



FINAL INDEPENDENT PROJECT EVALUATION:

Forensic Human Resource And Governance Development Assistance To The Palestinian Authority (PSEX02) *DECEMBER 2018*

BACKGROUND AND

CONTEXT

Countries: Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT)
Duration: March 2011 – December 2018
Budget: US\$ 10,181,000
Donor: Canada
Implementing agencies: UNODC Programme Office in the State of Palestine and UNODC Laboratory and Scientific Section, Research and Trend Analysis Branch, Division for Policy Analysis & Public Affairs.
Independent Evaluation Team: Mr Angus Henderson (Team Leader), Dr Ayesha AlRifai (Health Policy & Gender Expert) and Dr Robert Anderson (Forensic Medicine and Science Expert).

FULL REPORT:
http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/reports_year_2018.

In 2009, Canada led a needs assessment of forensic services in Palestine and reported they were virtually non-existent. In response, UNODC Programme Office in the State of Palestine (POPSE) with the assistance of a project funded team member based in the Laboratory and Scientific Section in HQ UNODC, designed and implemented the project Forensic Human Resource And Governance Development Assistance to the Palestinian Authority. The overall objective was to contribute to an 'improved criminal justice system for men, women and children of the West Bank'.

The purpose of this final evaluation was to assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, partnerships and cooperation, human rights, gender equality, effectiveness, impact and lessons learned. In addition, the evaluation considered three main areas; (1) the extent that objectives, outputs and outcomes were met, (2) the utilization of resources, (3) areas for improvement. The evaluation assessed achievements, derived recommendations, and examined the strategy for completion.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation utilised a mixed-method approach to assess qualitative and quantitative data, ensuring a gender-sensitive, inclusive methodology. A broad-based sampling approach used primary (interviews and observations) and secondary data sources (project documents and reports). Data gained from one source was triangulated with another.

The evaluation covered the duration of the project. It was conducted by three independent external evaluators with SGBV, Law Enforcement and Forensic Medicine and Science backgrounds, all of whom had prior experience of the Middle East. The evaluation included a field visit to East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Hebron, Bethlehem and Nablus from 22 July – 02 August 2018.

MAIN FINDINGS

The project was complex and ambitious, especially in its timescale. Delays in delivery were often due to factors beyond the control of the Project Implementation Unit (PIU), including an absent legislature, the PA financial crisis and difficulties in hiring staff. These could, however, have received more attention via active risk management.

The project was highly relevant to the needs of the PA, as articulated in numerous strategic and policy documents, to the objectives of the International Community and Canada, the donor and to UNODC Global and Regional Programmes and Frameworks.

While the project had some problems understanding the local political context and adjusting its assistance accordingly, overall the project accurately reflected the needs and requirements of the beneficiaries.

The PIU used resources appropriately and cost-effectively. The project was within budget but took 3 years longer to deliver than expected, in part due to the political situation in Palestine, the high turnover of PIU staff and time-consuming procurement. It would have benefitted from more continuity of PIU staff, PA partners and consultants. While the implementation conformed to UNODC procedures, better use could have been made of in-house UNODC expertise (both regional and global) to overcome some of the obstacles encountered in procurement, capacity building, governance and the development of new legislation.

The project worked with several PA ministries and agencies and with three main international partners. The Project Steering Committee (PSC) was well attended and well documented. PIU and POPSE interactions with international partners were not as strong as with local partners. UNODC's role in the OPT was not well known or understood. A more proactive communications and outreach strategy is needed.

Sustainability is largely dependent on the fiscal environment within the PA. Beneficiaries want and like what has been achieved and desire that the new forensic services are not only sustained but also increased in scope and capacity. Key to sustainability will be continued donor support, until the political circumstances change and/or the PA becomes more self-sufficient.

The project has been effective in achieving its objectives, with the exception of increasing harmonization and coordination within the legal framework. Developments in forensic science and medicine were very successful, including: the creation of a new, functional, staffed forensic science laboratory (FSL) working to inter-national standards and increased capacity of the National Centre of Forensic Medicine for medicolegal cases.

Forensics are now contributing to an improved criminal justice system within the OPT, permitting the analysis and presentation of evidential material in court, and justice is swifter. The FSL has shown impressive progress but still requires adequate funding, governance and oversight. There are reliable indicators of significant project contributions in support of human rights of victims and the accused in SGBV cases and in changing the mindset of service providers towards these victims.

The project adhered to the human rights agenda in the PA's policy frameworks and strategy documents, at the design phase and throughout all project activities. Equality of access to forensic services and justice were central. The project assisted the judiciary and prosecution services to understand family protection, SGBV and women's rights to justice. Prosecutors confirmed that timely evidence attainment was a major national gain for procedural justice and fair tribunals.

A formal UNDOC gender strategy informed the design phase and recognised obstacles to realization of gender equality, including law enforcement, justice and forensic sectors being non-traditional employment areas for women. However, lack of visibility, advocacy and awareness-raising compromised reasonable gender integration. Mainstreaming gender is still a work in progress.

Palestinian rule of law objectives prioritise access to justice for marginalised and vulnerable people. The project indirectly benefited both victims of crime and the accused and significantly increased the capacity of forensic medical services to offer appropriate medical care to victims of SGBV. Low uptake of these services points to insufficient resources for awareness raising.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The project has provided facilities and infrastructure and helped develop a strategic vision for FS, based on trained forensic physicians, nurses, scientists and on formal academic

partners in Palestine. There is better awareness of the role of forensics within the criminal justice system. Many components are in place that allow the PA to handle the forensic aspects of abuse and violence against women and children.

Risk management should have received more attention. Fluctuating UNODC staff levels impacted delivery. The legal basis for the FS has still to be ratified. There remain weaknesses in strategic planning and governance frameworks. Without strong governance, agreed structures and guaranteed funding, the sustainability of the FS is questionable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Revise reporting and generate greater awareness of project outcomes: POPSE should consider how it communicates with donors and the media. There is a need for good news stories to demonstrate success and reporting should focus less on activities and more on effects and impact.

Mitigate risk via conditionality: Future UNODC projects to support forensic services should actively manage risk and reduce both the likelihood and impact of risk by making certain elements of delivery conditional, requiring recipients to support and then deliver key elements of the project.

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICE

UNODC projects often require additional time and experience delays in hiring project staff and in delivering outcomes on time. The composition of the team on the ground should adequately reflect the different types of expertise required to implement the project and, while the team can be supplemented by external consultants, it should not be completely dependent on them to the extent that the project aims cannot be achieved without them.

Awareness-raising amongst project stakeholders should always be supplemented by awareness-raising amongst a project's potential service users, to avoid an under-used resource, and amongst potential donors and contributors, to increase project outputs and outcomes.

The lack of awareness found amongst this project's beneficiaries of UNODC's rich catalogue of on-line information and resources highlights the need for active promotion and publicity of its global portfolio of activities.

Independent Evaluation Section (IES)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
Vienna International Centre
P.O. Box 500 1400 Vienna, Austria
E-mail: unodc-ieu@un.org