

FINAL EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT ON TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, THE RULE OF LAW, AND THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM/CTCBP/ACCBP 2016-114.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Implementation: Evaluation was conducted between February and June 2022. A total of 45 participants were interviewed during the evaluation, of which 11 were women. Field missions were conducted in Iraq and Cameroon resulting in in-country consultations conducted over six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 19 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs).

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Donors: The project had a total budget of \$1.3 million and was funded partially by the Government of Canada, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the United States of America, Denmark, and the Counter-Terrorism Capacity Building Program (CTCBP) and in-kind contributions (including through staff time) from UNCCT/UNOCT and OHCHR.

The project on Training and Capacity Building of Law Enforcement Officials on Human Rights, the Rule of Law, and the Prevention of Terrorism (“Global Project”) was launched in 2016 by the UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Working Group on Protecting and Promoting Human Rights and the Rule of Law. This multi-year project was implemented by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) from 2016-2022. The Global Project aimed to train Member States’ law enforcement agencies to build their capacity to prevent, respond to, and investigate terrorism threats based on international human rights law and the rule of law. It also sought to support them in implementing measures under Pillar IV of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (A/RES/60/288). The Global Project was implemented in six countries across different regions: Mali,

Cameroon and Nigeria in West and Central Africa, Iraq, Jordan, and Tunisia in the MENA region. It aimed to improve the operational effectiveness of law enforcement, security, and justice institutions in the participating countries through training focused on operationalizing international human rights standards and the rule of law in a counter-terrorism context. The Global Project consisted of four Phases, Phase I to III, focused on training and Phase IV, centred on monitoring and evaluation.

MAIN FINDINGS

Effectiveness. Global Project has produced tangible results in Cameroon and created champions in the form of Expert Groups dedicated to enhancing the trainings’ effectiveness and sustainability. A critical mass of law enforcement agents was created at the time to implement human rights standards while performing their duties. Several of the most important training institutions were involved in the project, which created a network of these institutions within the MENA region for a time. By providing a forum for discussing pressing issues in investigating and prosecuting, the training in some countries improved collaboration among the law enforcement agencies. However, there is still no access to national curricula as was envisioned in the Immediate Goals of the Global Project.

Efficiency. Beneficiaries expressed appreciation and satisfaction with the training materials and experts’ human rights and counter-terrorism competence. Although GP received all funds, completing all phases took longer than expected. However, coordination problems across six countries, long recruitment processes, and the COVID pandemic contributed to implementation delays. The lack of project staff in beneficiary countries also hindered monitoring interventions.

Cross-cutting issues. An adequate implementation of the rights-based approach and gender equality was not achieved because initial training did not address gender-related topics thoroughly in all Phases. As a result, Project did not substantially contribute to building the capacity of female professionals, nor were gender-equality issues adequately addressed in the training materials. Following the Phase III implementation in 2022, topics concerning women foreign fighters and other gender-related subjects were introduced in Iraq. Despite this, quality research and study concerning the impact of counter-terrorism on gender, gender mainstreaming, and gender equality in counter-terrorism were not integrated in the trainings conducted.

Relevance/Project Design and Coherence. Although the Global Project was based on a country needs assessment and in response to Member States’ needs to effectively prevent, respond to, and investigate terrorist threats in accordance with international human rights law and the rule of law, the project continued to have no appropriate mechanisms or sustained opportunities to integrate international human rights frameworks into the work of law enforcement agents. The Global Project had a weak design that did not include the standard programmatic elements: governance structures, theory of change, monitoring system, and an adequate framework for measuring results. Several of these shortcomings resulted in the loss of institutional memory within the project and its partners. In addition, without a proactive project monitoring process, no risk mitigation plans were developed. Consequently, many materialized program risks were not mitigated. Finally, despite ambitious goals, the design and implementation of the Global Project focused primarily on delivering training, which did not fully align with the intervention’s overall objective.

Impact and Sustainability. Based on the data collected and the interviews conducted, it was impossible to determine the impact of the Global Project. Furthermore, there was a mismatch between the project's impact-level goals and the technical and human capacity of the team appointed to carry out the project. As a result, the implementation focused on delivering outputs rather than monitoring and managing the anticipated results. Finally, the lack of an exit strategy, weak political will and partner countries' ownership made it impossible to institutionalise the trainings.

LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

1. *Sustainability*

There would be a greater chance for sustainability and the training module's institutionalization if a distinctive memorandum of understanding were negotiated with the participating institutions and if the actual trainers in the beneficiary academic institutions actively participated in the training module's development. Embedding project experts directly within educational institutions in the partnering countries would be beneficial in providing support, continuity, timely response, monitoring, and visibility for the intervention. It is also possible that the inclusion of female instructors may positively impact attracting female trainees and achieving gender parity within the sector. Many risks that materialized concerning ownership and gender parity could have been mitigated, and the prospects for sustainability could have been improved if all stakeholders' institutional arrangements, roles and capacities were assessed systematically and discussed rigorously from the outset of the Project in 2016.

2. *Coherence*

The coherence of any future interventions may be enhanced by ensuring that any proposed trainings or other activities are in line with national policies and criminal justice reforms. To achieve this, national stakeholders need to be involved in developing the results framework. This could also enhance their understanding of the overarching objective of the interventions and the results to be achieved in furtherance of national objectives for integrating human rights principles in the fight against terrorism.

3. *Selection of training participants and the length of training*

There is no "one size fits all" approach to the training design. For example, when a group of trainees is composed of senior and junior officers, discussion and communication may not prove effective since junior officers may not feel confident to voice their opinions in front of their superiors. Instead, effective training is based on a careful analysis of the group dynamics, appropriate language, targeted needs for male and female participants, venue accessibility, and a proper amount of time for lectures and practical exercises.

4. *Maintaining a continuous professional human rights programme*

The Project's goal of ensuring sustained access to training failed due to limited risk analysis and mitigation measures in implementation strategies and system-wide determining factor that transcends law enforcement agencies that were not considered at the time of the Global Project's conception: sustaining and institutionalizing the training may require administrative reforms within the ministries including a sufficient number of lecturers, credit hours, quality assurance and control process. Ensuring beneficiaries' physical access to the training venues is also an important factor. Human rights training is not specifically encouraged, rewarded, or mandated.

5. *Addressing the gaps in the normative environment of the partner country.*

Several beneficiary countries have adopted legislation that, among other, strengthened existing counter-terrorism provisions, expanded the definition of terrorism and offences, enhanced criminal penalties for terrorist acts, increased criminal liability regarding the threat of foreign terrorist fighters, and promoted regional and international cooperation on investigations and the prosecution of terrorists. However, the terminology used to discuss violent extremism (VE) is complex and remains controversial for various reasons. Most importantly, there is no universally agreed-upon definition for many of the terms used in this field. This unsupportive normative environment poses a challenge to both the implementation agencies and national stakeholders in implementing a rights-based approach in the work of law enforcement agencies. Stakeholders and participants should be prepared for these shortfalls by contextualizing the training materials and discussing strategies for overcoming these challenges.

6. *Gender*

Factors that challenged the Global Project's attempts to promote and mainstream gender equality principles are: 1) the gender imbalance across the sectors of intervention was not considered; 2) gender aspects were not adequately reflected in the design of the project and the implementation strategies. A lack of women's participation in the project was an unfortunate consequence of the first factor. Furthermore, the second factor adversely impacted the content of the training materials, which did not appropriately adapt to the local gender context of each country: the gender-specific impact of terrorist activities, how women, men, boys, and girls are not equally impacted by terrorism, and how they might respond to and recover from terrorism. Thus, Project lost the opportunity to deconstruct stereotypes about women and men's roles in terrorism and counter-terrorism, where men are viewed as perpetrators and women as passive victims.

7. *Joint Implementations*

As a non-resident agency, the UNOCT heavily depends upon the performance of partner resident UN agencies in the target countries. The partnership with the OHCHR was effective at the beginning of the project, particularly during Phases I and II. Nevertheless, partners provided less support in institutionalizing training or preserving the institutional memory.

Therefore, the roles of UN partners for delivering results, sharing tasks in the realm of monitoring, and sustaining the intervention should be clearly defined and followed.

METHODOLOGY

The Global Project's evaluation methodology adhered to OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation and the UNEG Handbook for Conducting Evaluations of Normative Work in the UN System. The evaluation also used a combination of 'outcome harvesting' and 'contribution analysis' as the underlying approach to understanding the changes that occurred at the time of programme implementation and whether these may be attributable to project activities. The evaluation paid particular attention to gender equality to ensure that this was mainstreamed into the report's overall findings and addressed as a specific section. Data collection and analysis tools included an evaluation matrix, questionnaires for stakeholders, implementing partners and beneficiaries.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. Build on the successes of the project. Consider extending the project site in Cameroon so that the national Expert Group can extend the training to beneficiaries in the most relevant geographic areas of the country that were left out.

Recommendation 2. Build sustainable partnerships with training institutions in the beneficiary countries. Ensure that the training developed under the Global Project is implemented through a memorandum of understanding, which defines the role of partners in implementing the trainings, plans for sustainability of the programs, and impact evaluations.

Recommendation 3. Increase the effectiveness of the implementation process of the project. Minimize unnecessary delays associated with the recruitment and deployment of experts by establishing own roster or requesting another UN entity to recruit an international or local consultant using UN Mutual Recognition principles (Mutual Recognition Statement. Business Innovation Group/ 2019). Consider adapting lump sum or "global price" contracts for short-term experts to allow for greater logistics flexibility.

Recommendation 4. Promote gender equity and gender mainstreaming throughout the design and implementation process. Ensure that training modules take gender analysis and gender considerations into account, as well as the gender-based impacts of counterterrorism measures. Supports at least one gender study within the scope of implementation and ensure that findings are adapted in the training manuals.

Recommendation 5. Consider program design from a needs-based perspective. Involve national partners in planning and developing an exit strategy that would address the matter of financial and human resources to sustain the training; Ensure a comparative analysis of the relevant legislation, standards of practice to identify possible gaps that could prevent the effective application of human rights principles in the work of police and national security agencies; promote the use of modern technology to sustaining the programmes' outputs.

Recommendation 6. Strengthening the role of project governance mechanisms and monitoring systems. Set up a Project Steering Committee to ensure that all activities are adequately monitored and overseen by the national partners. Ensure an adequate project monitoring process, a coherent theory of change, an adequate logical framework, and a risk mitigation plan.

Recommendation 7. Strengthen Coherence, Synergies and Complementarities internally and externally. Conduct an annual mapping of related projects and participate in donor coordination meetings to determine areas where the future project can build synergies or complement the UN agencies.

Recommendation 8. To maximize the project's impact and prioritise the exit strategy. The political will of the partner member states should be monitored beyond the formal agreement and operating budgets to ensure that the human and financial capacities of the project are addressed from the outset.