types of specific national-level initiatives across the UNFPA humanitarian response countries included in this study were discussed previously in this report. A more detailed analysis of these data initiatives on the basis of their relevance to population needs indicates extensive contributions to a range of needs assessments across all countries. The chart below highlights the major needs assessments for humanitarian programming polled via the country office survey, including in relation to COVID-19.

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[52] Ibid., para. . 39, p. 12
[53] Cited in UNFPA Humanitarian Strategy, p. 9
[54] UNFPA Humanitarian Strategy 2012, p. 30
[55] Some UNFPA countries (e.g., Balkan countries, Fiji/Vanuatu) do not have completely discrete country offices programming or separa. te sets of strategic programme documentation. For others, absence of a CPD within the centralized UNFPA database may have been an administrative oversight.
[56] https://iawg.net/resources/misp-calculator
[57] UNFPA, *Evaluation of the UNFPA Capacity in Humanitarian Action (2012-2019)*, May 2020 Available: https://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/evaluation-unfpa-capacity-humanitarian-action-2012-2019

FIGURE 24: CDP Results Frameworks – Key Elements by Country by Year (Desk Review Data)

CPD & Results Framework Present
Humanitarian response outcomes/outputs/indicators
Data outcomes/outputs/indicators
Humanitarian data outcomes/outputs/indicators
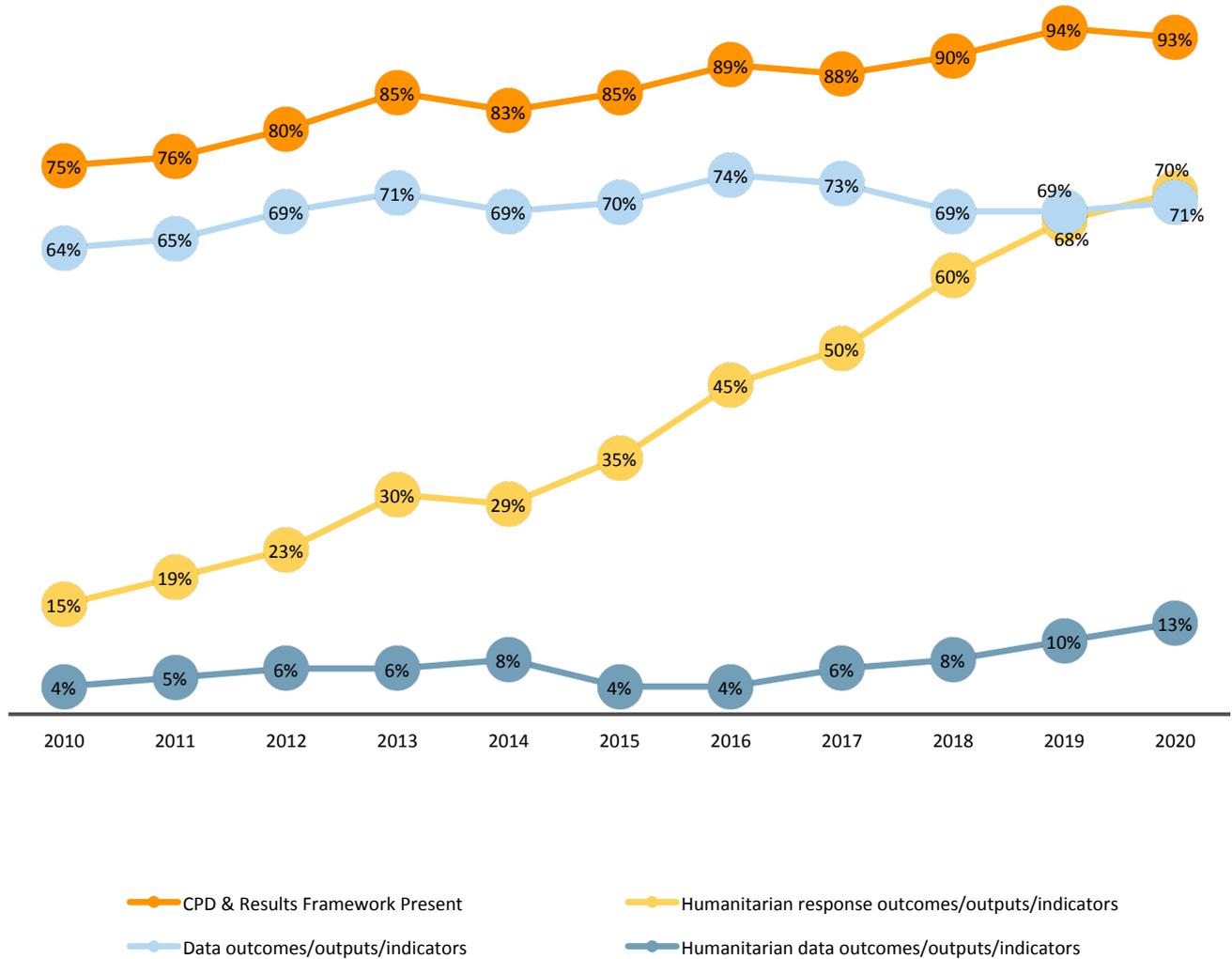
FIGURE 25: Major Needs Assessment Initiatives Contributed to by UNFPA COs (Survey Data)


■ 2020-21   ■ <=2019
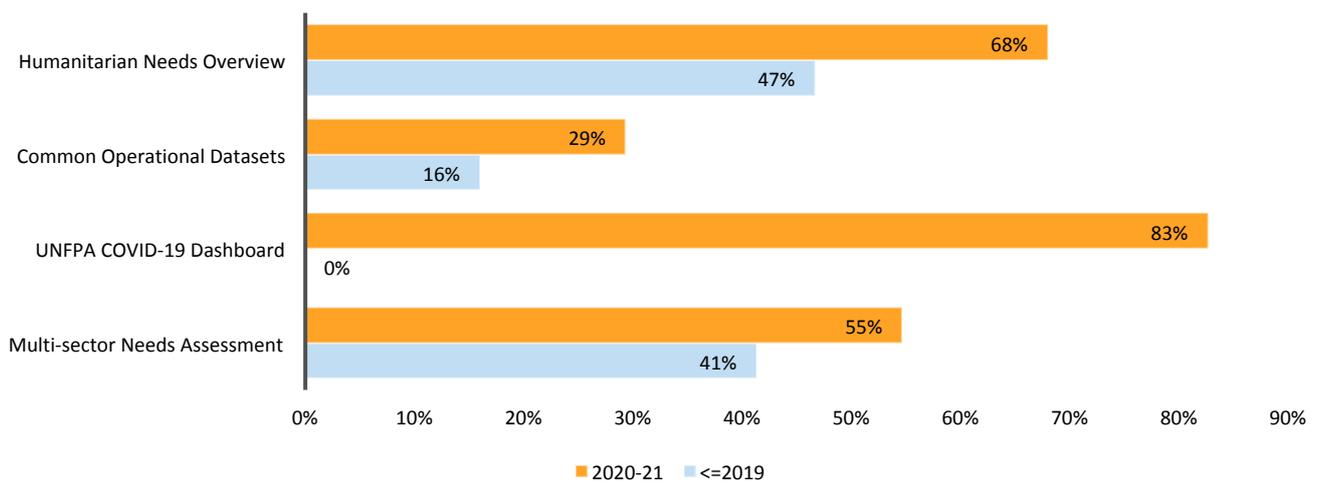
The UNFPA COVID-19 dashboard and the HNO are the most commonly cited needs assessment tools contributed to by UNFPA staff at country office level, at 80 per cent and 68 per cent of responding COs respectively, followed by MSNAs (which include variants of the MSNA such as the Joint MSNA) at 55 per cent. The COD-PS were the least commonly reported tool to be used at 29 per cent of COs reporting completing them in the previous year and a further 16 per cent in previous years.

The apparent low level of contribution to CODs/COD-PS does not correlate with the actual presence of CODs/COD-PS per country on the portal. Desk research indicates valid COD/COD-PS for 64 per cent of countries at the time of research (and since, the portal has undergone further updates). The lower level of reporting of these instruments by country office survey respondents may be a reflection of a lack of awareness of such instruments (and their application to humanitarian settings) among the surveyed stakeholders. Indeed, 35 per cent of survey respondents (which included staff representing the various UNFPA technical areas, including data management SRH, GBV and programme/country office management staff) said they did not know if their CO contributed to COD-PS or not. This suggests that the CODs/COD-PS may not be utilized as a point of reference on a regular basis for humanitarian programming staff. In some cases, poorly staffed CO may lack population data expertise, such that that the COD-PS are updated largely by the population and development branch/technical and the RO in consultation with the CO.

An analysis of the presence of COD/COD-PS across the 80 desk research countries, presented in the chart below, indicates a growing body of countries with this tool available to humanitarian stakeholders. A reason cited by UNFPA population specialists for greater proportion of overall CODs (which including those related to administrative boundaries as well as population statistics) than COD-PS is that COD-ABs are technically simpler to develop and do not tend to experience the same rate of change (unless in the case of natural disasters that merge geographic regions).

FIGURE 26: UNFPA Humanitarian Response Countries with Active/Valid COD/COD-PS, by Year
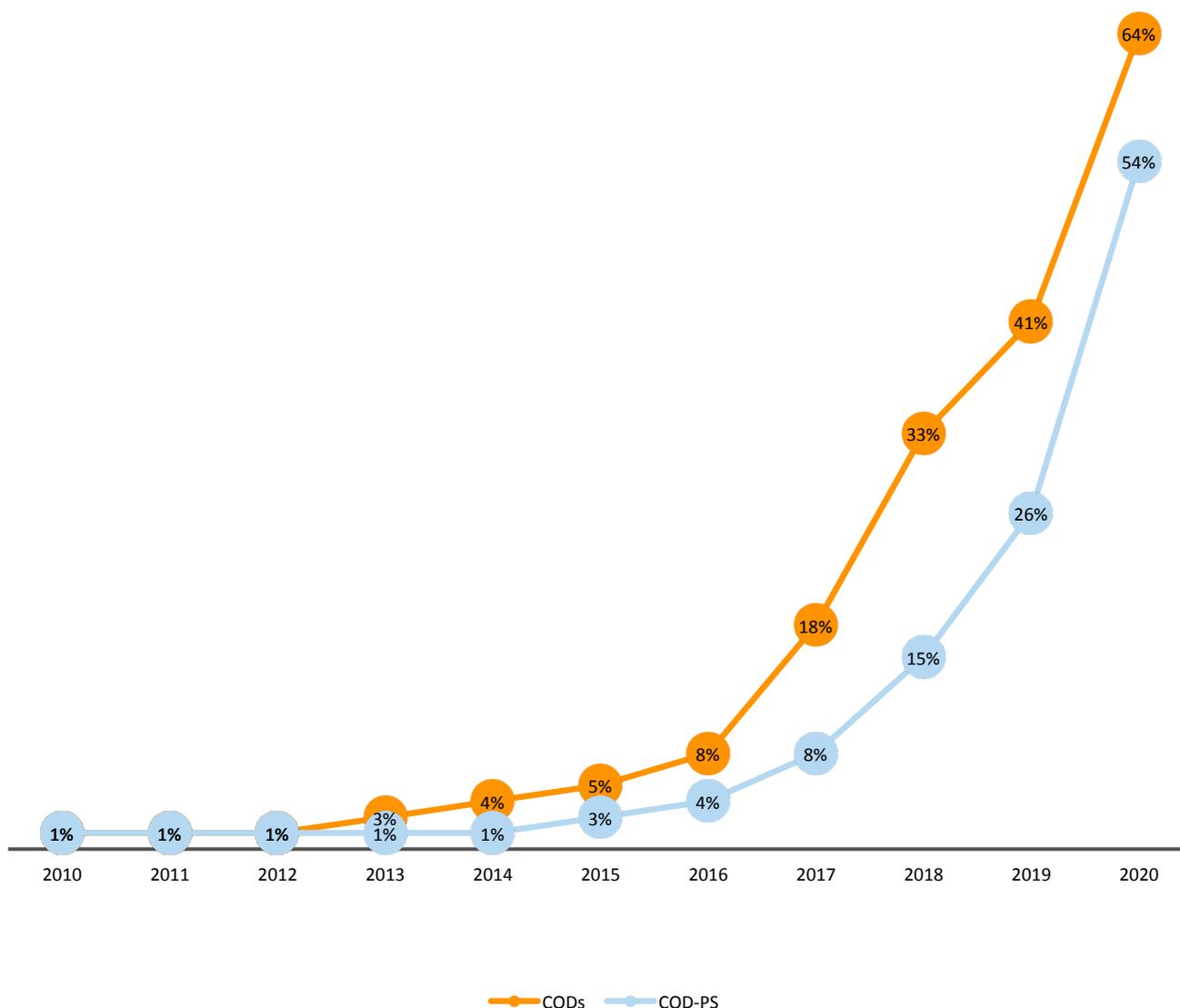
However, the timeliness of the data that is presented in the COD/COD-PS was noted to be a challenge by a number of external stakeholders interviewed as part of the baseline research. Indeed, many of the COD-PSs are based on data from previous years – the average reference year of COD-PS datasets from 160 countries worldwide is 2016, with only 16 countries having datasets from 2021 and 27 from 2020.[58] Many stakeholders interviewed for the baseline research noted an inherent challenge in the use of longer-term development/census-based population datasets for humanitarian programming where populations are frequently highly and rapidly mobile. While the Population and Development Branch has conducted research on the application of these data sets by humanitarian stakeholders (during 2018-2020), further research the direct application of these datasets by country offices by might prove useful to optimize their utility among all levels of humanitarian intervention staff and partners. In view of output 4 and output 5 of the 2022-2025 UNFPA strategic plan (which focus on supporting and strengthening data systems and evidence) a future evaluation should analyse efforts to roll out approved methods across UNFPA COs each year by technical staff. See further detail below.

A final cross-country initiative with humanitarian data components is the UNFPA **Minimum Preparedness Requirements/Minimum Preparedness Actions** (MPR/MPA), a suite of guidance initially rolled out in 2016, after the interagency field manual on MPAs were released in 2015 to "enable a coordinated and focused strengthening of UNFPA preparedness capacity".[59] These actions are mandatory for all UNFPA offices at national, regional and global levels to ensure a minimum level of preparedness in case of humanitarian crisis, including risk assessments that mandate specific actions once various thresholds are reached. The MPRs/MPAs incorporate humanitarian data elements and indeed cite the 2010 *Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations* as a key foundational element. The "Minimum Preparedness Guidance" notes, "Needs assessments, information management and response monitoring" as one of the four thematic areas of the MPAs, with the specific requirements under this thematic area as:

1. Inter-agency assessment tool incorporated sex- and age-disaggregated data and GBV/SRH issues.

2. Agreement on key indicators for GBV and SRH sector.

Further, it cites data in humanitarian settings as one of the key programme commitments (along with minimum standards on GBV, MISP and the youth compact) of its emergency and preparedness system.[60]

An analysis of achievement of the number of MPAs targeted by each UNFPA office (country offices, regional offices and sub-regional offices), presented in the chart at right, indicates a high level of compliance with the MPA requirements.

This does not analyse the specifics of compliance (or the specific MPAs that offices do not achieve), but such a high compliance level (89 per cent) is suggestive of good compliance with the humanitarian data elements of MPAs. Interestingly, although all UNFPA offices, including HQ, are obliged to complete MPAs, UNFPA HQ does not report against them in the SIS. The integration of humanitarian data management components into country/regional-level MPRs/MPAs may be a useful area for further research, as would unpacking quality vs quantity in relation to MPA completion by country offices. Further discussion on the challenges surrounding the collection of quality humanitarian data across the UNFPA mandate areas can be found below.

FIGURE 27: UNFPA Humanitarian Response Countries with Active/Valid COD/COD-PS, by Year

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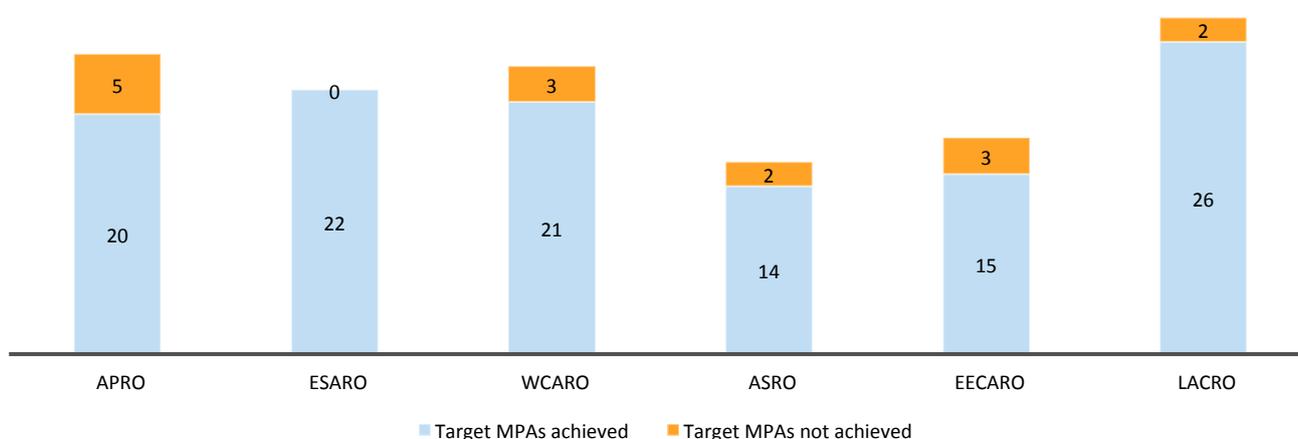
[58] Data from https://cod.unocha.org/ UNFPA stakeholders indicate there were major COD-PS updates to HDX in the second quarter of 2021; however, for the purpose of this baseline, the time line 2010-2020 is reflected in the findings.
[59] UNFPA, UNFPA Revised Minimum Preparedness Guidance Note, HFCB, 2016.
[60] MPA guidance - Internal presentation, undated

> **Finding 8: The evolution of humanitarian data initiatives over the past ten years has been in alignment with the (albeit limited) articulation of humanitarian data elements in UNFPA strategic planning, although there is little evidence to indicate that this has been by design.**

The linkages between UNFPA humanitarian data initiatives and outcomes articulated across strategic documents have been discussed in depth above. The references to humanitarian data within these strategic documents are, typically, general in context; for example:

- Planning … based on up-to-date, disaggregated data that enables vulnerable areas and populations to be identified (UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017)

- Generate information for decision-making rapidly, including in humanitarian settings (*UNFPA Strategic Plan 2014-2017*)

- Improved national population data systems to map and address inequalities; […] to strengthen interventions in humanitarian crises (*UNFPA Strategic Plan 2018-2021*).

While outside the scope of this assignment, it is important to highlight that the newly released *2022-2025 UNFPA Strategic Plan*[61] states that UNFPA will support the scaling-up of data in humanitarian settings by 1) strengthening and utilizing data systems, 2) building capacity in data disaggregation, analysis, dissemination, and utilization, 3) increasing data coverage and quality for SDG Target 5.6 indicators, and 4) emphasizing and promoting real-time monitoring to provide decision-making data.[62]

The 2012 Second Generation Humanitarian Strategy is also more explicit in its articulation of specific outcomes related to humanitarian data, notably programmatic outcome #5 and output (#6) related to:

- Leveraging of population data for humanitarian response.

- The contribution to and use of common operational datasets in selected vulnerable countries as part of preparedness.

- Input in data collection and analysis for needs assessments.

The range of UNFPA humanitarian data initiatives discussed in Section 5 is indicative of UNFPA meeting these strategic outcomes. Specific examples are contributions to the COD-PS and to a range of country and regional needs assessments. Evidence from country-level data collection does not suggest concerted efforts to interpret these brief references to humanitarian data in the strategic documents much further beyond the noted initiatives. The humanitarian data initiatives that go beyond the strategic outcomes have therefore evolved on a more ad-hoc basis in response to immediate information needs and available data technologies or in response to specific project/programme (or donor) requirements and thus are not widely integrated across country or regional strategic plans.

Few of the respondents to the online survey or key informants interviewed across the six UNFPA case study countries or regions articulated alignment with UNFPA strategic plan outcomes as a key driver of their decisions to implement humanitarian data initiatives.

> **Finding 9: Existing data initiatives are tailored towards and linked to the main UNFPA mandate areas of SRHR and GBV (and more recently, COVID-19) but less so for youth and vulnerable groups (elderly, people with disabilities, LGBQTI people), reflective of the limited amount of investment of UNFPA in these areas.**

The humanitarian data initiatives that UNFPA implements or contributes to run the full range of mandate areas, particularly the larger interagency initiatives (such as HNOs/HRP/3RP, 4W/5Ws). However, this does not always hold true – some global-level initiatives are focused on specific sectoral areas, e.g., the GBVIMS for GBV data. Further, smaller-scale initiatives – those that are more focused at the national level – are more likely to be specific to individual sectoral areas. Key examples of these are individual dashboards that present data on specific service provision across sub-national or national regions. These tend to be focused on UNFPA mandate areas of SRHR and GBV, and less so on youth, which does not typically receive the same level of programme focus within UNFPA as the other two mandate areas. The 2020 *Evaluation of UNFPA Capacity in Humanitarian Action* noted that UNFPA had "no systematic or consistent mechanisms for assessing the needs of youth" although it noted ad-hoc examples across a number of countries of increased consideration for youth-friendly/adolescent-friendly services but with "limited evidence of results".[63] Evidence from the case study countries underscored this finding. Further discussion and technical review on how to mainstream –

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[61] UNFPA, *The UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2022-2025*, United Nations DP/FPA/2021/8, 2021. Available: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/board-documents/main-document/ENG_DP.FPA_.2021.8_-_UNFPA_strategic_plan_2022-2025_-_FINAL_-_14Jul21.pdf.

[62] See paragraphs 55, 56, 77, 104, and 118 of the 2022-2025 UNFPA Strategic Plan.

[63] UNFPA, *Evaluation of the UNFPA capacity in Humanitarian Action (2012-2019)*, May 2020 Available: https://www.unfpa.org/admin-resource/evaluation-unfpa-capacity-humanitarian-action-2012-2019

humanitarian data work across other thematic areas, given the strength of existing thematic networks within UNFPA on "low fertility and aging", "adolescents and youth" and "disability and inclusion", etc., is recommended.

6.3. QUESTION 3: EVALUATION INFORMATION NEEDS

What are the information needs to be addressed within the framework of the evaluation on the support to the generation, provision and utilization of data in humanitarian assistance?

Overall response

There is an extensive body of information on UNFPA humanitarian data initiatives across locations, time and sectors to support an evaluation. However, there are humanitarian data challenges that should be further explored, such as quantity/quality of data across the UNFPA mandate areas, the balance between longer-term development data needs and processes and immediate response data needs, and the wide range of tools and technologies used to capture, manage and report on data.

Finding 10: UNFPA collects an extensive range of primary and secondary data on humanitarian preparedness and response across all countries and regions and related to its mandate areas, though primarily SRHR, GBV and general demographics (population data).

As detailed above, there is an extensive body of humanitarian data initiatives across UNFPA. UNFPA is a consistent and acknowledged contributor to the major humanitarian data initiatives used worldwide (HNOs, HRPs, CODs, etc.), as well as to a wide variety of national and regional-level data initiatives and information-sharing/coordination mechanisms. These initiatives make use of primary humanitarian and longer-term population data collected by UNFPA implementing partners, third parties and UNFPA staff, and secondary data in the form of databases, statistics, indices etc. that UNFPA contributes to or leverages for its humanitarian programming.[64] There is also widespread and increasing use of population data for specific data initiatives (i.e., the COD-PS).

Under Output 13 of the UNFPA 2018-2021 Strategic Plan, there is a specific indicator related to collection of data on population needs, i.e., Output Indicator 13.4: *Proportion of countries that experienced humanitarian crises and that conducted rapid assessments of the affected populations, including pregnant women.*

Country office engagement in data management

Indonesia: UNFPA Indonesia has established the Knowledge Hub for Reproductive Health, an interactive platform and scientific forum to develop evidence-based studies on reproductive health, in collaboration with BAPPENAS and University of Indonesia's Faculty of Public Health (FKMUI). The hub, essentially an online platform for exchanging critical reproductive health information such as research results, lessons learned, experiences and ideas, allows experts and practitioners to create more effective and inclusive networks where peers and experts can provide technical inputs and support for each other as needed.

South Sudan: In addition to monthly situation reporting produced by the South Sudan CO, UNFPA has also conducted several assessments. In 2014, UNFPA conducted a regular safety audit with all relevant clusters; in 2015, UNFPA led a nationwide MISP assessment; in 2016, UNFPA produced the *HCT Protection Strategy Baseline Survey Report* and in 2018 a safety audit of POCs, which led to an interagency programme to address GBV. UNFPA is also an active participant in the Clinical Management of Rape (CMR) Task Force of the RH WG (led by UNFPA), MARA Working Group, Joint Consultation Forum (UNMISS and UNFPA) and the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) for Grave Violations against Children Task Force (UNMISS and UNICEF).

Cameroon: UNFPA plays an important role of gathering GBV data and communicating it to other humanitarian stakeholders. Analysis of GBVIMS data assists humanitarian actors to discover and respond to gaps in the provision of essential GBV services. The UNFPA CO prepared updated guidelines (March 2021) for GBV subcluster data coordination. Data is submitted by subcluster partners to the UNFPA and International Rescue Committee (IRC) focal points each month. Data is disaggregated by sex, age, disability, accompanying children, vulnerability status (IDP, host population, refugee, returnee) and, if possible, by location. In practice, UNFPA Cameroon reported that many actors have their own reporting formats and disaggregation requirements. In most cases, data is not disaggregated at the district, sub-division or village level, presenting challenges to decision making on humanitarian interventions.

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[64] UNFPA programmes collect primary data through direct contact with beneficiaries or via IPs specially designed for understanding the context and problems faced by the population of concern in crisis. UNFPA also contributes to and utilises secondary data, which involves a rigorous process of data collation, synthesis and analysis building of all relevant information available from different sources, such as the government, NGOs, United Nations agencies, etc., to build on logic that the severity of the crisis, the type, scope, scale of problems, and risks faced by the affected population can be estimated or projected with reasonable degree of accuracy by following a systematic approach.

Feedback from informants at country levels – both within and outside UNFPA – indicates that there is widespread openness (where contexts permit) to sharing data among stakeholders to ensure optimal coordination, coverage and response to immediate needs.

However, feedback from key informants also suggests that, while these initiatives are important and useful, there is also a range of challenges around the adequacy of data in terms of:

- Timeliness and capacity in data management – while UNFPA has improved the availability of COD-P in recent years and thus the availability and timeliness of population projections has improved, COs noted that especially population census data is dated or based on estimates. A further limiting factor is UNFPA capacity to include its priorities around pregnant women, adolescents and youth, elderly persons, persons with disabilities in MIRAs and MSNAs.

- Lack of adequate baselines against which progress can be measured, particularly in the event of sudden-onset crises where there is not enough time or resources to gather robust baseline data.

- Data bottlenecks or gatekeeping – often by governments that are unwilling to make data public for political reasons, place restrictions on sharing of data or delay authorization for sharing.

- Limited capacity on the ground among data collection partners, either from an organizational skills/capacity perspective, or because of poor access to locations for data collection.

The extent to which these, and other, challenges prevail across UNFPA programming and strategies for their mitigation should be a target of further research.

As noted under Finding 9 above, the predominant programmatic focus of UNFPA humanitarian response is primarily on the SRHR and GBV sectors, with a lesser focus on youth and vulnerable groups. This is reflected in the data initiatives supporting these responses, with the only dedicated initiatives that collate data for this sector being present at individual country or regional response level.

> **Finding 11: The quantity, sectoral scope and geographical spread of humanitarian data initiatives being implemented by, on behalf of, and with the support of UNFPA at national, regional and global levels are adequate to support an evaluation of the generation, sharing and use of this data.**

From a strategic perspective, humanitarian assistance programming by UNFPA since 2010, governed by the key global-level strategic plans (2008-2013, 2014-2017, 2018-2021) and the 2012 Second Generation Humanitarian Strategy, while incorporating elements of humanitarian data, does not have a discrete theory of change associated with it. Humanitarian assistance is, rather, integrated within the strategies that are accompanied theories of change. This is primarily evidenced by the *2018-2021 UNFPA Strategic Plan*, which has detailed a theory of change document. This theory of change includes one clear reference to data as one of the four strategic plan outcomes: i.e., production and dissemination of population data, including in humanitarian settings (illustrated in the figure below, emphasis added).

Outcome 4 change model in brief

Italicized phrases: Condition not directly addressed by UNFPA (critical assumptions,

Underlined phrases: Condition linked to another strategic plan outcome

Impact

Achieved universal access to sexual and reproductive health, realized reproductive rights, and reduced maternal mortality to accelerate progress on the ICPD agenda, to improve the lives of adolescents and youth, and women, enabled by population dynamics, human rights, and gender equality

Everyone, everywhere, is counted, and accounted for, in the pursuit of sustainable development

Outcomes

Analytic methods widely used to track inequalities within core indicators and populations

Produced and disseminated quality population data, including in humanitarian settings

Informed target setting, shaped programming, and monitored progress on the bulls-eye

Outputs

1. Improved national population data systems to map and address inequalities, to advance the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the commitments of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, and to strengthen interventions in humanitarian crises
2. Mainstreamed demographic intelligence to improve the responsiveness, targeting and impact of development policies, programmes and advocacy
3. *Improved infrastructure including information communication technology*

Analysis of these strategic documents indicates progressively increasing acknowledgement of the importance of humanitarian programming and the role of humanitarian data (and of timely development data such as timely updates of population statistics bearing upon humanitarian decision-making), across UNFPA over the past decade. The recently released *2022-2025 UNFPA Strategic Plan*, and the *Humanitarian Vision Paper* that was also under preparation in 2021, while outside the scope of this research, are expected to further embed these roles.

From a data availability perspective, the baseline research has collected evidence of a considerable body of humanitarian data gathered by UNFPA at country, response, region and global levels across all response countries over the past decade (and before). For the purpose of this assignment, and in line with current alignment of UNFPA programming around data, humanitarian data consists of a variety of global/international initiatives in which UNFPA partakes, interagency working group initiatives and country-level activities (including for example, disaster management frameworks, rapid assessment or response mechanisms, thematic or situational reporting and the like) (see Table 3 above for more detail). In contrast, development data initiatives within the scope of this assignment include census work, population estimates, including COD-PS, DHS, MICS and SDG monitoring, all of which have a crucial role in the planning and management of humanitarian crises.

There has been a clear trend of increasing use of humanitarian data tools at these levels over the course of the decade, but particularly in the past 5-6 years. At country level, there is a multiplicity of specific data initiatives that contribute to the body of data available to be analysed and aggregated at regional/global levels (although this is done so in a limited fashion).

Sectorally, CO survey results indicate there is good differentiation of data across the UNFPA mandate areas of SRHR and GBV, though less so for youth programming. Further, as displayed in the chart below, much of the humanitarian data directly related to rights-holders/beneficiaries (e.g., programme beneficiary data, rather than macro-level population data) being collected at country/response level is analysed to allow reporting against basic sex/age/location disaggregation (88 per cent of country offices report disaggregating some or all data across sex, age and location), with vulnerability criteria (e.g., disability status, LGBQTI status, female household head, etc.) being applied in a more ad-hoc manner, but still present across a significant proportion of countries for at least some data.
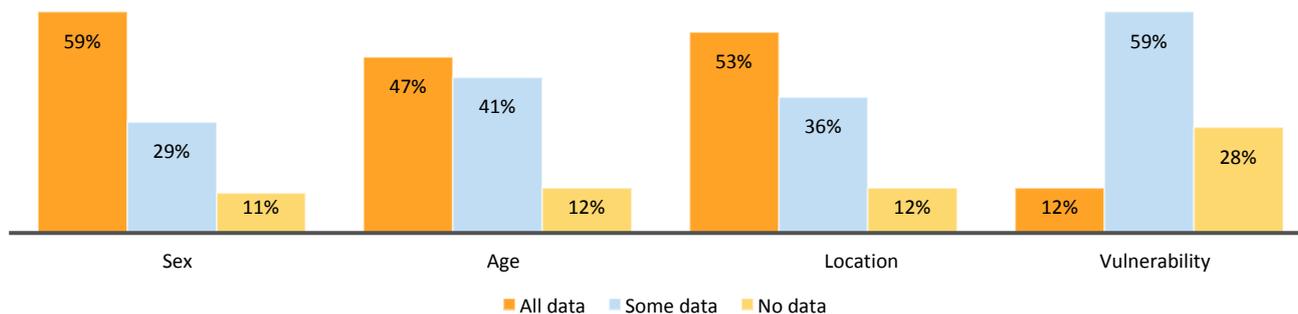
Finding 12: The strategic basis for humanitarian data - both retrospective and prospective - and the quantity of data across locations, sectors, time and groups can be captured via a testable theory of change. A draft of this theory of change accompanies this report.

Overall, the existing and emerging strategic basis, the quantity and quality of data collected over time, the quantity of initiatives by which it is collected, and the mechanisms by which it is aggregated and reported on provide a basis for a testable theory of change for humanitarian data. One of the outcomes of this research and analysis has been to reconstruct this theory of change, presented in Section 1. This theory of change can be utilized as the basis for a robust evaluation of the production and use of humanitarian data in UNFPA to date, while taking into account the future needs and strategic directions of the organization.

Finding 13: In the absence of a definitive policy on humanitarian data or a unified humanitarian data portal, humanitarian data is collected using a range of methods and tools, analysed and collated into a very wide and disparate range of databases, reports, dashboards, etc.

Responses from country offices to the online survey indicate a relatively low level of familiarity and usage of the keystone policy document on humanitarian data, the *2010 Guidelines on Data Issues in Humanitarian Crisis Situations*. Some data guidance and policies are used on an ad-hoc basis, with a body of guidance slowly emerging within UNFPA, such as that being compiled by the APRO (noted above). However, there is no definitive, recent and regularly managed/updated body of policies and guidance (and associated resources) governing UNFPA work on humanitarian data. As a result, UNFPA humanitarian response operational units apply a disparate range of policies, guidance and technologies (discussed in relation to humanitarian needs above) to meet their humanitarian informational needs.

Humanitarian data is collected and processed at various levels within UNFPA, including the CO, RO and HQ. Humanitarian data products including the COD-PS are constructed by the PDB/Technical Division given their highly technical nature (of constructing and/or refining sub-national population projections). The majority of the COD-Ps technical work done within PDB/Technical Division utilizes customized R-code libraries that are maintained and updated by technical specialists. These efforts also include the dissemination and visualization humanitarian data products (e.g., for COD-PS dataset dissemination via the humanitarian data exchange or COD-PS dataset visualization via arcGIS etc).

The most common types, and the numbers of, technology used in humanitarian data collection, as reported by country offices reporting to the online survey, are presented in the charts above. Approximately 85 per cent of country offices with active responses used some form of technological solution for their humanitarian data needs, with almost 50 per cent using more than one type. Further, the data collected from these tools is collated and presented via a wide selection of standalone dashboards, portals, databases, etc.

For example, in Yemen, where UNFPA has been undertaking humanitarian response activities at least since 2010 and which, as of 2021, is the second largest UNFPA humanitarian response (after Syria), there are four separate national-level sectoral humanitarian dashboards that UNFPA maintains, as well as another ten interagency or internal datasets to which the country office provides humanitarian data. The figure, below, provides a graphical representation of the different data initiatives.

FIGURE 30: Types and Numbers of Technologies/Tools/Software Cited by Country Offices (From Survey)

| Google Forms | Others | ArcGIS | PowerBI | Custom | ODK | SPSS | QGIS |
| 25% | 24% | 13% | 12% | 9% | 9% | 8% | 5% |

Number of countries

| n/r | none | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 10 | 12 | 24 | 13 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 |

Number of data software solutions reported in usage
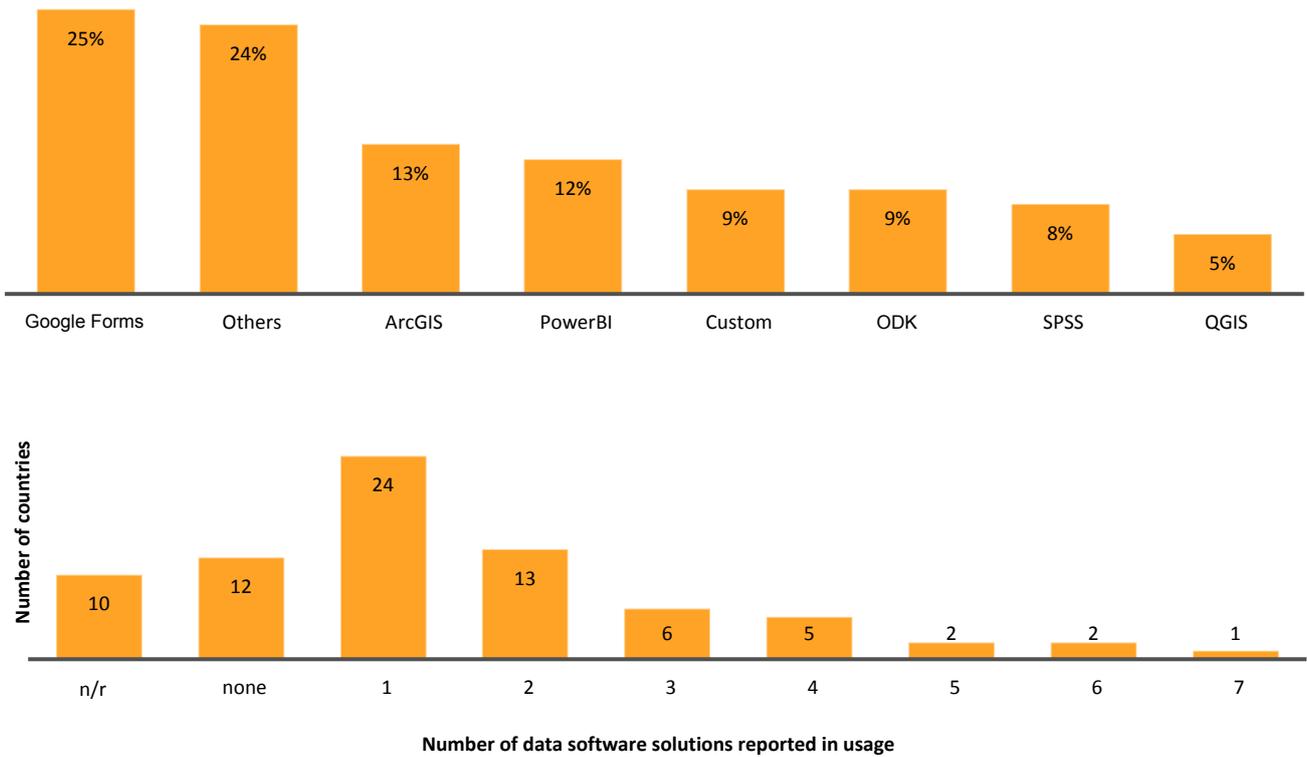
FIGURE 31: UNFPA Yemen Data Tools and Flows

UNFPA Yemen Data Initiatives
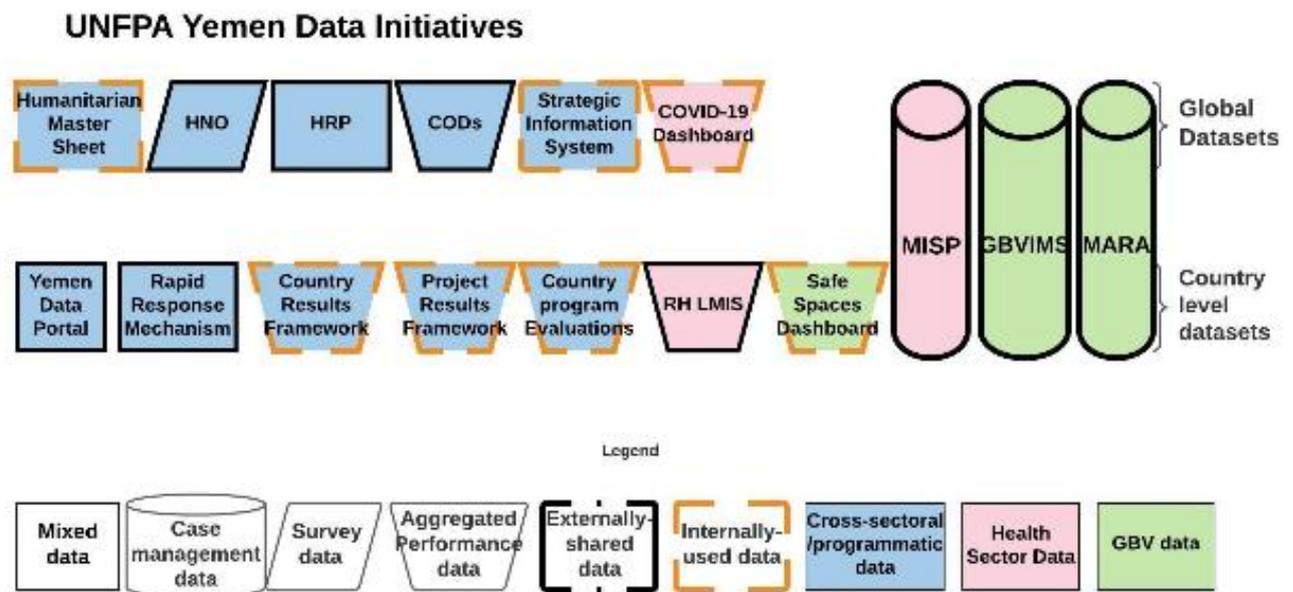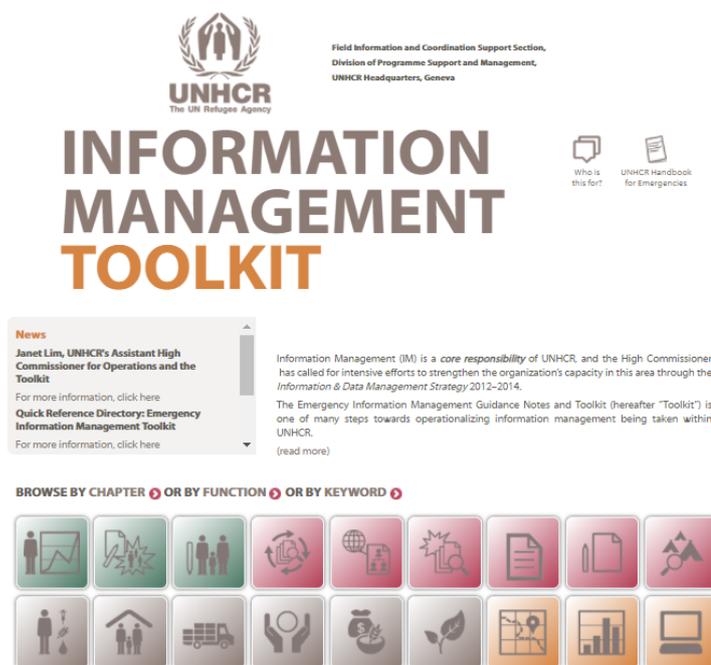
This can be contrasted with the resources UNFPA commits to its work on population data, which is the responsibility of a specific branch within UNFPA, has dedicated staff within regional and country offices, and an ongoing focus on up-to-date and high-quality guidance and technical support to the production and dissemination of population data.

A further contrasting example of management of data from outside UNFPA is presented by UNHCR, which implements an operational data portal[65] that provides up-to-date information on crisis situations worldwide. This is analogous to (albeit considerably more detailed than) the UNFPA emergencies dashboard, and also links to the UNHCR Information Data Toolkit portal[66], which has a variety of 'chapters' on different elements of humanitarian data (including population statistics, data strategies, needs assessments, 3Ws, etc.).

> **Finding 14: The heterogeneous nature of UNFPA humanitarian contexts, initiatives and data presents a challenge to interoperability and raises concern around data security and safety.**

The wide variety of information, tools and technologies in use by UNFPA across responses, and the existing guidance that may (or may not) be utilized by UNFPA operationally to guide humanitarian data collection and management is a solid basis for the future evaluation of the production and use of this data. However, this variety and the lack of integrated and up-to-date guidance also presents challenges to interoperability of datasets, and indeed to considerations of safety and security of data that may contain personally identifiable information on programme beneficiaries – including members of groups vulnerable to prejudice, exploitation or abuse from third parties (e.g., sex workers, LGBQTI persons).

This aspect of humanitarian data was explored in some detail via the online survey of country offices. Respondents were asked to note the specific types of potentially sensitive information that their country office or implementing partners collected regarding beneficiaries. The charts below illustrate how many offices were responsible for collecting this information and those collecting multiple types of information.

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[65] https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations
[66] https://im.unhcr.org/imtoolkit/

Chart 1 — # of info types collected (Both/Either, via IP, UNFPA directly):

- 5: Both/Either 31%, via IP 3%, UNFPA directly 23%
- 4: Both/Either 20%, via IP 7%, UNFPA directly 19%
- 3: Both/Either 12%, via IP 7%, UNFPA directly 12%
- 2: Both/Either 19%, via IP 23%, UNFPA directly 17%
- 1: Both/Either 4%, via IP 11%, UNFPA directly 11%
- 0: Both/Either 15%, via IP 51%, UNFPA directly 19%

Legend: ■ Both/Either ■ via IP ■ UNFPA directly

Chart 2 (via IP, UNFPA directly):

- Behaviors and location: via IP 51%, UNFPA directly 17%
- Risk information: via IP 51%, UNFPA directly 29%
- Financial information: via IP 33%, UNFPA directly 17%
- Health information: via IP 64%, UNFPA directly 17%
- Identifying information: via IP 71%, UNFPA directly 35%

Legend: ■ via IP ■ UNFPA directly
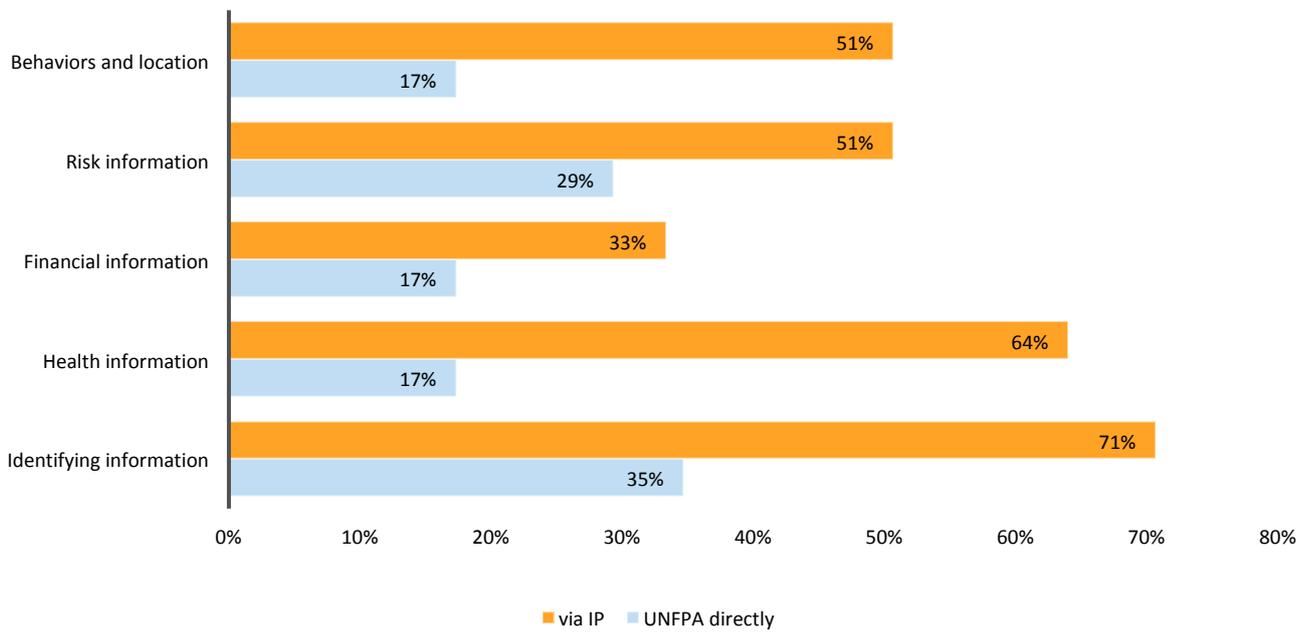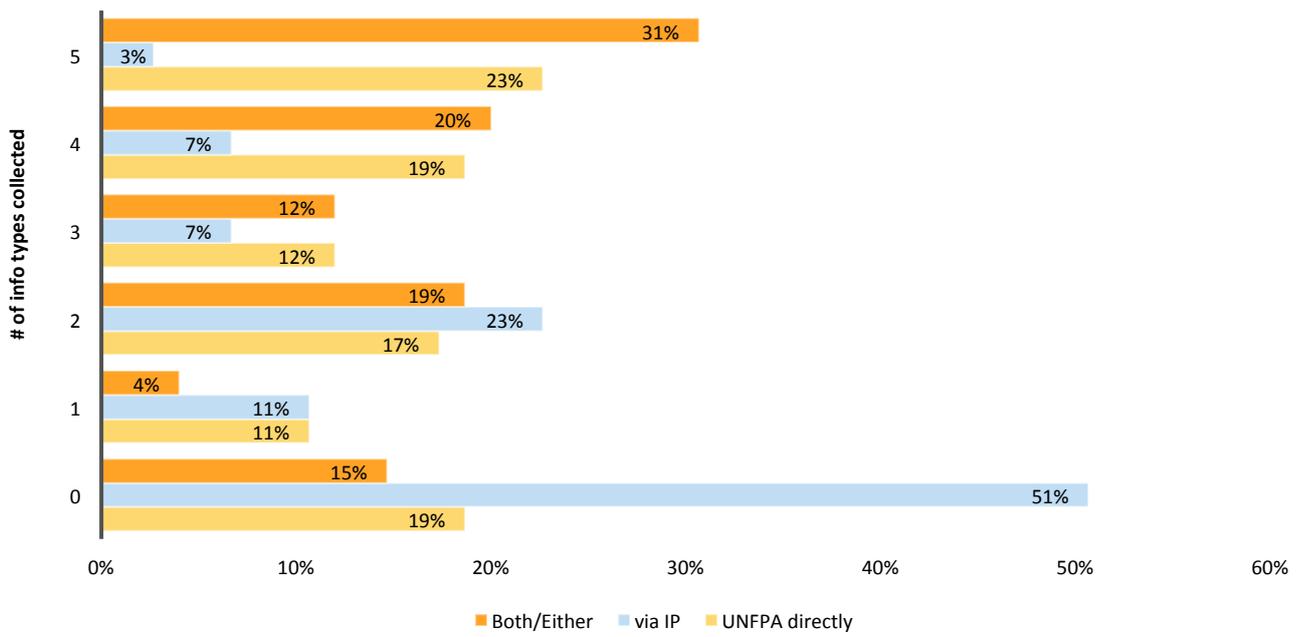
Overall, the majority (85 per cent) of offices collected at least one piece of sensitive information directly or (more commonly) via partners, with over half of responding countries indicating they collected four or more of these.

Offices also reported on measures that they take to secure this data from access by unauthorized entities, with 13 per cent not indicating that they undertook any measures (although several of these did note more general protection measures such as password-protecting data files). The avoidance of publishing photographs, use of consent, anonymization[67] of data and use of passwords were the most commonly cited protocols, with limited use of written protocols for data or procedures for dealing with breaches.

UNFPA has a suite of ICT policies related to data security available as part of its overall body of policies and procedures (noted under Table 1, above), but these date from 2012 and are not specific to humanitarian programming, so may not be relevant to the extant initiatives around data across UNFPA humanitarian programming globally.

The findings from the survey are well supported by evidence from interviews at country and regional level, which indicates that safety and security considerations are an important consideration of many of the data initiatives and are in-built into most of the data collection/aggregation and reporting/communication tools being utilized by UNFPA at country or response levels. However, these processes are not driven by any centralized policies or guidelines but are the responsibility of the technical staff that implement the technology solutions and manage databases, dashboards etc.

This policy gap is in contrast to the centrality of data security and importance surrounding some of the external initiatives that UNFPA contributes to, e.g., the GBV Guidelines or the GBVIMS, which place the safety/security of rights-holder information at the forefront of the work that they support. This is an important area that would benefit from further research as part of the full evaluation.

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[67] "Anonymization" (permanently and completely removing personal identifiers from data) is frequently equated with "de-identification" (removal of personally identifying information, but with the possibility of re-associating this with the data at a later time). Both are distinct processes and further research in this area could explore the boundaries of these with respect to UNFPA data.

6.4. QUESTION 4: MONITORING FRAMEWORKS, PROCESSES AND RESULTS

To what extent are adequate monitoring frameworks, processes and resources (including human resources) in place to enable data collection and the assessment of results?

Overall response

There are extensive processes and systems in place to capture humanitarian data and results. However, the resourcing of data collection and management is more ad-hoc than systematic, leading to different amounts of investment at country or response level. This may contribute to the more fragmented landscape of humanitarian data discussed above.

> **Finding 15: With a diversity of data systems, partners, tools and technologies across all countries and regions, the practice of initiative monitoring, data collection, results tracking and data management is well embedded across UNFPA programming.**

The assessment has identified many examples of monitoring frameworks, processes and systems across all locations reviewed and all dimensions of programming across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. As discussed above, strategic documents governing UNFPA operations at global, regional and national levels have been historically and continue to be accompanied by well-defined results frameworks. At initiative level, preparation of monitoring, evaluation and results measurement tools and frameworks is a prerequisite of most donor-funded initiatives, either directly from donors or via centralized funding mechanisms such as CERF.

The chart at right illustrates the results of a review of all valid CPDs identified by the assessment team across the 80 humanitarian response countries since 2010. It is clear that there is a very high level of compliance with inclusion of these instruments across all country strategies, and this is increasing over time. Indeed, those countries where CPD results frameworks were not identified may be a limitation of the research insofar as the results frameworks could not be located easily by the research team (i.e., gaps in UNFPA institutional memory).

At regional and global levels, there are additional initiatives that exist to track results and data within the organization. The regional Syria response, for example, implements a system of harmonized key indicators and definitions; compiles beneficiary data (including adolescent girls, LGBQTI, disabilities), service-level data, facility data and supply data covering the response countries of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey (both the cross-border response and refugee response within Turkey).

At global level, UNFPA implements a range of results data tracking mechanisms, discussed above in Section 5, notably compiled into the SIS (internally) but also published via annual reporting [both overall for the organization and specific to individual programme sectors (humanitarian, development, population, commodities, etc.)] and made available publicly via UNFPA data dashboards.[68] This organizational approach to results monitoring and reporting provides a solid basis for further evaluation research.

FIGURE 35: Country Programme Documents with Associated Results Frameworks
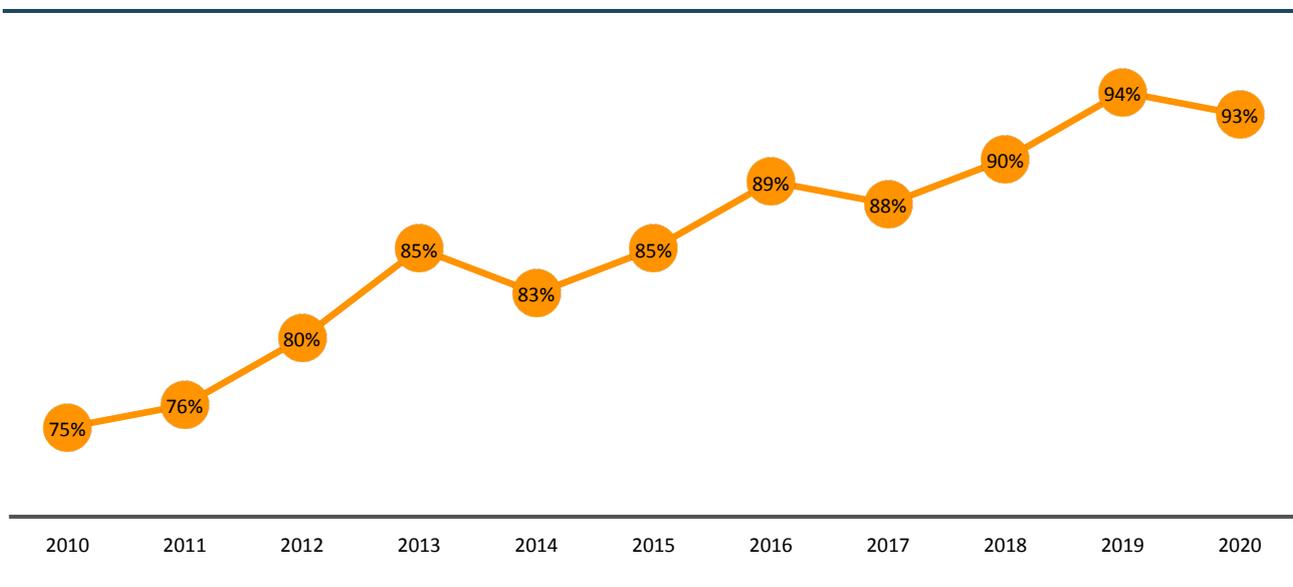
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[68] https://www.unfpa.org/data

As discussed under Findings 1-3 above, UNFPA strategic frameworks at global, regional and national levels incorporate humanitarian components, albeit limited in extent. The most recent Strategic Plan, however, provides extensive focus on humanitarian intervention and data and this is supported by a technical paper produced by the Data Task Team that articulates the population data strategy and priorities of UNFPA, including in humanitarian settings.[69] The articulation of this is reflected within associated monitoring and results frameworks, as described in the following table:

TABLE 11: Humanitarian Elements Within Strategic Results Frameworks

Strategic document	Location	Reference specifics
UNFPA 2009-2013 Strategic Plan Results Framework	None	None
2012 Humanitarian Strategy	Outcome 5	Improved data availability and analysis around population dynamics, SRH (including family planning) and gender equality.
	Output 6 (under Outcome 5)	Production, utilization and dissemination of demographic data on population dynamics, youth, gender and SRH in humanitarian programming.
UNFPA 2014-2017 Strategic Plan Results Framework	Output 12 (under Outcome 4)	Strengthened national capacity on population data for development and humanitarian programming.
	Output 15 (under Outcome 4)	Strengthened national capacity for using data and evidence to monitor/evaluate national policies and programmes in PD, SRHR, HIV, adolescents/youth & gender equality, including in humanitarian settings.
UNFPA 2018-2021 Strategic Plan Results Framework	Output 13 (under Outcome 4)	Improved national population data systems to map and address inequalities; to advance the SDGs and ICPD; and to strengthen interventions in humanitarian crises.
2022-2025 UNFPA Strategic Plan: Theory of change underlying the results framework	Output 4	Output 4: Population change and data includes the following: ***Innovation and digitalization*** (f) Generating "faster" humanitarian data on needs and results. ***Resilience and adaptation, and complementarity among development, humanitarian and peace-responsive efforts*** (b) Supporting data disaggregation and spatially referenced population to inform climate change, natural disasters and conflict-related vulnerability assessments and actions. (c) Strengthening partnerships to build capacity in risk information, specifically: hazard forecasts; vulnerability and exposure data; and records of impacts from past emergencies to strengthen early warning and anticipatory action. (d) Identifying metrics for tracking regularly (monthly or quarterly) climate-related public health emergency, conflict, displacement or other humanitarian risks and impacts under the UNFPA mandate.
	Output 5	Output 5: Humanitarian action includes the following: ***Human rights-based and gender-transformative approaches***

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[69] The Data Task Team consists of UNFPA representative from headquarters, regional offices and country offices and the Data Committee endorsed the technical report as part of the preparation process of the UNFPA Strategic Plan 2022-2025. The report outlines the challenges, opportunities and recommended strategy going forward to advance data as an accelerator to achieve the Strategic Plan 2022-2025 outcomes and outputs.

		(c) Systematically, transparently and timely contributing data and information on vulnerability and response to humanitarian stakeholders and affected communities.
		(e) Supporting system-wide feedback and complaint mechanisms to ensure inclusiveness and accessibility to all affected populations.
		Innovation and digitalization
		(b) Supporting digitalization of GBV information management systems
		(e) Scaling-up the 'last-mile' mobile solutions to improve data collection related to the distribution of humanitarian assistance and service provision.
		Leaving no one behind and reaching the furthest behind first
		(g) Ensuring the sustainability of GBV support case management services through investing and empowering local service providers is also crucial.
		Data and evidence
		(a) Improving the use of risk and vulnerability assessment tools before crises, building on the UNFPA presence and partnership with national statistical offices.
		(b) Supporting agile data systems with effective sex- and age-disaggregation to understand intersecting inequalities, identify, guide action and monitor progress in support of affected communities, vulnerable and marginalized groups while ensuring data protection.
		(c) Promoting good practices around GBV information and knowledge management and safe and ethical collection and using GBV data for programming, administrative data management in both protection and health programming responses to GBV.
		(d) Conducting rapid assessment and analysis of humanitarian needs through improved and consistent application of dedicated tools that capture GBV and sexual and reproductive health risks, service gaps, and priorities and effectively identify hard-to-reach populations.
		(e) Increasing the availability of sex-, age-, ethnicity-, and disability-disaggregated data for humanitarian response and recovery planning.
		(f) Improving monitoring in access-compromised areas and among mobile populations, including those displaced by a crisis, such as refugees and internally displaced populations.
		Resilience and adaptation, and complementarity among development, humanitarian and peace-responsive efforts
		(e) Leveraging population, health and gender data to improve climate-related and humanitarian vulnerability and impact assessment, in service of better identification of and support to those most affected and most likely to be left behind.
		(g) Strengthening strong supply chain resiliency, including through preparedness and prepositioning, including forecasting for commodities, interagency reproductive health kits and preposition commodities to ensure the continuity of services before, during and after crises.
2022-2025 UNFPA Strategic Plan: Data Task Team Report[70]	Output 13: Improving the generation of population data in scope and quality Output 14: Improving demographic intelligence (Strategic Plan 2020-2025)	**Extending Beyond Population Data** While population data are central to the UNFPA data strategy, the next SP provides a crucial opportunity to reflect on the UNFPA need for *additional* types of data and analysis to sharpen programmatic assessments, so that UNFPA can scale the best, most cost-effective interventions. A further priority for the next SP is strengthening UNFPA data systems and offerings **within humanitarian settings**, including for GBV. Untapped data opportunities for UNFPA include both untapped **types of data** and **research gaps,** including a wide range of data that could potentially enrich UNFPA analytics on SRHR. Ideally, UNFPA will have a balanced and comprehensive approach to data, enabling: Deepened capacity to generate and use census. Widespread adoption of geospatial data across UNFPA, from technical teams in data and analytics to M&E, to media and communications, etc. Expanded engagements in registry data (including CRVS, health registries). Expanded engagements with health sector data, aligned by location: population distribution; health facilities (HMIS/DHIS/avail surveys); key SRHR services; key SRHR outcomes. More substantial analysis of programming impact - what works; and advancing to scale and innovative, real-time data in humanitarian contexts.

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[70] UNFPA, Strategic Plan 2022-2025, Data Task Team Report, February, 2021

Generate "Faster" Humanitarian Data on Needs and Results

Despite significant advances in UNFPA contributions on population data for humanitarian needs [i.e., Common Operational Datasets on Population Statistics (COD-PS), and the new UNFPA app for direct MISP calculations through the PDB], UNFPA needs to develop new and better systems for real-time data collection in the field, on both needs and responses.

Since COVID-19, the GHRP and new internal COVID-19 reporting are monitoring the continuity of SRH and GBV services in all country offices, including humanitarian and high-risk settings; this work should be standardized, expanded and institutionalized to assure a basis for comparable monitoring and reporting across different contexts, and offering insight into ongoing shifts in demand, as well as outputs. In addition, the realities of insecure, humanitarian, fragile and high-risk settings also require new approaches to data collection (e.g., through cell phones or crowdsourcing), to generate data that are:

More frequently updated: quarterly, monthly or as situations change, depending on the indicator.

Well aligned with corresponding data collection by government, other UN partners, to reduce duplication and share data.

Closer to "real-time", i.e., more sensitive to rapid changes on the ground, including disruptions in services, change in population-level situations as crises unfold.

Inclusive of light models for data collection in high-risk, humanitarian or recovery settings.

Where do we want to be by 2030?

- UNFPA has deep thematic data expertise across ROs/COs and strong research partnerships with governments and civil society organizations, generates excellent analytic outputs, and is a global leader in all data relevant to our mandate.
- UNFPA generates fast and useful data on the scale and scope of needs, and programme impact, in humanitarian emergencies.

Each of the relevant outcomes/outputs related to humanitarian data has one or more indicators that measure progress in this regard. For example, of 16 indicators from the 2018-2021 Strategic Plan that assess the progress of UNFPA humanitarian and resilience-building work, three indicators specifically relate to humanitarian data, as follows:

- Indicator 13.4: Proportion of countries that experienced humanitarian crises and that conducted rapid assessments of the affected populations, including pregnant women.

- Indicator 13.5: Proportion of high-risk countries that produced a common operational data set on population.

- Indicator 14.4: Proportion of countries that generate and use mapping (at the district level or below) to illustrate the vulnerability of their population to disasters and humanitarian crises.

At the national level, country offices set out their intended results of programming via results frameworks associated with the CPDs and/or CPAPs that govern CO activities.

The chart below presents survey results from country offices that reported the presence of results frameworks specific to humanitarian programming. A total of 83 per cent of country offices recorded having specific humanitarian results frameworks that they report against, with 67 per cent reporting incorporation of humanitarian elements into mainstream programming results frameworks (countries could select both options in the survey). Only four countries from the 75 participating in the survey (5 per cent) claimed never to use humanitarian results frameworks or humanitarian elements within others.

Further, country office humanitarian staff also noted reporting on humanitarian programming in relation to larger national or regional-level interagency initiatives [UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs), Joint Response Plans, Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), etc.] Regional responses, e.g., the Syria response, note the presence of harmonized UNFPA and partner reporting mechanisms that track key output/activity metrics such as number of beneficiaries reached, services provided, supplies distributed, etc. with age-, sex- and disability-disaggregated data where required. These efforts represent a robust body of data against which a future evaluation could conduct research.

FIGURE 36: UNFPA Country offices with Humanitarian Specific Results Frameworks
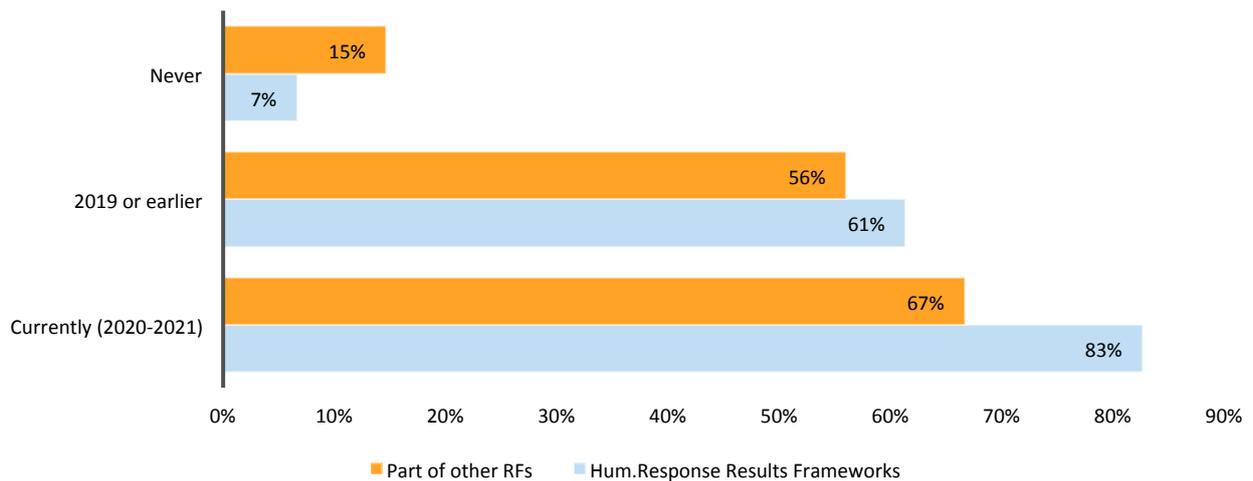
FIGURE 37: CPD Results Frameworks – Key Elements
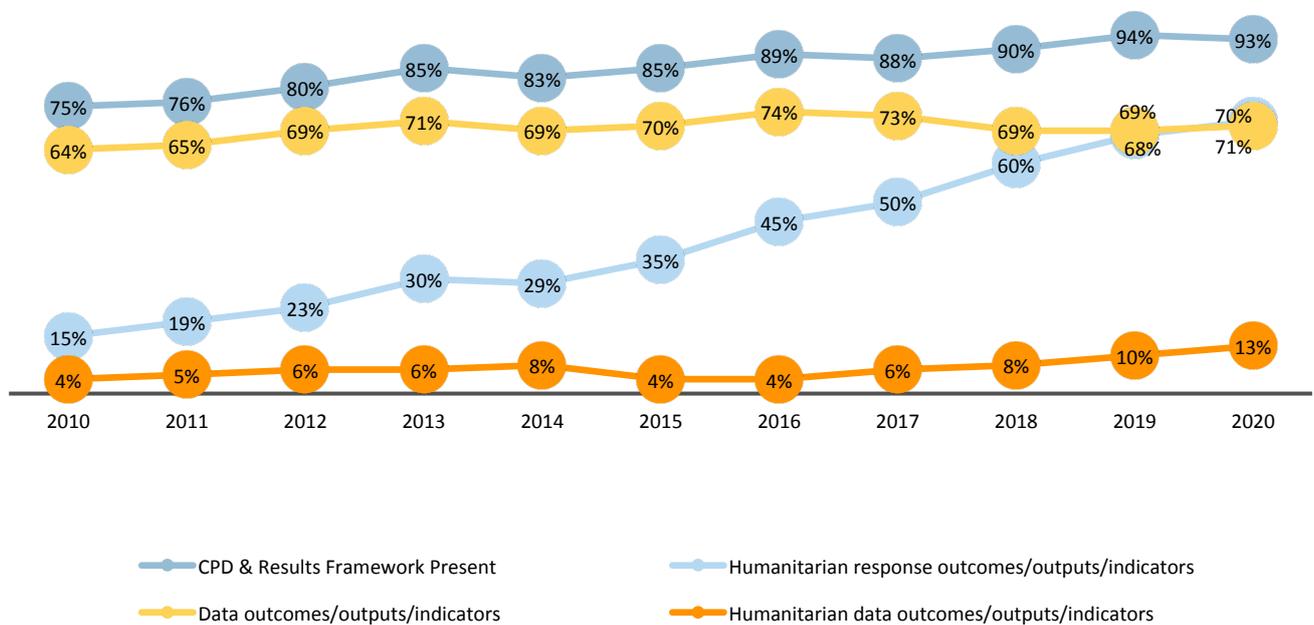
While many of the country offices participating in this assessment show that humanitarian results are incorporated into their country-level results frameworks (i.e., the CPD or CPAP results frameworks), desk review of these instruments and a review of the internal systems that track the measurement of results, e.g., the SIS or Humanitarian Master Sheet, indicate that much of the humanitarian data that is aggregated at global level is activity- or output-related, with little data available on outcomes or impacts. This may be a reflection of how these tools (notably SIS) are systematically organized to report against UNFPA strategic plan results frameworks. Thus, if humanitarian data outcomes are largely absent from the UNFPA strategic plan monitoring, evaluation, results and reporting frameworks, this absence is reflected within all downstream reporting mechanisms.

Funding allocated for data collection in humanitarian response (outside funding of roles/positions related to data) is typically drawn from individual program/project budgets and is part of the programmatic responsibilities of staff or implementing partners. The UNFPA ATLAS financial tracking system has included a budget line specifically related to humanitarian data,[71] and an analysis[72] of disbursements under this budget line indicates highly variable allocations across countries, with the results skewed by individual outliers. In the case of the analysis presented in the chart below, expenditure in 2015 of over $4m for Liberia greatly exceeded the more 'typical' expenditure of $1m or less for the other years. This expenditure (during the West Africa ebola crisis of 2014-2015), while allocated to humanitarian data, includes a range of sub-categories (project staff support, workshops, IP support costs) that appear to be related to programme activities rather than specifically data-related line items.

Further examination of UNFPA organizational results framework[73] indicates monitoring and measurement systems budgeted for (and expenses allocated) under the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency (OEE) Output 1 (Improved programming for results). The result description that accompanies this output is "Strengthening measurement and management systems to ensure high-quality planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation system in place", which adequately covers the establishment of monitoring systems across all programming, including humanitarian response. There is no evidence of any specific budget earmark in relation to humanitarian data. An analogous organizational performance area with a specific budgetary earmark is that of gender markers – under OEE Output 1, a specific gender marker indicator (# 1.2) is reported against number of country offices that track and report on expenditures using gender markers validated by a quality assurance process.

Notwithstanding these administrative measures, evidence indicates that allocation of funding for humanitarian data is largely folded into other programme activities on an ad-hoc basis, with no systematic funding mechanisms for humanitarian data. Further analysis of ATLAS data shows disbursements for salaries, training, and data collection across a range of other strategic programme outputs, supporting this finding.

Data from individual country offices collected via interviews triangulates well with the finding that resource mobilization efforts typically include an M&E element related to specific initiatives or projects. For example, the South Sudan country office reported a USD$600,000 earmark for monitoring and coordination in ongoing humanitarian programme budgets.

In Indonesia, implementing partners are responsible for submission of most monitoring data, supplemented by CO staff monitoring and ad-hoc third-party monitoring. In Turkey, cross-border monitoring is conducted via third-party monitors as the country office staff cannot directly access beneficiaries. This requires its own budget line.

FIGURE 38: Humanitarian Data Funding 2014-2017 (ATLAS Data)

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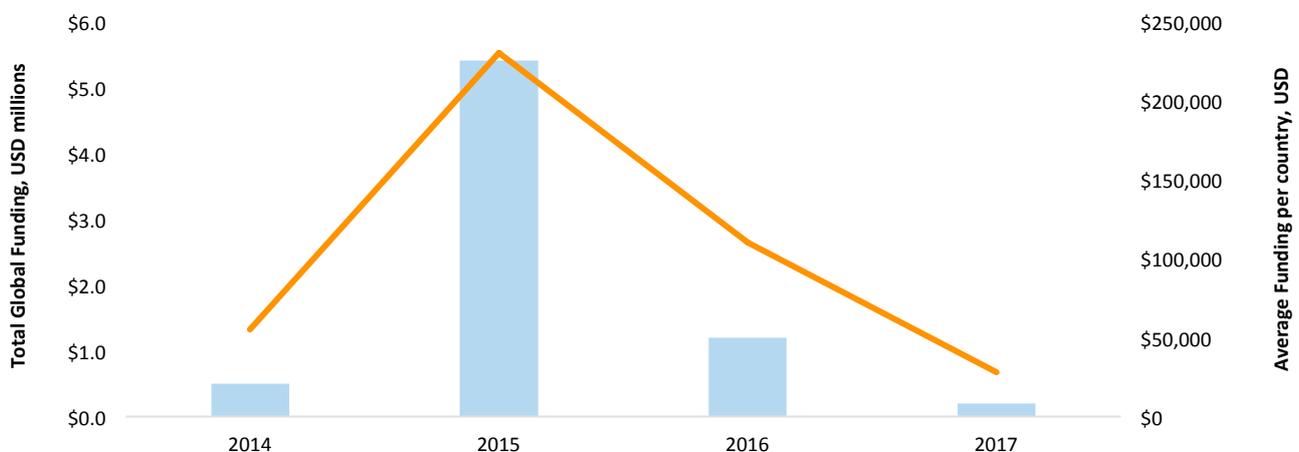
[71] Under strategic output 12 (data in population and development), Intervention Area 12-5, Data in Emergencies
[72] Analysis of data as per the *2019 Evaluation of the UNFPA Capacity in Humanitarian Action* – more up-to-date analysis of the full ATLAS dataset was beyond the scope of this baseline and could form part of the fuller evaluation if required.
[73] As tracked via the SIS

Funding availability dictates the design and scale of UNFPA response and data operations in Venezuela and imposes limitations around what can be achieved by UNFPA on data compared to needs.

The Venezuela Country Office (CO) reported that, while CERF and Humanitarian Office funds support UNFPA emergency programming, they are short-term and do not allow for longer-term support (and planning) around the crisis. CERF funds have allowed UNFPA to undertake a range of humanitarian response activities, launch a national communications plan with the Ministry of Communications and establish a hotline for vulnerable women and referral pathways; however, funding is insufficient for more strategic responses that span longer than one year. A challenge to funding is that Venezuela is considered a country with a medium-high ability to finance its own crisis response and with lower needs than other crises, thus is a 'pink-quadrant' country for UNFPA, i.e., among the lowest-priority needs.

Finding 18: The number, types, seniority level and experience of MEL/data staff vary greatly across locations and time in UNFPA. Evidence indicates that it is determined by the availability of programme resources than can be invested in data staff and data initiatives.

As discussed in Section 1, an average of 5 per cent of country office staff have full-time humanitarian data roles, although the numbers per country office vary widely, with limited correlation with the size (in funding terms) of humanitarian responses.

UNFPA country offices were surveyed on the number and types of contracts for staff they retain in relation to humanitarian programming, data-related programming (either long-term development data or humanitarian response), and those with roles related to humanitarian data specifically (see chart below).

The overall trend suggests that there is a high reliance on the use of consultants and surge or other temporary staffing mechanisms for all areas, and particularly on surge or other temporary mechanisms for humanitarian staff. This finding is in line with that of the 2020 *Evaluation of UNFPA Capacity in Humanitarian Action*.

There is a considerably higher reliance on the use of consultants for humanitarian data purposes than other mechanisms, with 45 per cent of staffing positions as consultants (typically funded from project budgets). A high proportion (62 per cent) of development data positions are core-funded, which correlates well with the emphasis placed on population dynamics programming across UNFPA operations. A review of the staff structures of the six case study countries triangulates well with this finding (presented in the table below), in that most of the population and development positions are full-time core staff position, with M&E positions tending to be a mix of consultant and full-time roles, though with a slightly higher number of consultants.

FIGURE 39: Country Office Staffing Breakdown by Contract Type
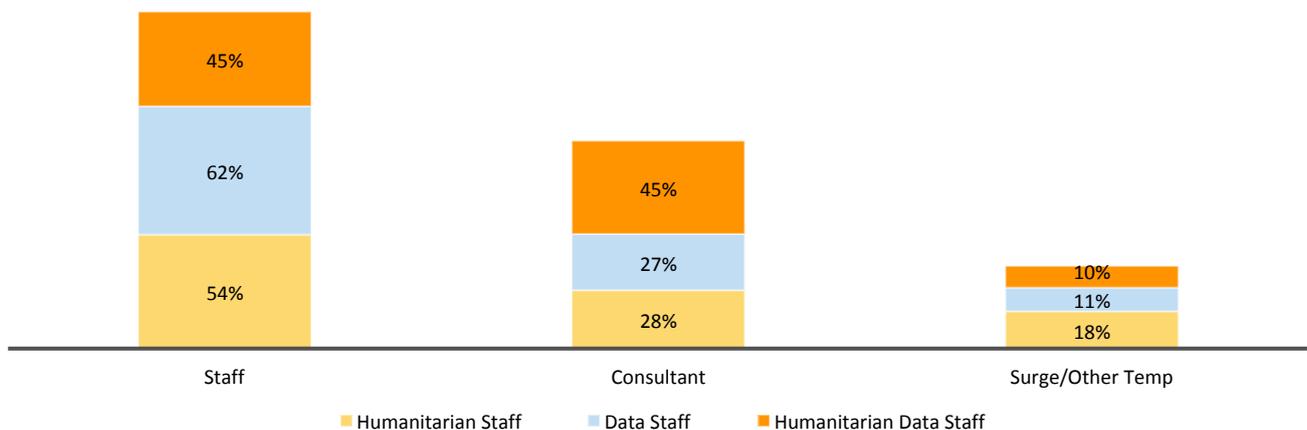
	Population Dynamics Positions	M&E Positions
Cameroon	None listed	2x M&E specialist, 1x core staff + 1x consultant
Indonesia	1x P&D specialist, 1x P&D associate, both core staff	2x M&E prog. officers, 1x core staff, 1x consultant
South Sudan	1 x P&D prog. officer, core staff	1x Intl. M&E specialist, 1x M&E analyst, both core staff
Turkey	1 x P&D adviser, consultant	1x M&E associate, 1x M&E consultant, both consultants
Venezuela	1 x P&D prog. officer, core staff	1x M&E consultant, 1x M&E coordinator, both consultants
Yemen	1x P&D specialist, core staff	1 x M&E specialist, consultant

In addition, informants to this baseline report that P&D development data work is implemented by two technical specialists at the P&D Branch/Technical Division who allocate 30 per cent of their time to COD-PS. They are supported by six regional humanitarian advisers (reportedly spending less than 10 per cent of their time on COD-PS), who are in turn supported by population data specialists at CO level (who spend less than 10 per cent of time on COD-PS updates). UNFPA stakeholders noted highly differentiated levels in staffing investment by contrasting UNOCHA, which, at HQ level has 7 full-time staff at seniority levels from P2 to P5 and 25 CO staff dedicated full time to coordination and updating of COD-AB and COD-HC.

> **Finding 19: Staff roles across the humanitarian-development nexus (including data personnel) can be flexible, with many staff operating part-time on humanitarian response, humanitarian data and development interventions to meet the needs as required by the country office.**

An important aspect of staff roles within country offices is the ability to quickly deploy in-house staff members from longer-term development programming to humanitarian response and/or humanitarian data roles.

The chart below presents data from the country office survey that illustrates the trend among country offices of having staff take on part-time humanitarian response or humanitarian data roles as and when the situation demands. Approximately half - 40 per cent of humanitarian staff and 54 per cent of humanitarian data staff - operate in a part-time capacity for humanitarian response, the remainder of their responsibilities being on the longer-term development end of the nexus.

This data is well supported by feedback from individual country offices, which indicates a clear capacity to allocate technical staff between longer-term development to humanitarian duties as the need requires. This capacity is especially important in the context of shorter-term sudden-onset crises where substantial humanitarian capacity is not embedded within the country office. Indeed, the capacity and practice of country offices redeploying staff to immediate response duties may not be captured by the survey data. For example, in Indonesia, the UNFPA country office reports one full-time humanitarian staff member and one part-time humanitarian staff member. However, other technical specialists from the country office (in GBV, SRHR and Data) are also available to contribute to humanitarian response, as required. This is relatively frequent in a context such as Indonesia, which responds approximately every 1-2 years to relatively small sudden-onset crises (typically natural disasters).

It is also important for elements of preparedness both in terms of having in-house response capacity within country offices and also working with long-term development partners (such as governments) on their preparedness initiatives, for example the *Satu Data Indonesia* (One Data Indonesia) initiative led by the Government of Indonesia but supported by UNFPA via its humanitarian and population development programming resources.
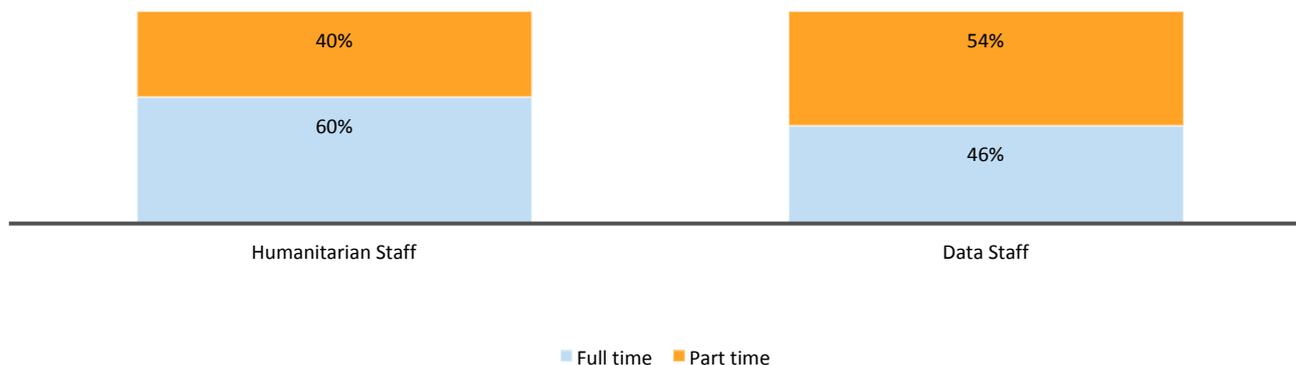
Finding 20: There is minimal evidence of systematized country or regional level strategy and monitoring, evaluation and learning frameworks and these efforts are primarily guided by donor requirements on project basis.

UNFPA – especially as part of its adolescent and youth work stream and focus on the nexus – through the Gender and Human Rights Branch, has expanded this focus in recent years, in light of increased interagency commitments and growing demands from UN member states. However, country office respondents noted challenges around recruiting for M&E and humanitarian data positions and the types of contracts that M&E and humanitarian data staff operate under.

While this was not explored via the online survey, evidence from interviews at country level indicates that country offices prioritize the requirement to report on specific donor-funded initiatives, many of which are accompanied by bespoke results frameworks (discussed above), an ongoing and considerable commitment of time and effort on the part of M&E staff, despite some efforts to harmonize such reporting requirements (e.g., that undertaken by the Syria Response Hub in Amman).

Internal monitoring mechanisms are also a key reporting obligation for all UNFPA offices, specifically against the milestones tracked by the SIS, described above in Section 1. These are updated on a quarterly basis and are a record of a wide variety of operational, administrative and programmatic indicators for all UNFPA offices/branches/divisions and every UNFPA operational country. While the SIS may have potential utility in tracking programme performance, including for humanitarian data, this has not yet been exploited within the system – some countries report against a very limited number (<5) of primarily administrative indicators/milestones, where others may report against 150+ indicators. As discussed above, the overwhelming focus of these indicators/milestones is in relation to activities and outputs. While the SIS is a comprehensive system against which all UNFPA administrative units are obliged to report on a regular basis, it may not be fit for the purpose of reporting on humanitarian data. The planned Enterprise Resources Planning system may provide scope for improved functionality or another solution may be warranted.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD

7.1. CONCLUSIONS

This section of the assessment presents broad conclusions of the baseline research with a view to establishing the extent to which the generation, provision, and utilization of data in humanitarian assistance at UNFPA can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion.[74]

> **Conclusion 1: UNFPA has increased its focus on and guidance to country offices on humanitarian response, but incorporation of humanitarian data across global, regional, and national levels remains limited.** [*Linked to Findings 1, 2, 3, 4*]

Over the past decade, UNFPA has gradually increased its focus on and reference and guidance to country offices on humanitarian response. This is especially evident in its latest strategic plan (2022-2025). However, specific reference to humanitarian data is highly limited across the global, regional and national levels. While humanitarian data initiatives form a key part of many country programmes, these are not integrated as part of strategic country office strategies but are often conducted on ad-hoc basis.

Conclusion 2: Humanitarian data efforts at UNFPA are not explicitly governed by a formal theory of change. Existing organizational theories of change, such as they are, have some elements that refer to data in a humanitarian context. However, the data ecosystem around humanitarian emergencies is clearly changing rapidly as the new UNFPA strategic plan articulates a set of results at the impact, outcome and output levels that UNFPA aims to achieve during 2022-2025. It also presents the theory of change underlying the results articulated in the strategic plan. Output 4 is specifically dedicated to strengthened data systems and evidence in development policies and programmes – a progression in terms of strategic support to humanitarian data (albeit in the context of preparedness only). Output 5 focuses on humanitarian action and covers a number of key aspects related to data, including supporting and strengthening data systems (specifically the COD-PS) and building capacity around humanitarian data. **[*Linked to Findings 5, 6, 8]*

> **Conclusion 3: UNFPA conducts numerous humanitarian data interventions in preparedness, planning and response, some of which are substantive. However, quality and quantity challenges remain for all efforts within the spectrum of intervention.**

UNFPA conducts substantive and, in many cases, innovative humanitarian data interventions that contribute to UNFPA efforts in preparedness, planning and response. These humanitarian data initiatives are often developed on the basis of need (at both country and regional levels) and shared among other humanitarian actors.

The baseline assessment found an array of tools and processes in place to capture, manage and report data. However, the extent to which these tools and processes lead to effective humanitarian programming, or the quality of such instruments, is unclear. Of note is the inherent challenge in the use of longer-term development/census-based population datasets for humanitarian programming where populations are highly mobile. Further research on the direct application of these datasets by country offices (by humanitarian stakeholders) and the need for further investment in continuous and agile data system is required to optimize their utility. **[*Linked to Finding 7]*

Conclusion 4: The humanitarian data initiatives that UNFPA contributes to or implements cut across all UNFPA mandate areas. While this is particularly relevant to larger interagency initiatives (such as HNOs/HRP/3RP, 4W/5Ws) it does not always hold true – some global-level initiatives are focused on specific sectoral areas, e.g., the GBVIMS for GBV data. Further, smaller-scale initiatives – those that are more focused on the national or sub-national level – are more likely to be specific to individual sectoral areas. These tend to be focused on the UNFPA mandate areas of SRHR and GBV, and less so on youth, which does not typically receive the same level of programme focus within UNFPA as the other two mandate areas. **[*Linked to Findings 9, 10]*

> **Conclusion 5: UNFPA processes and systems at country level are in place to manage humanitarian data related to UNFPA mandate areas. However, these processes are not well documented, not optimal and often do not form part of a systematized country- or regional-level strategy or monitoring, evaluation and learning framework.**

While there are extensive processes and systems placed at country level to manage humanitarian data in all its aspects around UNFPA mandate areas, the processes often tend to be led based on the personal investment of interest of Country Representatives and these systems are not well documented and do not tend to form part of a systematized country- or regional-level strategy,

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[74] Definition from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee, 2010

coordination effort or monitoring, evaluation and learning framework. There are lost opportunities in the decentralized and fragmented nature of managing data on case-by-case or country-by-country basis, including economies of scale and concerns about data protection. There are differing levels of investment at the country level and, as is evidenced by the case studies, insufficient technical expertise and time dedicated to both humanitarian and development data initiatives. This may contribute to the overall fragmented landscape of data interventions around humanitarian emergencies. **[*Linked to Findings 13-17*]**

Conclusion 6: Only a subset of UNFPA staff is skilled in the management of humanitarian data.

The baseline evaluability assessment found that, although there is widespread appreciation for humanitarian data experience and skills, there is a lack of clear articulation of these responsibilities at the outset (during position recruitment, unless a specific humanitarian data role is being recruited for). This has meant that the skills necessary for understanding and managing data (among all relevant staff) are not necessarily explicitly demanded and therefore cannot be assumed. This may well contribute to an overall low level of expertise in humanitarian data outside a very small subset of UNFPA staff. **[*Linked to Findings 18, 19*]**

Conclusion 7: Issues around responsible data,[75] data security and interoperability are not driven by centralized coordination, policies, tools, mechanisms or guidelines but rather are the responsibility of staff implementing the solutions.

Safety and security considerations are an important consideration of many of the data initiatives and are in-built into most of the data collection/aggregation and reporting/communication tools being utilized by UNFPA. However, outside some specific initiatives (e.g., the GBVIMS) these processes are not driven by any centralized policies or guidelines but are the responsibility of the technical staff that implement the technology solutions and manage databases, dashboards, etc. Challenges related to responsible data and interoperability should be explored in order to help UNFPA develop strong policies and tools to mitigate those risks for its work around COD-PS, MIRA/MSNA, MISP calculator and other high-profile and widely-utilized data or data-related initiatives. **[*Linked to Findings 14, 20*]**

Conclusion 8: UNFPA humanitarian information management systems are fragmented and decentralized.

UNFPA does currently not have a central humanitarian data repository where officers at different levels are able to retrieve information regarding the multiple humanitarian responses around the globe. For example, the Humanitarian Office in New York has to reach out frequently to UNFPA offices managing responses to understand the global situation. The tools that are used to complete these reports vary by country and are also prone to human error. Moreover, ample data is being collected in the various operations, but not swiftly available at regional or global levels impeding adequate evidence-based decision-making. *(Linked to Findings 7, 16, 20)*

8.2. WAY FORWARD

Taking into consideration the conclusions above and the views and feedback received from UNFPA stakeholders, and in light of the plans for a full evaluation on data in the humanitarian sector, this section outlines areas for possible future research and review as part of the forthcoming evaluation, including suggested evaluation questions. As noted above (and in light of the most recent strategic plan's focus on data), while UNFPA has substantially invested in humanitarian data to pave the way and justification for its actions, these approaches are challenged by a multitude of concerns (discussed above) and UNFPA benefits from investing in a detailed assessment of their approach to data management, safety and security as part of its humanitarian activities.

Short-term options for action by UNFPA

1. The Strategic Information System is currently the "overarching gateway for critical information about the profiles, performance and results of UNFPA departments".[76] While it is a reflection of a strong, comprehensive data tracking and analytical tool that covers all aspects of UNFPA management and programming (including humanitarian performance), it does not currently allow UNFPA staff to work closely with it to become an active tool allowing for data extraction to serve humanitarian programming needs. Analysis in the short term could assess the extent to which the SIS (or similar/successor system such as the Enterprise Resource Planning system) could be leveraged as a more practical tool for humanitarian data or whether another solution would be more effective.

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[75] Responsible data and data responsibility are terms now commonly used in international development and humanitarian action to underline the responsibility of actors to ensure safe and responsible management of the data they collect from people as part of their activities. See https://centre.humdata.org/data-responsibility/#:~:text=Data%20responsibility%20in%20humanitarian%20action,and%20the%20stakes%20are%20high.
[76] SIS home page, see: https://applications.myunfpa.org/SIS/

2. Key to the gathering and use of humanitarian data (and indeed all data) are considerations around data safety and security. An important area of UNFPA support across the humanitarian-development nexus is to governments in the maintenance of data systems during protracted crises or in the face of sudden-onset disasters. This entails supporting governments in securely maintaining their core census, survey, civil registration and health information system data, even when the security situation on the ground becomes difficult and increasingly fragile. The absence of up-to-date, relevant, technically strong and specific direction, guidance and support to UNFPA responses may be exposing rights-holders to real risks. The extent to which such considerations form part of decision-making and the practicalities around humanitarian data is an option for immediate action, and also an important part of the future evaluation.

3. Many UNFPA country offices have undertaken individual data initiatives related to COVID-19 to complement the UNFPA-supported programmatic interventions specific to COVID-19 in addition to the global-level dashboard. However, there is a lack of awareness of some country office staff with regard to the specificities or implementation of various data initiatives. There is an opportunity for improved internal (and potentially external) communication around special projects of timely and global significance.

Future areas of inquiry

1. There is clear evidence of the breadth of the UNFPA humanitarian data ecosystem. At the same time, data that is collected at various levels in-country are not necessarily reflected in the broader initiatives that aggregate data. For example, UNFPA Indonesia exhibits support a number of innovative interventions, among them the *One Data Indonesia* initiative, which is founded on the importance of quality and credible information that is easily accessible to the public. Future evaluation of humanitarian data should explore the scope for systematization and inclusion of such measures, both within UNFPA systems and in communication and coordination with national stakeholders (for humanitarian response and long-term development purposes) and international aid agencies.

2. Humanitarian data efforts at UNFPA are not explicitly governed by a formal theory of change but are referred to via elements in successive UNFPA strategic plans. However, these elements can form the basis of a testable, forward-looking global theory of change for humanitarian data across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and taking into account different standards that are applied to humanitarian data and population data. This should be a key pillar of the forthcoming evaluation.

3. From a resources perspective, while UNFPA has committed a number of key outputs in its 2018-2021 and 2022-2025 strategic plan around humanitarian data, these priorities and commitments are not aligned with its budget allocation. A future evaluation should explore the extent to which, and risks inherent to, UNFPA relies on an ad-hoc suite of humanitarian data staffing resources secured through non-core funding. This aspect could also consider the implications of practical resource allocation for more explicit and robust humanitarian data workstreams for the future, including data related to monitoring of and reporting on humanitarian programming for both compliance and accountability purposes (including for strategic planning and accountability to affected populations). Further research and mapping of the exact data content, systems and staffing in place reviewed against current expenditure on data systems, coupled with a gap analysis, would support future efforts to expand UNFPA data management efforts. Future analysis of staffing commitments should offer analysis relative to overall UN humanitarian response, need and budget in the country. Scale-up (or update) of data initiatives in the coming years should be taken into consideration and these efforts, too, would require increased resourcing from country offices, regional offices and headquarters.

4. While the Population and Development Branch has conducted research on the application of COD-PS data sets by humanitarian stakeholders (during 2018-2020), further research on the direct application of these datasets by country offices by humanitarian stakeholders might prove useful in optimizing their utility. In view of Output 4 of the 2022-2025 UNFPA strategic plan (specifically dedicated to strengthened data systems and evidence in development policies and programmes), it is important to include further analysis in future evaluations of current and future efforts to increasing the capacity (and resources) to roll out such systems across UNFPA COs each year by technical staff.

5. The wide range of humanitarian data initiatives that UNFPA implements or contributes to across all mandate areas (albeit mostly SRHR and GBV) suggests a need for further research on how humanitarian data work could be mainstreamed across other thematic areas, given the strength of existing thematic networks within UNFPA on topics such as low fertility and ageing, adolescents and youth, disability and inclusion, and others. The very substantial number of discrete data initiatives in operation globally may provide examples that could be piloted at greater scale, or indeed further research may determine that smaller, highly customizable and bespoke technology-intensive approaches are the most cost-effective model in certain circumstances.

6. The Humanitarian Branch of UNFPA provides global strategic direction, technical and operational support for UNFPA activities in all humanitarian settings, focusing on reproductive health, gender/GBV and population and related data issues. UNFPA stakeholders reported that prior to the establishment of the Humanitarian Branch, humanitarian data issues – spanning program, evaluation and population data – were routinely discussed at the Interdivisional Working Group on Humanitarian Action (IDWG-HA), included in the IDWG's agenda by the Chair of the IDWG-HA and delegated to task teams or working groups that reported back to the IDWG. There are questions at UNFPA regarding the current role of the IDWG-HA (and its synergy with the Humanitarian Branch) which was reportedly an effective and vibrant mechanism for interdivisional collaboration and mainstreaming of various humanitarian activities and priorities, including humanitarian data work.

7.3. PROPOSED EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Evaluation Question Area 1: To what extent are humanitarian data interventions clearly defined and articulated at country and regional levels?

Link to Conclusion 1: UNFPA has increased its focus on and guidance to country offices on humanitarian response, but incorporation of humanitarian data across global, regional, and national planning levels remains limited.

Link to Conclusion 2: Humanitarian data efforts at UNFPA are not explicitly governed by a formal theory of change.

Sub questions:

1. To what extent does UNFPA apply/utilize generally agreed definitions, and typologies of humanitarian data (including disaggregation levels)…

    a) At organization/strategic level?

    b) At implementation level (country/region/global)?

    c) Across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus.

2. What is needed to ensure convergence of definitions, typologies and collection/analysis methods across sectors and locations?

3. Humanitarian data policies and strategies**: To what extent are humanitarian data stakeholders and initiatives in UNFPA guided in practice by internal or external strategies, policies or guidance on data in general and humanitarian data in particular?

Evaluation Question Area 2: Does UNFPA adequately resource humanitarian data efforts (including population and development initiatives that are in support of planning and implementation of humanitarian interventions) across both <u>preparedness</u> and <u>response</u> phases?

Link to Conclusion 5: The humanitarian data initiatives that UNFPA implements or contributes to run the full range of mandate areas.

Link to Conclusion 6: Only a small subset of UNFPA staff possess skills in humanitarian data.

Sub questions:

4. Does UNFPA provide adequate financial resources for humanitarian data in terms of:

    a) Funding mechanisms (RR vs OR)?

    b) Funding amount in relation to the size of humanitarian responses?

    c) Support to integration with/transition to national data systems (e.g., census, civil registration, etc.).

5. Are the quantity/type of staff allocated humanitarian data responsibilities commensurate with:

    a) Data needs?

    b) UNFPA mandate and data commitments?

    c) The size of the humanitarian response?

6. Has UNFPA invested appropriately in people for management of humanitarian data, i.e., recruiting enough of the right people on the right contracts?

7. Has UNFPA invested appropriately in systems (i.e., the right systems for the right job) for the efficient and secure aggregation, coordination/management and timely sharing of humanitarian results data at national-regional-global levels, including ensuring accountability to affected populations?

Do staff with data responsibilities have access to and receive appropriate training on UNFPA and partner data tools, technologies, and protocols?

Evaluation Question Area 3: To what extent do UNFPA humanitarian data initiatives support the implementation of effective humanitarian interventions?

Link to Conclusion 2: UNFPA conducts humanitarian data interventions in preparedness, planning, and response. However, quality and quantity challenges exist.

Sub questions:

8. Data Initiatives

    a) How relevant are humanitarian data initiatives implemented/supported by UNFPA to the on-the-ground needs of the situation (including needs of affected/at-risk populations)?

    b) How does UNFPA collect, share, and, importantly, utilize the appropriate humanitarian data at the right times to…

    I. Ensure the implementation of effective programme decision-making?

    II. Demonstrate the results of its humanitarian programming?

    III. Ensure accountability to the UNFPA strategic plan and to affected populations?

9. What populations (including vulnerable groups/those left behind) are targeted by UNFPA humanitarian data initiatives? What ones are not properly targeted? Why not?

10. Does UNFPA have and does it utilize the correct mix of humanitarian data initiatives and resources to meet the needs of all key stakeholders (internally and externally – donors, partner agencies, government partners, NGO partners, community stakeholders) for both preparedness and response?

11. To what extent does UNFPA implement robust and effective quality assurance mechanisms for humanitarian data that work to maximize relevance, efficiencies, effectiveness and coherence?

Evaluation Question Area 4: To what extent are UNFPA humanitarian data initiatives supported by policies and guidelines for responsible data and interoperability of data and what measures are in place among UNFPA partner/collaborative agencies to support this process?

Link to Conclusion 7: Issues around responsible data and interoperability are not driven by centralized policies or guidelines but rather are the responsibility of staff implementing the solutions.

Sub questions:
12. Responsible data[77] and Interoperability[78]

    a) What, if any, are the synergies (or incompatibilities) in relation to humanitarian data that UNFPA leverages:

        I. Within country offices?
        II. Nationally with partners and other national stakeholders?
        III. Regionally – across regional responses and to regional offices?
        IV. Globally within UNFPA organizationally and with other global stakeholders (e.g., with the IMWG at regional and global levels)?
        V. Across the preparedness-response-recovery continuum?

    b) Does UNFPA seek to eliminate vertical stratification (siloing) of data initiatives and integrate with other data platforms, such as those for preparedness (CODs) or population data?

    c) To what extent does UNFPA (and partners) have and implement robust policies and processes to ensure the safety and security of all data?

13. Is the data of partners and right-holders adequately protected?

Evaluation Question Area 5: Is UNFPA adequately planning and investing in a systematic approach to data management to meet current and future humanitarian needs in both shorter-term and protracted emergency operations?

Link to Conclusion 1: UNFPA has increased its focus on and guidance to country offices on humanitarian response, but incorporation of humanitarian data across global, regional, and national levels remains limited.

Link to Conclusion 2: Humanitarian data efforts at UNFPA are not explicitly governed by a formal theory of change.

Link to Conclusion 4: UNFPA processes and systems at country level are in place to manage humanitarian data related to UNFPA mandate areas. However, these processes are not well documented and often do not form part of a systematized country or regional-level strategy or monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework.

14. Do UNFPA strategic plans (organizational and humanitarian) adequately reflect the current and future humanitarian data needs, particularly with reference to operating on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus?

15. Is UNFPA adequately investing in systems and partnerships to meet current future humanitarian needs, particularly for sudden-onset humanitarian crises?

16. Does UNFPA sufficiently support innovative approaches to tackle data-related challenges?

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[77] The collective duty to account for unintended consequences of working with data by:
1) Prioritising people's rights to consent, privacy, security, ownership when using data.
2) Implementing values and practices of transparency and openness.
[78] Data interoperability addresses the ability of systems and services that create, exchange and consume data to have clear, shared expectations for the contents, context and meaning of that data.

The evaluation will be based on mixed methods, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and tools.

At a minimum, the methodological approach will comprise:

● A refining and testing of the reconstructed theory of change (drafted as part of the baseline and evaluability assessment) of the use of humanitarian data within UNFPA.

● A thorough gender-responsive stakeholder analysis, including a beneficiary typology.

● A desk review that includes analysis of the available programme, administrative and financial data pertaining to the collection, analysis, management and use of humanitarian data within UNFPA.

● The conduct of key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys with UNFPA staff, consultants, key partners and stakeholders.

● Extended desk country reviews – for example, two per UNFPA region of operation, incorporating each of the UNFPA regional offices.

● Country field visits (optimally one from each UNFPA region), with a view to exploring UNFPA humanitarian data work in a range of emergencies. This should include two regional-level responses, potentially Syria and Venezuela, to reflect different types of response.

● In-person data collection in the UNFPA Humanitarian Office, Population Service Branch and UNFPA Headquarters.

Country selection/suggested sampling

● **Country level:** Twelve countries for extended desk reviews (two per region), six countries for country field visits (one per region). Potentially all humanitarian response countries for online surveying and/or secondary data aggregation (e.g., an expanded sampling and targeting of staff in individual data positions across all response countries).

● **Regional level:** Two regional responses – potentially Syria and Venezuela.

● **Global level:** UNFPA HQ, HO, PSB, OCHA, UNHCR, Global protection cluster, the GBV AOR, WHO (as leaders of the global health cluster), Information Management Working Group members.

See *Annex 6:* for additional details on the proposed evaluation approach.

8. ANNEXES

These are available in volume 2 of the report.

UNFPA