

**EVALUATION
REPORT**

COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION

UNICEF Ecuador Cooperation Programme 2004-2008

EVALUATION OFFICE
May 2008

unite for
children

unicef 

**EVALUATION
REPORT**

**COUNTRY PROGRAMME
EVALUATION**

**UNICEF Ecuador Cooperation
Programme 2004-2008**

Country Programme Evaluation UNICEF-Ecuador Cooperation Programme 2004-2008

© United Nations Children's Fund, New York, 2008

United Nations Children's Fund

Three United Nations Plaza

New York, New York 10017

May 2008

The purpose of the evaluation reports produced by the UNICEF Evaluation Office is to assess the situation, facilitate the exchange of knowledge and perspectives among UNICEF staff and to propose measures to address the concerns raised. The content of this report does not necessarily reflect UNICEF's official position.

The text has not been edited to official publication standards and UNICEF accepts no responsibility for errors.

The designations in this publication do not imply an opinion on legal status of any country or territory, or of its authorities, or the delimitation of frontiers.

For further information, please contact:

Evaluation Office

United Nations Children's Fund

Three United Nations Plaza

New York, New York 10017, United States

Tel: +1(212) 824-6322

Fax: +1(212) 824-6492

PREFACE

This report was drawn from the Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) for UNICEF- Ecuador Cooperation Programme 2004-2008. The Evaluation was contracted out to the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO-Ecuador). The evaluation team was made up of Miguel Chavarría, Mónica Girolami, Roberto Iturralde, Martha Moncada and Soledad Varea.

The report discusses the main achievements, lessons learned and challenges experienced in implementing the programme. It also draws lessons that may be useful in the future to guide UNICEF action and the design of new cooperation programmes.

The evaluation called for participatory processes of dialogue and consultation with the various parties involved in the programme, including central Government, local Government, civil society and the private sector. Their perceptions and opinions are reflected in the content of this report.

The evaluation was conducted in 2007 at the request of the UNICEF office in Ecuador, under the supervision of The Americas and Caribbean Regional Office of UNICEF and the UNICEF Evaluation Office in New York. The latter was also responsible for final approval and publication of the report.

Joaquín González-Alemán supported the first stage of the evaluation, while Ada Ocampo completed the process including final approval and publication of the report. All these professionals serve on the regular staff of the UNICEF Evaluation Office in New York.

Jean Gough, Haleem Lone and Saville Kushner, of the UNICEF Regional Office in Panama, were involved in the process at different stages and lent valuable comments and contributions, in addition to assuming shared responsibility for supervision.

Cristian Munduate, UNICEF Representative in Ecuador, and Ludwig Guendel, UNICEF Senior Programme Officer in Ecuador, together with Gina Velasco, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, also made significant contributions to the evaluation process.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to members of the evaluation team and other participants who contributed to the success of this process, ensuring that it would produce useful conclusions and recommendations and valuable, practical lessons.

I would especially like to thank the local stakeholders who generously shared their vision of how UNICEF can target its action toward supporting the Governments as they generate and implement public policies that take a human rights perspective.

Lucien Back
Officer in Charge (OIC), Evaluation Office
UNICEF New York

CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Acronyms | III |
| Executive Summary | V |
| Resumen Ejecutivo | XIII |
| Résumé Analytique | XXI |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 1.1. Description | 1 |
| 1.2. Background and justification of the evaluation | 1 |
| 1.3. Objectives and scope | 2 |
| 1.4. Methods | 3 |
| 1.5. How the evaluation was organized and what factors affected the process..... | 4 |
| 2. The Backdrop Of Cooperation In Ecuador | 1 |
| 2.1. Brief description of the Ecuadorian setting..... | 1 |
| 2.2. Problems of children and adolescents | 1 |
| 2.3. Public policies for children and youth | 6 |
| 3. The UNICEF-Ecuador Cooperation Programme | 9 |
| 3.1. Historical and philosophical background of the cooperation programme | 9 |
| 3.2. Strategic objectives of the 2004-2008 cooperation programme..... | 10 |
| 3.3. Principal stakeholders in the cooperation programme (CP)..... | 11 |
| 3.4. Rationale of the rights-based public policy approach..... | 13 |
| 3.5. The cooperation programme and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) | 16 |
| 3.6. Resources for programme implementation | 18 |
| 3.7. Comparative analysis between cooperation programmes for 1999-2003 and 2004-2008 | 21 |
| 3.8. The first stage of evaluation: midterm evaluation of the cooperation programme.... | 22 |
| 4. Results And Experiences Through 2007 | 25 |
| 4.1. Results and experiences from cooperation programme implementation | 25 |
| 4.2. Results and experiences of selected projects..... | 29 |
| 4.2.1 Positioning education as a national priority through the Social Contract for Education | 29 |
| 4.2.2. The maternal and infant health programme and application of the Women's Zero-cost Maternity Bill..... | 30 |
| 4.2.3. Special protection in the cooperation programme | 31 |
| 4.2.4. The Municipality of Morona | 32 |
| 4.2.5. The Municipality of Riobamba | 33 |
| 4.2.6. The Municipality of Esmeraldas..... | 35 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 5. Conclusions | 37 |
| 5.1. Relevance | 37 |
| 5.2. Rights based approach | 38 |
| 5.3. Added value | 42 |
| 5.4. Coordination | 43 |
| 5.5. Sustainability | 46 |
| 5.6 Opportunities and challenges for cooperation in the Ecuadorian setting | 47 |
| 6. Lessons Learned | 49 |
| 6.1. Role and orientation of cooperation | 49 |
| 6.2. Cooperation and work in the national sphere..... | 49 |
| 6.3. Citizen oversight movements and social control of public policies..... | 50 |
| 6.4. Cooperation work in the local and community sphere | 51 |
| 6.5. Conditions that most favour or impede change..... | 52 |
| 7. Recommendations..... | 53 |
| 7.1. The role of UNICEF in Ecuador | 53 |
| 7.2. Strengthening networks and strategic partnerships | 55 |
| 7.3. Decentralization, autonomy and community work..... | 57 |
| 7.4. Convergence for applying cooperation approaches..... | 58 |
| 7.5. UNICEF-based approach to cooperation | 58 |
| APPENDICES..... | 61 |
| Appendix 1: References..... | 63 |

Acronyms

| | |
|-------------|--|
| ACNNA: | Communications Agency for Children and Adolescents |
| AIDS: | Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome |
| AME: | Association of Municipal Boards of Ecuador |
| CCNA: | Canton Council on Children and Adolescents |
| CEPAM: | Ecuadorian Centre for the Development of Women |
| CNNA: | National Council on Children and Adolescents |
| CODENPE: | Council of People Groups and Nations of Ecuador |
| COMPINA: | Metropolitan Council for the Full Protection of Children and Adolescents |
| CONAIE: | Federation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador |
| CONAMU: | National Council of Women |
| CONASA: | National Health Council |
| CONCOPE: | Consortium of Provincial Boards of Ecuador |
| CORPEI: | Corporation of Promotions and Investments |
| CPE: | Country Programme Evaluation |
| CRI: | Children's Rights Index |
| CSE: | Social Contract for Education |
| DINAPEN: | National Specialized Police for Children and Adolescents |
| DINEIB: | National Department of Intercultural Bilingual Education |
| DIPECH: | Provincial Department of Education of Chimborazo |
| DIPEIBCH: | Provincial Department of Intercultural Bilingual Education of Chimborazo |
| DIPEIB-MS: | Provincial Department of Intercultural Bilingual Education of Morona Santiago |
| DSI: | Department of Indigenous Health |
| EAP: | Economically Active Population |
| EB/PRODEC: | Project on Development, Effectiveness and Quality, Basic Education Programme |
| ECLAC: | Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| ECUARUNARI: | Federation of Kichwa Peoples del Ecuador |
| EDNA: | State of the Rights of Children and Adolescents |
| EIBAMAZ: | Intercultural Bilingual Education for the Amazon |
| EIFC: | Community and Family-based Child Education |
| FAO: | Food and Agricultural Fund of the United Nations |
| FEINE: | Indigenous Federation of Evangelicals |
| FENOCIN: | National Federation of Indigenous and Black Small Farmers |
| FICSH: | Inter-provincial Federation of Shuar Centres |
| FIG-CALDI: | Canada Fund for Gender Equality |
| FIPSE: | Independent Federation of the Shuar People of Ecuador |
| FLACSO: | Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences |
| FODI: | Child Development Fund |
| HIV: | Human Immunodeficiency Virus |
| IBRD: | International Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| ILDIS: | Instituto Latinoamericano de Investigaciones Sociales |
| ILO: | International Labour Organization |
| IMCI: | Integrated Management of Childhood Illness |
| INEC: | National Statistics and Census Bureau |
| INECI: | Ecuadorian International Cooperation Bureau |
| INNFA: | National Institute on Children and the Family |
| IPLAC: | Latin American and Caribbean Pedagogical Institute |

| | |
|------------|---|
| LMGAI: | Zero-cost Maternity and Childcare Assistance Bill |
| MBS: | Ministry of Social Welfare |
| MDG: | Millennium Development Goals |
| MEC: | Ministry of Education and Culture |
| MEF: | Ministry of Economics and Finance |
| MODERSA: | Health Care Modernization Project |
| MSP: | Ministry of Public Health |
| MTR: | Midterm Review |
| NBI: | Index of Basic Needs Unmet |
| OCP: | Heavy Crude Oil Pipeline |
| ODNA: | Observatory of Children and Adolescents |
| ORI: | Operation Child Rescue |
| PAI: | Expanded Immunization Programme |
| PANN: | National Food and Nutrition Programme |
| Plan PETI: | National Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labour |
| PMT: | Programme for Working Children |
| PREALC: | Regional Employment Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean |
| PRODEPINE: | Development Project for Indigenous and Black Peoples in Ecuador |
| PROMECEB: | Programme for the Improvement and Quality of Basic Education in Ecuador |
| SERBISH: | Education System of the Shuar Federation |
| SIAN: | Comprehensive Food and Nutrition System |
| SIISE: | Ecuadorian System of Social Indicators |
| SIL: | Local Information Systems |
| SINEC: | National Statistics and Census System |
| SIS: | Social Information System |
| SIVE: | Epidemiological Surveillance System |
| STFS: | Technical Secretariat of the Social Front |
| TACRO | The American and Caribbean Regional Office |
| UN: | United Nations |
| UNAIDS: | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDs |
| PAHO: | Pan American Health Organization |
| UNDAF: | United Nations Development Assistance Framework |
| UNDP: | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNE: | National Union of Educators |
| UNESCO: | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization |
| UNETE: | United Nations Emergency Team for Ecuador |
| UNFPA: | United Nations Population Fund |
| UNHCR: | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNICEF: | United Nations Children's Fund |
| UNIFEM: | United Nations Development Fund for Women |
| WFP: | World Food Program |
| WHO: | World Health Organization |

Executive Summary

This document summarizes the main results, lessons learned and challenges derived from the evaluation of the Ecuador-UNICEF Cooperation Programme (2004-2008). The Programme involves national and local governmental counterparts, NGOs as well as means and mechanisms of citizen participation. The evaluation was performed by the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO - Ecuador) and coordinated by UNICEF along with the Ecuadorian Institute for International Cooperation (INECI). A reference group made up of representatives from governmental organizations, NGOs, civil society, and representatives of indigenous people and nationalities and Afro-descendants is also part of the Programme.

The evaluation analyzed: 1) the relevance of the Programme with regards to the situation of children and adolescents in Ecuador; 2) the extent to which rights-based, gender and intercultural approaches have been mainstreamed, as well as the extent to which the Programme adopted a Results Based Management Approach; 3) the value that the Program has added to public policies related to children and adolescents at the national and local levels; 4) its contribution to reinforce coordination mechanisms among local, national and international actors for advocating children and adolescents rights; and 5) the sustainability of the Programme's results for supporting the country's decentralization strategies, on the national and local levels.

The evaluation focused on four main aspects: a) contributions to the formulation and implementation of policies aimed at protecting the rights of children; b) the degree to which national actors internalized concepts and practices related to a rights-based, gender, and intercultural approaches; c) the scope of the actions carried out by duty bearers in support to the right holders at the national and local levels; and d) progress made towards the integration of the lines of work applied, and with regards to the levels of coordination maintained with local, national and international actors.

The evaluation used three cases at the national level¹ and three at the local level² as reference points. The selection of cases was approved by UNICEF Ecuador, The Americas and Caribbean Regional Office of UNICEF (TACRO) and by UNICEF's Evaluation Office. An evaluation framework was developed including the variables subject of the evaluation, the Programme strategies, and the results pursued by the Programme. A questionnaire was used for establishing dialogues with the selected actors.³ Reports and publications issued by UNICEF, the United Nations System and by relevant partners were reviewed.

Situational analysis

1. Ecuador is a country of intermediate development, ranking 82nd among the world's 177 countries on the human development index. It has one of Latin America's highest inequality ratios: 0.56. Some 54% of Ecuador's total population is poor; this percentage rises to 77.8% in rural areas and decreases to 40.3% in urban areas. Social and territorial gaps persist

¹ The Social Contract for Education, the Observatory for the Rights of Children and Adolescents, and the mother-child health component of the Ley de Maternidad Gratuita y Atención a la Infancia (Law for the Provision of Free Maternity and Pediatric Care in Ecuador).

² The implementation of the strategies of the program and those of sub-national programs *ProAndes* and *Amazonía* were assessed in three communities in the provinces of Chimborazo (mountains), Esmeraldas (coast) and Morona (Amazon).

³ 225 individuals participated, of whom 52 % were women, 37% were men and 4 % were boys and 7% were girls.

between urban and rural areas. This holds true especially for areas where indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants are concentrated.

2. Between 2000 and 2006, the country experienced a reduction in the global and chronic malnutrition rates among children younger than five years of age from 12% to 8.6% and from 26% to 18.1%, respectively. However, for every boy or girl suffering from chronic malnutrition in an urban areas, two suffer from the same condition in rural areas. Although, overall mother-child mortality rates have experienced an historic decline, there has been stagnation in recent years (2002-2006). Some 30% of the population does not have access to health care services. The rate of students who have completed basic education has increased over the past few years by 8 points, with 90% being the national average. However, while six out of every 10 children over the age of 14 complete their basic schooling in urban areas, only two out of every ten do so in rural areas. Close to 400,000 children between the ages of 5 and 15 do not attend school.
3. Over the past 10 years, more than a million Ecuadorians, or 7% of the total population, have migrated abroad. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent among youths between the ages of 15 and 26, who represent half of all Ecuadorian migrants. In recent years, Ecuador has experienced moderate economic growth, sustained to a large extent by an increase in the price of petroleum and an increase in remittances sent back home by those living abroad.
4. Protecting the rights of children and adolescents entails the following: 1) establishing social commitments and making firm political decisions; and 2) financing programs, projects and actions aimed at improving the living conditions of children and adolescents. Since 1999, the percentage of public budget allocated toward education, health and social welfare has gradually increased. Since 2004, the social expenditure/GDP ratio has been on the rise, thus reversing the position that social policy has traditionally held. At present, more and more importance is being given to guaranteeing universal coverage in health care, education, nutrition, safe drinking water and sanitation. Thus it becomes necessary to protect the resources that are allocated for social expenditures.
5. The political instability that has prevailed in Ecuador for more than a decade has resulted in the weakening of its institutional system. One example is the constant changes in political and technical leadership within government agencies⁴. Political and institutional instability along with other structural factors are causing discontinuity in social policies, institutional fragmentation and difficulties in managing programs and social services. This situation feeds a negative perception of democracy, its institutions and its governance. However, the Ecuadorian government, with the support of UNICEF, other agencies of the UN system and donors, is working to reinforce institutional capacities, protect and increase social investment, and promote the transparency of financial reporting with an eye toward protecting the rights of children and adolescents.
6. Institutional weaknesses represent a challenge for government administrators in general and for social ministries in particular. They especially affect the systemic supply of services in a country which is emphasizing and encouraging the participation of local governments in the discussion on social policies and a national debate on the deconcentration and decentralization of such policies. Paradoxically, the current administration of President

⁴ Between 2005 and 2006, the Ecuadorian government named 83 ministers in different branches.

Rafael Correa (2007-2011) has leaned toward strengthening the state's leading role in social related matters and in the centralization of social policies.

7. The endorsement in 2003 of the Ecuadorian Code for Children and Adolescents constitutes an enormous step forward in protecting the rights of Ecuadorian boys, girls and adolescents. To date, 110 local cantonal councils for children and adolescents have been established, of which 85 have their own budget, and 30 councils aimed at protecting human rights have been created. These are formal organizations that promote actions and measures to protect the rights of children.

The Ecuador-UNICEF Cooperation Programme

8. The Ecuador-UNICEF Cooperation Programme reached a turning point after the crisis that affected the country in 1999; it surpassed its social-assistance focus and adopted an approach oriented towards strengthening public policies. Thereafter, it began to: i) advocate the linkages between social policies and fiscal policies, ii) affirm equity as a government duty,⁵ and iii) more firmly mainstream, a rights-based approach.
9. In the frame of its new intervention strategy, UNICEF has opted to work under integrative schemes rather than concentrating its efforts in solely identifying strategic partners. UNICEF's actions are now aimed at ensuring greater visibility to the problems affecting children and adolescents living in Ecuador.
10. The Programme main strategies include advocacy and support to the development of national and municipal public policies, the strengthening of national and local capacities, the mainstreaming of gender and cultural integration, citizen participation and mobilization, the development of public policy models that will encourage protective and supportive family environments, and the strengthening of national and local capacities for emergency preparedness and response. The common thread for these strategies has been the focus on rights-based public policy.
11. The Cooperation Programme has four components: institutional reform and social investment, intercultural education for all, health and nutrition, and participatory monitoring and social mobilization. Besides its components the Programme includes two projects – ProAndes and Amazonía – which are implemented in various locations through provincial authorities, indigenous organizations and grassroots faith-based communities. While ProAndes covers 14 cantons on the coast and in the highlands, Amazonía is being implemented in 9 cantons in the Amazon region.
12. The Programme will cover a horizon of five years with a budget of US\$13.9 million, of which 28% comes from regular resources and 72% from other financing sources.

Main results

13. The evaluation of the Cooperation Programme concluded that the approach and strategies adopted by UNICEF in Ecuador are relevant, given the weak institutional and management

⁵ Bustelo Eduardo, Vargas Jorge Enrique, Perczek, 2006. Cooperación en Tiempos de Crisis. In Jara Carlos and Vega Silvia, 2006. **El Enfoque de Derechos en UNICEF- Ecuador**, UNICEF, Quito.

capacities of the government in matters concerning public policies and given the low level of adoption, showed by the country, on the rights of children and adolescents.

14. The evaluation determined that the entrepreneur, academic, technical and political sectors that are connected to the Programme, value UNICEF's contribution. They also recognize that the Programme has been able to establish a bridge between governmental and local institutions. The national counterparts have also added value to the Programme and made possible its operationalization. The evaluation also found the Programme has been able to synergize UNICEF's contributions, with those proceeding from the central and local governments and from the NGOs. As a result, resources in favor of children and adolescents have been successfully mobilized despite national budgetary restrictions and institutional weaknesses. Examples of such include the passage and implementation of the Ecuadorian Code for Children and Adolescents, the Law for the Provision of Free Maternity and Pediatric Care in Ecuador, the 10-year National Plan of Action for Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents, the 10-year National Education Action Plan, the Indigenous Children Agenda, and local plans to benefit children.
15. Between 1999 and 2007, a period in which the Programme supported the national dialogue and the monitoring of social investment, social investment increased fivefold.⁶ The social budgets for some of the cantonal and provincial governments of the territories where the Programme had a presence also increased, and these governments became further involved in matters related to children and adolescents. Contributing factors to the previously mentioned results were the scrutiny of the social components of the national budget and the dissemination of information in a transparent and friendly way at the national and local levels. Technical assistance provided by UNICEF to the Ministry of Economics and Finance and to the National Congress for the formulation of the budgetary *pro forma* for the ministers of social departments and agencies, helped transform the social arena into a top priority for these politico-governmental spheres. The same result was obtained by the Programme through the support provided for the improvement of budgetary and executive management in the cantons and provinces where the Programme operates.
16. The Programme has succeeded in introducing a rights-based approach in Ecuador through several initiatives such as the monitoring of social investment, the creation of a rights index and a periodical report on the status of the rights of children and adolescents; advocacy and technical assistance for the universalization of basic education; the mainstreaming of an intercultural approach in health issues and the improvement of the managerial capabilities of municipalities and governors. With this groundwork, better conditions have been created for the government and citizens to protect the rights of boys, girls and adolescents. Through the UNICEF-supported citizen observatory groups, key topics have been introduced such as that of the universalization of basic education. In addition, information has been distributed on the protection of educational rights. Welfare and social assistance institutions have been supported for the design and implementation of plans aimed at protecting children, while local and provincial governments have been supported for the adoption of agendas aimed at promoting children's rights and at developing children oriented Programmes. Organizations such as the Confederation of the Quechuan People of Ecuador (ECUARUNARI) have also been trained for the formulation of a proposal benefiting indigenous children.
17. Currently, more boys and girls are enrolling in the first year of elementary school and in the Bilingual Intercultural Education Programme. Some families are combating chronic

⁶ Ecuador's social budget grew from US\$629 million in 1999 to US\$3.222 billion in 2007 (in current dollars).

malnutrition through their own indigenous dietary habits, which is improving the nutrition in their diet; and indigenous women of the Amazon have benefited from the introduction of vertical birth delivery into local health service Programmes. The latter is undoubtedly a result of the application of an intercultural approach.

Conclusions

18. The ethical and technical quality of the assistance provided by the Programme has contributed to the adoption of a public policy approach by national counterparts and cooperating partners. By the same token, this has helped initiate a social management proposal among local governments, aimed at guaranteeing the rights of girls, boys and adolescents. Furthermore, it has enabled citizens to demand universal coverage from the Programmes of the Ministries of Education, Health and Social Inclusion.
19. The Programme has intervened in heterogeneous niches in the national as well as the local sphere. However, its work does not show a good level of coordination within UNICEF Office's divisions and with its network of counterparts. The insufficient coordination has decreased the Programme management efficacy, efficiency and potential value added. This can be explained by the fact that governmental institutions and international cooperation do not operate in an articulated way with NGOs and the private sector especially with those pursuing identical objectives. This holds true especially at the local level.
20. One aspect that the UNICEF Cooperation Programme must overcome is its perception of local governments as being part of civil society, when they are rather part of the state. The Programme also needs to review its approach toward supporting the National Council for Children and Adolescents. It should promote the creation by the National Council for Children and Adolescents, of councils aimed at protecting rights, with resources and decision making power, at the cantonal level. The aim would be to avoid overlapping actions with other groups or social sectors.
21. The sustainability level of policies and strategies promoted by the Programme has clearly been greater on the national level than on the local level. In the future, UNICEF must work to strengthen the capacities of all actors and partners involved in the Programme so that to ensure that the rights-based approach will be mainstreamed more operationally and coherently. It must also increase: i) effectiveness in the transfer of methodologies and approaches; ii) continuity and systematic approach of technical assistance. The Programme should also develop exit strategies and define deadlines for its interventions. In Esmeraldas, for example, even though cooperation has been in place for more than 10 years, results and impact have tended to be diluted.
22. Some other barriers that the Programme must overcome are: 1) the still prevailing relief and paternalistic approaches on counterparts and partners as well as on some donors; and 2) the rigidity of organizations, particularly governmental bodies, 3) local patronage systems. For ensuring sustainability, the Programme but especially UNICEF must strengthen its managerial capacities and delve further into the structural problems if it is to achieve greater and better benefits and services for right holders.
23. The evaluation also concluded that the time has come for the Programme to move from a discourse on promoting children's and adolescents' rights to a more operational public policy approach that will guarantee the viability of the provision of services to citizens and that the rights of children and adolescents will be put in practice by rights advocates.

Lessons learned

24. The Programme learned that successful results in the adoption of public policies can be achieved through 1) an enhancement of advocacy, promotion and mobilization, 2) an increase in the level of technical involvement in the implementation of rights-based public policies and services
25. The main challenge for UNICEF, in that sense, is to ensure that the Programme will move from an approach geared toward encouraging change to one that will promote actual change; from one aimed at designing and creating policies to one that will facilitate the operationalization of services related to such policies; from one centered on encouraging and strengthening members and organizations of civil society and the public sector to one aimed at ensuring that citizens will provide their own responses to problems.
26. With regard to citizen oversight, one positive impact of the Programme has been its ability to advocate to the government for more financing to ensure that the rights of children and adolescents are upheld and that the priorities in public policy that benefit this segment of society are defined. By producing and distributing focused information, the Programme has also succeeded in mobilizing citizens around children's rights to more and better education and health care. However, it is necessary to reinforce this approach by involving the observatories in the design and implementation of strategies of public policies aimed at reducing inequalities still affecting children and adolescents.
27. It was learned that social dialogue as well as agreements with broad sectors of Ecuadorian society is what most effectively optimizes the work the Programme does with national counterparts. It was also concluded that a high degree of ownership by national counterparts is crucial for influencing public policies. National counterparts' commitment must be made visible through the resources institutions are able to assign and through their capacities for strengthening the implementation, management and monitoring of public actions.
28. UNICEF conceives Ecuadorian society as a network and this conception underpins its work with central entities. The network concept implies that all social actors, whether they are private or public, national or local, assume shared, successive and alternative roles for acting as interpellators of the state.
29. Another lesson is that the Programme should more systematically engage people while working directly in the territories in a way to ensure more sustainability of local actions. UNICEF must redouble its efforts so that its work in the local sphere contributes toward building an integrative national vision, with a view of contributing to strengthen national public policy. However, it must avoid the temptation to take the "one-size-fits-all" approach and apply standard formulas that will fail to respect local and regional specificities. It must also avoid limiting its partnerships to public agencies exclusively when there are countless local, national and international actors working to achieve similar goals in the same areas.
30. Also, UNICEF learned that Ecuadorian society's view of public policy has been shaped by a paternalist, charity-based management. This is a long-standing problem: there are local political traditions, patrimonialism, and cults of leadership or "caudillismo" which have created an authoritarian, traditionalist and dominant culture. UNICEF must maintain its strategic focus on supporting the organized management of a civil society that does not seek the corporatization of the state or governmental authoritarianism.

Recommendations

31. As per the evaluation, the Programme should continue to apply and enhance the public policy approach and support advocacy and citizen monitoring. The Programme should also continue to update the legal and normative frameworks aimed at improving the human and financial resources management of the public sector.
32. The Programme should reinforce a strategy of national development in which social, economic and production policies are integrated using regional and territorial approaches based on equity and quality of life.
33. The evaluation suggests that the Programme strengthen its working ties with other agencies whose work is directly related to the promotion of productive activities - for example, the generation of jobs and income for a significant portion of the Ecuadorian population, especially women and young parents, and the support of boys, girls and adolescents living in Ecuador who are the sons and daughters of emigrants.
34. To improve the impact of the Programme, partnerships which maximize the influence on public policy need to be strengthened. The evaluation suggests the adoption of a more long-term approach to avoid responding strictly to short-term issues and to actors with political power. It is also recommended that the Programme take a more proactive and reflexive role, always within the framework of its agreements with Ecuador, and a sound communication strategy with local donors, through which concrete and immediate results will emerge so that the scope of this approach and the advantages of its results and outputs can be internalized.
35. The analysis of the budget should entail an equal-opportunity approach that will help encourage an inter-agency discussion of gender and intercultural aspects. Other social capacities that benefit children and adolescents will thus be mobilized. In the case of intercultural, the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural character of Ecuador should be strengthened, and the differences between individual rights and the collective values and ways of life defended by indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian cultures should be taken into account. Also, the Programme should promote inter-agency dialogues and discussions aimed at promoting a greater sense of ownership.
36. UNICEF should establish closer ties between its work for children and adolescents and women's rights so that substantial changes in gender relations are brought about. A policy should be developed that will guide institutional work in this area and reach out to actors concerned with defending gender equality.
37. With regard to citizen mobilization, the evaluation recommends that the movements and organizations that are a part of the Programme reflect on their governance, representation and coverage. It would also be advisable for them to adopt democratic mechanisms to integrate new members and elect their boards. It is additionally recommended that they pursue influence beyond the scope of the central government.
38. The Social Contract for Education should make explicit the meaning of some of its principles such as the universalization of basic education and the concept of "Texts for all," which are too general to have an influence on the educational structure. Also, consensus should be fostered on the meaning of quality education. Besides, goals and indicators for monitoring should be defined.

39. The Programme should: i) preserve its power to convene the private sector; ii) maintain its interest in supporting UNICEF and iii) seek to increase the contributions from enterprises, trade unions and participants. The mechanism suggested consists of keeping them informed and motivated, and periodically submitting financial reports on activities in progress and the results achieved by the Programme.
40. UNICEF should work in a more sustained, hands-on fashion with other development partners, mainly the agencies of the UN System involved in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The purpose will be to achieve concerted action focused on protecting the rights of Ecuador's girls, boys and adolescents.
41. Based on the experiences of the two sub-regional Programmes ProAndes and Amazonía, UNICEF should further coordinate its local activities with those of national Programmes and strengthen its focus on public policy in the local sphere. UNICEF should unify local and national Programmes but without disregarding the peculiarities of each territory and community.
42. UNICEF should concentrate its activities in territories that offer the greatest possibilities for providing feedback on and complementing the work done in the national networks. Also, it should choose areas that will display the greatest demonstrable effects that will motivate other communities and territories to adopt policies that benefit children and adolescents.
43. The organigram of the UNICEF Office should be modified to better reflect the approaches and new forms of management that have been adopted. Therefore, it would be necessary to: 1) review the manner in which the thematic, operational and geographic components have been organized; and 2) strengthen the conceptual and methodological aspects that will guide teamwork and enable the Programme to offer an integrated, comprehensive vision of children and adolescents.
44. Other recommendations are to: 1) incorporate adolescents in the next Cooperation Programme, since they are largely absent from the current Programme; 2) strengthen the Programme's comprehensive vision of childhood development; and 3) promote interventions related to the family and surrounding community.

Resumen Ejecutivo

El presente documento contiene una síntesis de los principales resultados, lecciones y desafíos obtenidos a través de la evaluación del Programa de Cooperación de Ecuador-UNICEF (2004-2008). Este Programa involucra a contrapartes gubernamentales en el nivel nacional y local, a organizaciones no gubernamentales e instancias y mecanismos de participación ciudadana. La evaluación fue realizada por la Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales (FLACSO – Ecuador) y coordinada por UNICEF junto con el Instituto Nacional de Cooperación Internacional (INECI). Cuenta asimismo, con un grupo de referencia constituido por representantes de organismos gubernamentales, no gubernamentales, de la sociedad civil y representantes de pueblos y nacionalidades indígenas y afrodescendientes.

La evaluación analizó: 1) la pertinencia del Programa respecto de la situación de la niñez y adolescencia en el Ecuador; 2) el grado de incorporación de los enfoques de derecho, de género, de interculturalidad, así como la orientación del Programa hacia la gestión por resultados 3) el valor que el Programa agregó a las políticas públicas relacionadas con la niñez y la adolescencia en los ámbitos nacional y local; 4) la contribución a la coordinación de las acciones de los actores locales, nacionales e internacionales en torno a los derechos de la niñez y la adolescencia; y 5) la sostenibilidad de los resultados del Programa en relación con el apoyo a las estrategias de descentralización del país, en los ámbitos nacional y local,

La evaluación se centró en cuatro puntos: a) contribuciones a la construcción y puesta en marcha de políticas para el cumplimiento de los derechos de la niñez; b) grado en el que los actores nacionales se apropiaron de las nociones y prácticas relativas al enfoque de derechos, de género y de interculturalidad; c) alcance y limitaciones de las acciones ejecutadas por los tenedores de obligaciones nacionales y locales, para garantizar derechos a los titulares; d) avances en la articulación de las líneas de trabajo aplicadas, y en la coordinación con los actores locales, nacionales e internacionales.

La evaluación tomó como referencia tres casos de alcance nacional⁷ y tres de alcance territorial⁸. La selección fue acordada con la oficina de UNICEF Ecuador, la Oficina Regional de UNICEF para América Latina y el Caribe (TACRO) y la Oficina de Evaluación de la Sede de UNICEF en Nueva York. Se estableció un marco de evaluación que incluyó las variables a ser investigadas, las cuales corresponden a las estrategias, productos y resultados que persigue el Programa. Se formularon preguntas para dialogar con los actores seleccionados,⁹ y se revisaron informes y publicaciones realizados por la Oficina de UNICEF, el Sistema de Naciones Unidas y los socios.

Análisis de situación

1. El Ecuador es un país de desarrollo intermedio, ya que ocupa el lugar No. 82 entre 177 países del mundo en el índice de desarrollo humano. Presenta uno de los coeficientes de desigualdad más altos de América Latina: 0.56. El 54% de la población ecuatoriana es

⁷ El Contrato Social por la Educación, el Observatorio de los Derechos de la Niñez y la Adolescencia y el componente de salud materno infantil de la Ley de Maternidad Gratuita y Atención a la Infancia.

⁸ Tres comunidades de las provincias de Chimborazo (sierra), Esmeraldas (costa) y Morona (amazonía) en las cuales se analizó el funcionamiento de las estrategias del programa y también el de los programas subnacionales: ProAndes y Amazonía.

⁹ Participaron 225 personas, de las cuales el 52 % fueron mujeres, 37% hombres; 4% niños y 7% niñas.

pobre; en el área rural este porcentaje asciende a 77.8%, mientras que en las zonas urbanas alcanza el 40.3%. Persisten las brechas sociales y territoriales entre las áreas urbanas y las rurales y en aquellos lugares donde se concentran pueblos indígenas y afrodescendientes.

2. Entre el 2000 y 2006 se produjo una reducción en las tasas de desnutrición global y crónica de menores de 5 años, de 12% a 8,6% y de 26% a 18,1%, respectivamente. Sin embargo, por cada niño o niña con desnutrición crónica en la zona urbana, dos presentan las mismas condiciones en las áreas rurales. Si bien las tasas de mortalidad materna infantil disminuyeron en el pasado, se evidencia un estancamiento en los últimos años (2002-2006). El 30% de la población no accede a servicios de salud. De otro lado, la tasa de escolares que completaron la educación básica se incrementó en los últimos años en 8 puntos, manteniéndose en un 90% como promedio nacional. Sin embargo, mientras 6 de cada 10 niños y niñas mayores de 14 años culminan la educación básica en las zonas urbanas, tan solo 2 de cada 10 lo hacen en el sector rural. Cerca de 400.000 menores entre 5 y 15 años están fuera del sistema escolar.
3. En los últimos 10 años más de un millón de personas ecuatorianas han migrado hacia el extranjero, lo cual corresponde a un 7% de la población total. Este fenómeno se da particularmente entre la juventud ubicada en el rango de 15 y 26 años quienes representan la mitad del total de migrantes. En años recientes, el Ecuador ha experimentado un crecimiento económico moderado sustentado, en gran medida, por el incremento del precio del petróleo y de las remesas enviadas por quienes viven en el exterior.
4. El cumplimiento de los derechos de la niñez y la adolescencia supone: 1) establecer compromisos sociales y tomar decisiones políticas firmes; 2) el financiamiento de programas, proyectos y acciones que garanticen el mejoramiento de las condiciones de vida de la niñez y adolescencia. Desde 1999, se evidencia un aumento progresivo del porcentaje de los ingresos públicos destinado a educación, salud y bienestar social. Desde 2004 la relación gasto social/PIB tiende al alza, con lo cual se está revirtiendo la posición que históricamente ocupaba la política social. En la actualidad, cobra importancia garantizar coberturas universales en salud, educación, nutrición, agua potable y saneamiento, para lo cual es necesario proteger los recursos destinados al gasto social.
5. La inestabilidad política de más de una década en el Ecuador ha repercutido en el debilitamiento de su institucionalidad. Un ejemplo son los recurrentes cambios en el liderazgo político y técnico dentro del aparato estatal¹⁰. La inestabilidad política e institucional junto con otros factores estructurales están provocando discontinuidad en las políticas sociales, fragmentación institucional y dificultades para gerenciar los programas y los servicios de atención social. Tal situación alimenta una percepción negativa de la democracia, de sus instituciones y de las clases dirigentes. No obstante, el gobierno, con el apoyo de UNICEF, otras agencias del Sistema de Naciones Unidas y donantes se esfuerzan en fortalecer las capacidades institucionales, proteger e incrementar la inversión social, así como en promover la transparencia de los informes financieros, con el fin de avanzar hacia el cumplimiento de los derechos de la niñez y adolescencia.
6. Las debilidades institucionales constituyen desafíos para la administración pública en general y para los ministerios sociales, en particular. Afecta sobre todo la articulación de la oferta de servicios en un país que está incentivando la participación de los gobiernos

¹⁰ En el período 2005 y 2006, el gobierno de la República ha nombrado 83 ministros en los diferentes ramos.

locales en la discusión sobre las políticas sociales y en el debate nacional sobre la desconcentración y descentralización de competencias de esa política. Paradójicamente, la tendencia del reciente gobierno del Presidente Rafael Correa (2007-2011) es fortalecer el rol del Estado en materia social y la centralización de las políticas sociales.

7. La aprobación, en 2003, del Código de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia, constituye un gran avance en el cumplimiento de los derechos de niños, niñas y adolescentes del Ecuador. Se han establecido, a la fecha, 110 consejos cantonales de la niñez y la adolescencia en el nivel cantonal, de los cuales 85 cuentan con presupuesto propio y se han creado 30 juntas de protección de derechos. Estos son organismos formales que promueven acciones y medidas para la protección de los derechos de la niñez.

El Programa de Cooperación

8. El Programa de Cooperación de UNICEF Ecuador dio un giro luego de la crisis de 1999; abandonó la lógica asistencial y adoptó un enfoque centrado en el fortalecimiento de la política pública. A partir de entonces comenzó a impulsar la relación de la política social con la fiscal; a afirmar la equidad como deber del Estado¹¹ y a incorporar, con mayor firmeza, la perspectiva de derechos.
9. Con este cambio en la estrategia de intervención, UNICEF optó por trabajar bajo esquemas integradores, antes que escoger solamente aliados estratégicos. Sus acciones se han orientado a visibilizar los problemas que afectan a la niñez y adolescencia ecuatorianas.
10. Las estrategias del Programa combinan la abogacía con el apoyo al desarrollo de políticas públicas nacionales y municipales, el fortalecimiento de las capacidades nacionales y locales, la incorporación de las dimensiones de género e interculturalidad, la participación y movilización ciudadana, el desarrollo de modelos de políticas públicas que propicien entornos familiares protectores y motivadores, y el fortalecimiento de las capacidades nacionales y locales para prevenir y actuar frente a las emergencias. El eje aglutinador de estas estrategias ha sido el enfoque de políticas públicas basado en una perspectiva de derechos.
11. El Programa de Cooperación tiene cuatro componentes: reforma institucional e inversión social; educación intercultural para todos; salud y nutrición; monitoreo participativo y movilización social. Además, los dos programas -ProAndes y Amazonía- se ejecutan en varias localidades, de la mano de autoridades provinciales, organizaciones indígenas y comunidades eclesiales de base. Mientras ProAndes cubre 14 cantones de la costa y de la sierra, el programa Amazonía se ejecuta en nueve cantones de esta región.
12. El Programa quinquenal tiene un presupuesto de USD 13.9 millones, que proviene en un 28% de recursos regulares y un 72% de otras fuentes de financiamiento.

Principales resultados

13. A través de la evaluación del Programa de Cooperación se constató que el enfoque y las estrategias adoptadas son pertinentes dada la débil institucionalidad y la disminuida

¹¹ Bustelo Eduardo, Vargas Jorge Enrique, Perczek. 2006. Cooperación en Tiempos de Crisis. En Jara Carlos y Vega Silvia, 2006. **El Enfoque de Derechos en UNICEF- Ecuador**, UNICEF, Quito.

capacidad rectora del Estado en la generación de políticas públicas y ante el bajo grado de cumplimiento de los derechos de la niñez y adolescencia.

14. Con la evaluación se verificó que los sectores empresariales, académicos, técnicos y políticos de la sociedad ecuatoriana que trabajan con la cooperación valoran la cooperación de UNICEF y que ésta convoca a las instituciones gubernamentales y locales. Las contrapartes nacionales resignifican a la cooperación y la operacionalizan. También se constató que a través del Programa de Cooperación se articulan tanto los aportes de UNICEF, como los de los gobiernos central y local, y los de las ONG. Gracias a ello se ha logrado movilizar recursos en favor de la niñez y adolescencia, pese a las restricciones presupuestarias y a las debilidades institucionales. Ejemplos de ello son la aprobación e implementación del Código de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia, la Ley de Maternidad Gratuita, el Plan Decenal de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia, el Plan Decenal de la Educación, la Agenda de la Niñez Indígena, los planes locales a favor de la infancia.
15. En el período 1999 - 2007 en el cual el Programa de Cooperación apoyó la vigilancia y el diálogo sobre la inversión social, ésta llegó a quintuplicarse¹². También se incrementaron los presupuestos de algunos de los gobiernos cantonales y provinciales de los territorios donde coopera, y se consiguió que estos intervengan más en los asuntos relacionados con la niñez y adolescencia. A ello contribuyó el escrutinio del presupuesto estatal para el área social y la amplia difusión de información transparente y asequible en los ámbitos nacional y local. La asistencia técnica brindada por UNICEF al Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas y al Congreso Nacional para la formulación de la pro forma presupuestaria de los ministerios del área social coadyuvó a transformar lo social en una prioridad de estas esferas político-gubernamentales. Igualmente ocurrió con el apoyo al mejoramiento de la gestión presupuestaria y gerencial en los cantones y provincias del país donde coopera.
16. El Programa de Cooperación ha conseguido introducir el enfoque de derechos en el Ecuador a través, entre otras iniciativas, del seguimiento de la inversión social, la elaboración del Índice y del Estado del Cumplimiento de los Derechos de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia, la abogacía y asistencia técnica para la universalización de la educación básica, la incorporación del enfoque intercultural en la salud, y el mejoramiento de las capacidades gerenciales de las alcaldías y prefecturas. Con esta base, existen mayores condiciones para que el Estado y la ciudadanía intervengan para que se cumplan los derechos de niños, niñas y adolescentes. A través de los observatorios ciudadanos apoyados por UNICEF se han posicionado temas como el de la universalización de la educación básica y se ha difundido información sobre el cumplimiento de dichos derechos. Se ha apoyado a las instituciones de bienestar y asistencia social en el diseño e implementación de planes para la protección de la infancia, así como a los gobiernos locales y provinciales, para que adopten agendas a favor de la niñez y desarrollen programas dirigidos a este sector social. También se ha capacitado a organizaciones como Ecuarunari en el diseño de una agenda para la niñez indígena.
17. Actualmente, más niños y niñas están ingresando al primer año de educación básica y a la Educación Intercultural Bilingüe; algunas familias están combatiendo la desnutrición crónica a través de hábitos alimenticios autóctonos los cuales mejoran los valores nutricionales de su dieta; y las mujeres indígenas de la Amazonía se han beneficiado con la introducción del

¹² El presupuesto social de la nación ha pasado de USD. 629 millones de dólares, en 1999, a USD 3.222 millones en 2007 (Dólares corrientes).

parto vertical en los servicios de salud. Esto último es, sin duda, un resultado de la aplicación del enfoque de interculturalidad.

Conclusiones

18. La calidad ética y técnica de la asistencia brindada por el Programa de Cooperación ha contribuido a que las contrapartes nacionales y los socios cooperantes adopten el enfoque de políticas públicas. También a que en los gobiernos locales se tienda a construir concertadamente una propuesta de gerencia social, que apunte a garantizar los derechos de niñas, niños y adolescentes. Asimismo, a que la ciudadanía exija que los programas de los Ministerios de Educación, Salud e Inclusión Social tengan una cobertura universal.
19. El Programa ha intervenido en nichos muy heterogéneos, tanto en el ámbito nacional como local. No siempre lo hizo de manera coordinada tanto dentro de la Oficina de UNICEF como en la red de contrapartes, lo cual ha restado eficacia, eficiencia y valor agregado a su gestión. Lo antedicho se explica por la fragmentación de las instituciones estatales y de la cooperación internacional sumada a una escasa articulación, sobre todo en el ámbito local, entre organizaciones no gubernamentales y del sector privado que persiguen los mismos objetivos que el Programa de cooperación.
20. Una limitación que el Programa de Cooperación de UNICEF deberá superar es el considerar a los gobiernos locales como instancias de la sociedad civil, cuando en realidad estos gobiernos forman parte del Estado. Asimismo, necesita repensar su actual apoyo al Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y de la Adolescencia para que cree consejos cantonales de protección con facultades y recursos, puesto que estos se superponen a instancias promovidas por otros grupos o sectores sociales para proteger sus derechos.
21. La sostenibilidad de las políticas y estrategias promovidas por el Programa ha sido claramente mayor en el ámbito nacional que en el local. A futuro, UNICEF deberá esforzarse por fortalecer la capacitación de todos los actores que integran el Programa de Cooperación y de sus socios, con el fin de que incorporen más operativa y consistentemente el enfoque de derechos. También deberá garantizar mayor eficacia en la transferencia de metodologías y enfoques, mayor continuidad y sistematicidad de la asistencia técnica, contar con estrategias de salida y definir tiempos toques de cooperación. En el territorio de Esmeraldas, por ejemplo, si bien la cooperación tiene más de 10 años de trabajo, los resultados e impactos han tendido a diluirse.
22. Otras barreras que la cooperación deberá superar son: 1) la persistencia de los enfoques asistencialista y paternalista, tanto en las contrapartes y aliados como entre algunos donantes; 2) la rigidez de las organizaciones, en especial las públicas, así como los cacicazgos y el clientelismo. En aras de la sostenibilidad, el Programa de Cooperación y en particular UNICEF, deberán tratar más profundamente los problemas estructurales y fortalecer sus capacidades gerenciales, con el fin de producir mayores y mejores beneficios y servicios para la ciudadanía portadora de derechos.
23. La evaluación concluyó también que ha llegado el momento de transitar del discurso a favor de los derechos de la niñez y adolescencia, a un enfoque de política pública más operativo, que garantice la viabilización de la prestación de servicios a la ciudadanía y la puesta en práctica de los derechos de la niñez y adolescencia por parte de todos los garantes de derechos.

Lecciones aprendidas

24. El Programa aprendió que debe complementar las exitosas acciones de adopción de políticas públicas, obtenidas en parte gracias a la abogacía, promoción y movilización, con una incidencia técnica mayor en la implementación de las políticas públicas y la operación de los servicios en las cuales se aplique el enfoque de derechos.
25. El principal desafío de UNICEF, en ese sentido, es lograr que el Programa de Cooperación transite de un enfoque orientado a estimular el cambio, hacia otro que promueve la ejecución de tal cambio; de uno orientado al diseño y creación de políticas a otro que facilite la operación de los servicios relacionados con esas políticas; de uno centrado en estimular y fortalecer a los miembros y organizaciones de la sociedad civil y del sector público, a otro en el que la ciudadanía genere respuestas a los problemas.
26. En cuanto a vigilancia ciudadana, un impacto positivo del Programa de Cooperación ha sido abogar ante el Estado, para conseguir un financiamiento adecuado para poner en práctica los derechos de la niñez y adolescencia, junto con la definición de prioridades en las políticas públicas a favor de ese sector social. Produciendo y difundiendo información focalizada también se ha conseguido movilizar a la ciudadanía en torno a los derechos que tiene la niñez a más y mejor educación y salud. Es necesario, sin embargo, fortalecer dicho enfoque involucrando a los observatorios en el diseño e implementación de aquellos temas estratégicos de las políticas públicas, que inciden en la reducción de las inequidades que aún afectan a la niñez y adolescencia.
27. Se aprendió que las condiciones que más potencian el trabajo con las contrapartes nacionales son el diálogo y la generación de acuerdos con amplios sectores de la sociedad ecuatoriana. También que el grado de apropiación de las contrapartes es fundamental para incidir en las políticas públicas. Su compromiso se debe expresar en los recursos que asignan las instituciones y en sus capacidades para fortalecer la operación, gestión y seguimiento de las acciones públicas.
28. El concebir a la sociedad ecuatoriana como una red es una fortaleza de UNICEF que subyace en su trabajo con las entidades centrales. La red implica que los actores sociales, tanto privados como públicos, nacionales y locales, asumen roles compartidos, sucesivos y alternativos en la interpelación que hacen al Estado.
29. Una lección es que la cooperación debe acercarse más sistemáticamente a la gente, a través de un trabajo directo en los territorios para lograr una mayor sostenibilidad de las acciones locales. UNICEF deberá aunar esfuerzos para que su trabajo en el ámbito local contribuya a construir una visión nacional integradora, la cual fortalezca una política pública nacional. Sin embargo, debe evitar la tentación “estandarizadora” de querer aplicar recetas que uniformen el trabajo de la cooperación de UNICEF, sin respetar las particularidades locales y regionales. También debe evitar que las alianzas se limiten exclusivamente a las organizaciones públicas, cuando existe un sinnúmero de actores locales, nacionales e internacionales trabajando por similares fines en los territorios.
30. UNICEF aprendió asimismo, que el imaginario de la sociedad ecuatoriana sobre las políticas públicas ha sido moldeado por una gestión paternalista y de beneficencia. Este es un problema histórico; hay un predominio de los cacicazgos locales, el patrimonialismo y caudillismo, lo cual ha configurado una cultura autoritaria, tradicional y prevalente. UNICEF

debe mantener su apuesta estratégica de apoyar una gestión organizada de la sociedad civil que no persiga la corporativización del Estado ni el autoritarismo estatal.

Recomendaciones

31. En la evaluación se recomienda continuar aplicando y profundizando el enfoque de política pública y apoyando la abogacía y vigilancia ciudadana. Se sugiere seguir actualizando los marcos legales y normativos orientados al mejoramiento de la gestión de los recursos humanos y financieros del sector público.
32. La cooperación deberá fortalecer una estrategia de desarrollo nacional en la cual se articulen la política social y las políticas económicas y productivas usando los enfoques regional y territorial basados en la equidad y el bienestar.
33. Se sugiere cohesionar los lazos de trabajo con otras agencias cuyo quehacer guarda relación directa con la promoción de actividades productivas, por ejemplo la generación de empleo e ingresos para un significativo porcentaje de la población ecuatoriana, especialmente mujeres y padres jóvenes, y el apoyo a niños, niñas y adolescentes que están viviendo en el país y que son hijas e hijos de emigrantes.
34. Otro aspecto que deberá reforzar son aquellas alianzas que potencian la incidencia en la política pública y, de esta manera, mejorar el impacto del Programa. Se le sugiere adoptar un enfoque de más largo plazo para evitar responder exclusivamente a propuestas coyunturales y a los actores con poder político. También se recomienda que asuma un rol más proactivo y reflexivo siempre enmarcado en los acuerdos con el país, y una buena estrategia de comunicación con los donantes locales mediante la cual se muestren los resultados concretos e inmediatos, a fin de que interioricen el alcance de este enfoque y la bondad de sus resultados y productos.
35. El análisis del presupuesto deberá integrar un enfoque de igualdad de oportunidades, que permita promover la discusión interinstitucional de las dimensiones de género e interculturalidad. Así se movilizarán otras capacidades sociales en favor de la niñez y la adolescencia. En el caso de la interculturalidad se sugiere reforzar el carácter pluriétnico y multicultural del Ecuador, y tomar en consideración las diferencias entre los derechos individuales y los valores y formas de vida colectivas que defienden las culturas indígenas y afroecuatorianas. Igualmente, promover diálogos y discusiones interinstitucionales para una mayor apropiación.
36. UNICEF deberá establecer vínculos más estrechos entre su trabajo a favor de la infancia y adolescencia y los derechos de las mujeres, de modo que se propicien cambios sustanciales en las relaciones de género. Conviene desarrollar una política que oriente el trabajo institucional en esta temática y que acerque la cooperación a actores preocupados por defender la equidad de género.
37. En cuanto a la movilización ciudadana, se sugiere a los movimientos y organizaciones que son parte del Programa, reflexionar sobre su gobernanza, representatividad y cobertura. También adoptar mecanismos democráticos para integrar miembros y elegir a sus directivos. Además, se les sugiere influencia más allá del ámbito del gobierno central.
38. Al Contrato Social por la Educación se le recomienda precisar el significado de principios como el de la universalización de la educación básica y el de textos para todos, los cuales

son demasiado generales como para incidir en la estructura de la educación. Asimismo, se le sugiere llegar a acuerdos sobre las nociones de la calidad de la educación, establecer metas y definir indicadores de seguimiento.

39. El Programa deberá preservar su poder de convocatoria al sector privado, mantener su interés en apoyar a UNICEF e incrementar los montos de las contribuciones de las empresas y gremios donantes y participantes. El mecanismo sugerido es mantenerlos informados y motivados; y, periódicamente, rendir cuentas sobre las actividades en marcha y los resultados alcanzados por el Programa.
40. UNICEF deberá trabajar de manera más sostenida y cercana a otros actores de la cooperación internacional, principalmente las agencias del sistema de las Naciones Unidas agrupadas en el marco de cooperación de UNDAF. El objetivo será lograr una acción concertada en pos del cumplimiento de los derechos de niñas, niños y adolescentes del Ecuador.
41. Partiendo de las experiencias de los dos Programas subregionales, ProAndes y Amazonía, se recomienda a UNICEF coordinar más sus acciones locales con las de los programas nacionales y fortalecer el enfoque de política pública en el ámbito local. Se le sugiere unificar los programas locales con los nacionales, pero sin descuidar las particularidades de cada territorio y comunidad.
42. Se le recomienda concentrar acciones en los territorios que mayores posibilidades ofrecen para retroalimentar y complementar el trabajo en las redes nacionales. También donde haya mejores efectos demostrativos que motiven a otras comunidades y territorios a sumarse por las políticas a favor de la niñez y adolescencia.
43. Se recomienda modificar la estructura orgánica de la Oficina de UNICEF para que se adecue mejor a los enfoques adoptados y a las nuevas formas de gestión. Por lo tanto habría que: 1) revisar la manera en que han sido jerarquizados los componentes temáticos, operativos y geográficos; 2) fortalecer lo conceptual y metodológico para que acompañen al trabajo en equipo y para poder ofrecer una visión integrada e integral de la niñez y adolescencia.
44. Otras recomendaciones son: 1) incorporar a la adolescencia en el siguiente Programa de Cooperación, ya que es la gran ausente en el Programa actual; 2) fortalecer su visión integral sobre el desarrollo de la infancia; y 3) promover intervenciones relacionadas con la familia y su comunidad más inmediata.

Résumé Analytique

Le présent document offre une synthèse des principaux résultats, enseignements et difficultés mis en avant par l'évaluation du Programme de coopération Équateur-UNICEF (2004-2008). Ce Programme fait intervenir des organismes gouvernementaux nationaux et leurs homologues locaux, ainsi que des organisations non gouvernementales, des instances et des mécanismes de participation des citoyens. L'évaluation a été réalisée par la Faculté latino-américaine des sciences sociales (FLACSO) et coordonnée par l'UNICEF, en collaboration avec l'Instituto Ecuatoriano de Cooperación Internacional (INECI). De même, un groupe de référence comprenant des représentants d'organismes gouvernementaux, d'organisations non gouvernementales et de la société civile, ainsi que des représentants de populations et de nationalités autochtones et d'ascendance africaine a été utilisé.

L'évaluation a analysé : 1) la pertinence du Programme relativement à la situation des enfants et des adolescents en Équateur; 2) la mesure dans laquelle les questions des droits, de l'égalité des sexes et de l'interculturalité ont été prises en compte, ainsi que la gestion axée sur les résultats; 3) la valeur que le Programme a ajoutée aux politiques publiques qui ont trait à l'enfance et à l'adolescence aux échelons national et local; 4) la contribution à la coordination de l'action d'acteurs locaux, nationaux et internationaux en faveur des droits des enfants et des adolescents; et 5) la durabilité de l'impact du Programme sur le soutien des stratégies de décentralisation mises en œuvre dans le pays aux niveaux national et local.

L'évaluation a porté sur quatre points principaux : a) la contribution à l'élaboration et à l'exécution de politiques relatives à la défense des droits de l'enfant; b) la mesure dans laquelle les acteurs nationaux ont intériorisé les concepts et les pratiques qui privilégient les droits, l'égalité des sexes et l'interculturalité; c) la portée et les limitations des mesures prises par les détenteurs d'obligations aux niveaux national et local pour garantir les droits; et d) les progrès réalisés pour articuler les axes de travail et soutenir la coordination avec les acteurs locaux, nationaux et internationaux.

L'évaluation a pris pour référence trois cas de portée nationale¹³ et trois autres réalisés dans le cadre territorial¹⁴. Cette sélection a été faite en accord avec le bureau de l'UNICEF Équateur, le bureau régional pour les Amériques et les Caraïbes (TACRO) et le bureau de l'évaluation du siège. Un cadre d'évaluation regroupant les variables à analyser, correspondant aux stratégies, aux produits et aux résultats que vise le Programme, a été élaboré. Des questions ont été formulées pour engager le dialogue avec les acteurs sélectionnés¹⁵, et les rapports et les publications du bureau de l'UNICEF, du système des Nations Unies et autres organismes associés ont été examinés.

Analyse de la situation

1. L'Équateur est un pays à développement intermédiaire classé 82^e des 177 pays du monde figurant sur l'indice de développement humain. Il enregistre l'un des coefficients d'inégalité

¹³ Le Contrat social pour l'éducation, l'Observatoire des droits des enfants et des adolescents et la composante santé maternelle et infantile de la Loi relative à la maternité gratuite et aux soins pour les enfants.

¹⁴ Trois communautés des provinces de Chimborazo (montagne), Esmeraldas (littoral) et Morona (Amazonie), dans lesquelles les stratégies du Programme et des Programmes sous-nationaux : ProAndes y Amazonía ont été analysées.

¹⁵ 225 personnes ont participé, dont 52 % de femmes, 37% d'hommes et % 11 d'enfants.

les plus élevés d'Amérique latine : 0,56. 54 % de la population équatorienne est pauvre; dans les zones rurales, ce pourcentage atteint 77,8 %, tandis que dans les zones urbaines, il est de 40,3 %. Des fractures sociales et territoriales continuent de séparer les zones urbaines et rurales des régions où vivent de fortes concentrations de populations autochtones et d'origine africaine.

2. Entre 2000 et 2006, les taux de malnutrition globale et chronique des enfants de moins de 5 ans ont reculé, passant de 12 % à 8,6 % et de 26 % à 18,1%, respectivement. Toutefois, pour chaque enfant atteint de malnutrition chronique en zone urbaine, on en compte deux en zone rurale. Bien que les taux de mortalité maternelle-infantile aient régressé d'une manière sans précédent, ils sont restés stationnaires ces dernières années (2002-2006). Environ 30 % de la population n'a pas accès aux services de santé. Par ailleurs, la proportion d'écoliers ayant achevé leur cycle d'éducation de base a augmenté de 8 points ces dernières années, pour se situer à 90 % en moyenne au niveau du pays. Toutefois, alors que 6 enfants de plus de 14 ans sur 10 terminent leur éducation de base en zone urbaine, ils ne sont que 2 sur 10 en zone rurale. Près de 400 000 jeunes de 5 à 15 ans sont exclus du système scolaire.
3. Ces dix dernières années, plus d'un million d'Équatoriens, soit 7 % de la population globale, ont émigré à l'étranger. Ce phénomène concerne particulièrement les jeunes de 15 à 26 ans, qui comptent pour la moitié de tous les émigrants. Au cours des dernières années, l'Équateur a connu une croissance économique modérée, soutenue en grande partie par la hausse du prix du pétrole et par les envois d'argent de ses ressortissants vivant à l'étranger.
4. La réalisation des droits des enfants et des adolescents suppose : 1) la prise d'engagements sociaux et de décisions politiques fermes; et 2) le financement de Programmes, de projets et de mesures qui améliorent les conditions de vie des enfants et des adolescents. Depuis 1999, on observe une augmentation progressive du pourcentage des fonds publics affectés à l'éducation, à la santé et à la protection sociale. Depuis 2004, la part du PIB dans les dépenses sociales a augmenté, ce qui marque un revirement de situation par rapport à ce qui existait dans le passé. À l'heure actuelle, une importance croissante est accordée à la garantie d'une couverture universelle en matière de santé, d'éducation, de nutrition, d'eau potable et d'assainissement. Pour cela, les ressources affectées aux dépenses sociales doivent être maintenues.
5. L'instabilité politique dont souffre l'Équateur depuis plus de dix ans a affaibli ses institutions. On peut citer en exemple le renouvellement incessant des cadres politiques et techniques au sein de l'appareil de l'État¹⁶. L'instabilité politique et institutionnelle, combinée à d'autres facteurs structurels, est à l'origine de la discontinuité des politiques sociales, de la fragmentation institutionnelle et des difficultés de gestion des Programmes et des services sociaux. Cette situation a engendré une perception négative de la démocratie, de ses institutions et des classes dirigeantes. Cependant, le gouvernement, avec le soutien de l'UNICEF, d'autres institutions du système des Nations Unies et des donateurs, s'attache à renforcer les capacités institutionnelles, à protéger et accroître les investissements sociaux, ainsi qu'à promouvoir la transparence des bilans financiers, afin de soutenir la réalisation des droits des enfants et des adolescents.
6. La faiblesse des institutions constitue un défi pour l'administration publique en général, et pour les ministères des affaires sociales, en particulier. Elle affecte surtout l'articulation de

¹⁶ En 2005-2006, le gouvernement de la République a nommé 83 ministres dans les différentes branches.

l'offre des services dans un pays qui encourage les pouvoirs publics locaux à participer à l'examen des politiques sociales et au débat national sur la déconcentration et la décentralisation des compétences dans ce domaine. Paradoxalement, le récent gouvernement du président Rafael Correa (2007-2011) a eu tendance à renforcer le rôle de l'État en matière sociale et à centraliser les politiques sociales.

7. L'adoption, en 2003, du Code de l'enfance et de l'adolescence marque un progrès important vers la réalisation des droits des enfants et des adolescents en Équateur. À ce jour, 110 conseils cantonaux de l'enfance et de l'adolescence ont été formés à l'échelle locale, dont 85 dotés de leur propre budget, et 30 assemblées de défense des droits ont vu le jour. Il s'agit d'organismes officiels qui promeuvent les initiatives et les mesures de protection des droits de l'enfant.

Le Programme de coopération

8. Le Programme de coopération Équateur-UNICEF a pris un nouveau tournant après la crise de 1999; la logique de l'assistance a été abandonnée pour privilégier l'appui à la politique publique. À partir de là, le Programme a commencé à faire valoir les liens entre politique sociale et politique fiscale, à poser l'équité en devoir de l'État¹⁷ et à intégrer plus vigoureusement la défense des droits à ses activités.
9. Conformément à cette nouvelle stratégie d'intervention, l'UNICEF a travaillé dans le cadre de plans d'intégration au lieu de rechercher uniquement des alliances stratégiques. Il s'est efforcé de donner de la visibilité aux problèmes qui affectent les enfants et les adolescents équatoriens.
10. Les stratégies du Programme combinent le plaidoyer et le soutien à l'élaboration de politiques publiques nationales et municipales, le renforcement des capacités nationales et locales, l'intégration des questions de l'égalité des sexes et de l'interculturalité, la participation et la mobilisation des citoyens, le développement de modèles de politiques publiques permettant d'instaurer des environnements familiaux protecteurs et motivants, et le renforcement des capacités nationales et locales pour prévenir les situations d'urgence et y faire face. L'axe unificateur de ces stratégies a été l'accent mis sur l'adoption de politiques publiques fondées sur les droits.
11. Le Programme de coopération comporte quatre volets : réforme institutionnelle et investissements sociaux, éducation interculturelle pour tous, santé et nutrition, et surveillance participative et mobilisation sociale. En outre, deux Programmes intitulés ProAndes et Amazonía ont été mis en œuvre dans diverses localités par les autorités provinciales, des organisations autochtones et des communautés ecclésiastiques. Alors que le Programme ProAndes couvre 14 cantons situés dans des zones côtières et montagneuses, le Programme Amazonía déroule ses activités dans 9 cantons de l'Amazonie.
12. Le Programme quinquennal est doté d'un budget de 13,9 millions de dollars E.-U., dont 28 % proviennent des ressources ordinaires et 72 % d'autres sources de financement.

¹⁷ Bustelo Eduardo, Vargas Jorge Enrique, Perczek, 2006. Cooperación en Tiempos de Crisis. Dans Jara Carlos y Vega Silvia, 2006. **El Enfoque de Derechos en UNICEF- Ecuador**, UNICEF, Quito.

Principaux résultats

13. L'évaluation du Programme de coopération a permis de constater que l'objectif principal et les stratégies adoptées sont pertinents, compte tenu de la faiblesse institutionnelle et de la capacité réduite de l'État en matière de gestion publique, ainsi que du faible niveau de respect des droits des enfants et des adolescents.
14. L'évaluation a permis de vérifier que les secteurs des affaires, académique, technique et politique de la société équatorienne qui coopèrent avec l'UNICEF apprécient sa contribution et reconnaissent qu'il rassemble les institutions gouvernementales et locales. Les homologues nationaux donnent un sens nouveau à la coopération et assurent son fonctionnement. Il a aussi été constaté que les contributions de l'UNICEF, des pouvoirs publics centraux et locaux et des ONG s'articulent autour du Programme de coopération. Cela a permis de mobiliser des ressources pour les enfants et les adolescents en dépit des restrictions budgétaires et du manque d'efficacité des institutions. On peut citer en exemple l'adoption et l'application du Code de l'enfance et de l'adolescence, la loi sur la maternité gratuite, le plan national décennal de protection intégrale de l'enfance et de l'adolescence, le plan décennal pour l'éducation, le Programme pour les enfants autochtones et les plans locaux en faveur du jeune enfant.
15. En 1999-2007, période pendant laquelle le Programme de coopération a appuyé la surveillance et l'examen des investissements sociaux, le montant de ces derniers a quintuplé¹⁸. Les budgets de certains gouvernements cantonaux et provinciaux des territoires où le Programme est en cours ont aussi augmenté, et ces gouvernements interviennent davantage aujourd'hui dans les affaires qui ont trait aux enfants et aux adolescents. L'examen du budget de l'État affecté au secteur social et la diffusion à grande échelle d'informations transparentes et accessibles aux niveaux national et local ont contribué à ce progrès. L'assistance technique fournie par l'UNICEF au Ministère de l'économie et des finances et au Congrès national pour établir le budget *pro forma* des ministères chargés des affaires sociales a permis de propulser le secteur social au rang des priorités de ces sphères politico-gouvernementales. Il en a été de même pour le soutien à l'amélioration de la gestion budgétaire et administrative dans les cantons et les provinces du pays où l'UNICEF coopère.
16. Le Programme de coopération a réussi à mettre l'accent sur les droits en Équateur à travers, entre autres initiatives, le suivi des investissements sociaux, l'élaboration de l'indice et du statut des droits des enfants et des adolescents, la mobilisation et l'assistance technique en faveur de l'éducation de base universelle, la prise en compte de l'interculturalité dans le secteur de la santé et l'amélioration des capacités administratives des mairies et des préfectures. Ce contexte crée de meilleures conditions pour que les droits des enfants et des adolescents soient respectés, tant par l'État que par les citoyens. Dans le cadre d'observatoires de citoyens formés avec l'aide de l'UNICEF, des thèmes comme l'universalisation de l'éducation de base ont pu être introduits et des informations ont été diffusées sur la façon de réaliser ces droits. Un soutien a été fourni aux organismes de protection et d'assistance sociale afin qu'ils conçoivent et mettent en œuvre des plans de protection des jeunes enfants, ainsi qu'aux gouvernements locaux et provinciaux, afin qu'ils adoptent des mesures en faveur de l'enfance et lancent des Programmes axés sur ce

¹⁸ Le budget social du pays est passé de 629 millions de dollars É.-U. en 1999 à 3, 222 millions de dollars É.-U. en 2007 (dollars actuels).

secteur social. Des organisations comme ECUARUNARI ont aussi reçu une aide pour élaborer un Programme en faveur des enfants autochtones.

17. À l'heure actuelle, de plus en plus d'enfants commencent leur première année d'éducation de base et d'éducation interculturelle bilingue; certaines familles luttent contre la malnutrition chronique en adoptant des habitudes alimentaires autochtones qui augmentent la valeur nutritionnelle de leur régime alimentaire; et pour les femmes autochtones de l'Amazonie, la pratique de l'accouchement vertical a été introduite dans les services de santé. Cette dernière mesure découle sans nul doute de l'importance accordée à l'interculturalité.

Conclusions

18. La qualité éthique et technique de l'assistance fournie par le Programme de coopération a contribué à ce que les homologues nationaux et les partenaires de coopération adoptent le recentrage sur les politiques publiques. De la même manière, il a servi à soutenir l'élaboration concertée, au sein des gouvernements locaux, d'un projet de gestion sociale qui vise à garantir les droits des enfants et des adolescents. En outre, il a permis aux citoyens d'exiger que les Programmes des Ministères de l'éducation, de la santé et de l'intégration sociale aient une couverture universelle.
19. Le Programme est intervenu dans des domaines très hétérogènes, tant au plan national que local; il ne l'a pas toujours fait de manière coordonnée, que ce soit au niveau du bureau de l'UNICEF ou de son réseau d'organismes de contrepartie, ce qui nuit à l'efficacité, à l'utilité et à la valeur ajoutée de sa gestion. Cela s'explique par la fragmentation des institutions de l'État et de la coopération internationale, qui se résume à des liens limités, surtout localement, entre les organisations non gouvernementales et celles du secteur privé qui poursuivent les mêmes objectifs que le Programme de coopération.
20. L'une des limitations que le Programme de coopération de l'UNICEF devra surmonter est sa tendance à considérer les gouvernements locaux comme des instances de la société civile, alors qu'en réalité, ils font partie de l'État. De même, il doit réexaminer le soutien qu'il fournit actuellement au Conseil national de l'enfance et de l'adolescence afin de créer des conseils cantonaux dotés de pouvoirs et de ressources, étant donné que ces derniers se superposent aux instances promues par d'autres groupes ou secteurs sociaux pour défendre leurs droits.
21. Les politiques et les stratégies défendues par le Programme ont manifestement été plus viables au niveau national qu'au niveau local. À l'avenir, l'UNICEF devra s'efforcer de renforcer les capacités de tous les acteurs du Programme de coopération et de ses partenaires, afin qu'ils intègrent le recentrage sur les droits de manière plus fonctionnelle et plus consistante. Il devra également garantir que le transfert des méthodologies et des orientations soit plus efficace et que l'apport systématique d'assistance technique ne soit pas interrompu, se doter de stratégies de sortie et définir des délais de coopération. Sur le territoire d'Esmeraldas, par exemple, bien que la coopération se poursuive depuis plus de 10 ans, les résultats et les impacts ont eu tendance à se diluer.
22. Les autres obstacles que la coopération devra surmonter sont : 1) la persistance de l'assistanat et du paternalisme, tant de la part des organismes de contrepartie et des partenaires que de certains donateurs; et 2) la rigidité des organisations, notamment publiques, ainsi que les abus d'influence et le clientélisme. Par souci de viabilité, le

Programme de coopération, et en particulier l'UNICEF, devront s'attaquer plus en profondeur aux problèmes structureaux et renforcer leurs capacités administratives, afin d'améliorer la qualité et la quantité des avantages et des services destinés aux citoyens détenteurs de droits.

23. L'évaluation a également conclu que le moment était venu de passer du discours sur les droits des enfants et des adolescents à un recentrage plus opérationnel sur la politique publique qui garantisse la viabilité de la prestation des services aux citoyens, ainsi que l'application concrète des droits des enfants et des adolescents par tous ceux qui sont chargés de les faire respecter.

Enseignements tirés

24. L'un des enseignements tirés du Programme est que les interventions réussies d'adoption de politiques publiques, dont le succès repose en partie sur le plaidoyer, la promotion et la mobilisation, doivent s'accompagner d'un soutien technique important pour mettre en œuvre ces politiques et ces services fondés sur les droits.
25. À cet égard, le principal défi de l'UNICEF consiste à obtenir que le Programme de coopération s'efforce non plus d'encourager le changement mais de promouvoir l'exécution de ce changement; non plus de concevoir et d'élaborer des politiques, mais de faciliter la mise en place de services liés à ces politiques; non plus d'encourager et de renforcer les membres et les organisations de la société civile et du secteur public, mais d'aider les citoyens à formuler les solutions aux problèmes.
26. En ce qui concerne la vigilance des citoyens, un impact positif du Programme de coopération a été de demander à l'État d'affecter des fonds adéquats pour réaliser concrètement les droits des enfants et des adolescents, ainsi que de fixer des priorités en faveur de ce secteur social dans les politiques publiques. La production et la diffusion d'informations bien centrées a aussi permis de sensibiliser les citoyens au fait que les enfants ont droit à des services d'éducation et de santé de meilleure qualité et en plus grand nombre. Toutefois, cette orientation requiert de faire participer les observatoires à la conception et à la mise en œuvre des éléments stratégiques des politiques publiques qui contribuent à réduire les inégalités dont souffrent toujours les enfants et les adolescents.
27. Nous avons appris que les conditions les plus propices à la collaboration avec les homologues nationaux sont le dialogue et les accords passés avec de vastes secteurs de la société équatorienne. L'évaluation a aussi permis de conclure qu'un niveau élevé de contrôle exercé par ces homologues est fondamental pour influencer les politiques publiques. Leur engagement doit se refléter dans les ressources qu'ils affectent aux institutions et dans les capacités qu'ils déploient pour renforcer le fonctionnement, la gestion et le suivi des mesures publiques.
28. Le fait de concevoir la société équatorienne comme un réseau est un point fort qui soutient le travail de l'UNICEF avec les organismes du gouvernement central. Ce réseau implique que les acteurs sociaux, tant publics que privés, nationaux que locaux, jouent des rôles partagés, successifs et alternatifs pour interpeller l'État.
29. Une autre leçon est que la coopération doit se rapprocher plus systématiquement des populations et intervenir directement dans les territoires pour accroître la viabilité des initiatives locales. L'UNICEF devra redoubler d'efforts pour que les activités qu'il mène au

niveau local contribuent à créer une vision nationale d'intégration qui soutienne la politique publique nationale. Toutefois, il doit éviter la tentation de « standardisation » qui consiste à appliquer des recettes qui uniformisent le travail de coopération, sans tenir compte des particularités locales et régionales. Il doit également éviter de forger exclusivement des alliances avec les organisations publiques, alors qu'il existe une multitude d'acteurs locaux, nationaux et internationaux qui poursuivent des objectifs similaires dans les territoires.

30. De même, l'UNICEF a appris que l'imaginaire de la société équatorienne en matière de politique publique a été façonné par une gestion paternaliste et de bienfaisance. C'est un problème historique : les abus d'influence locaux, les droits patrimoniaux et le despotisme ont engendré une culture autoritaire, traditionnelle et dominante. L'UNICEF doit maintenir le pari stratégique qui consiste à soutenir une gestion organisée de la société civile qui ne perpétue pas la « corporatisation » et l'autoritarisme de l'État.

Recommandations

31. Dans l'évaluation, il est recommandé de continuer à appliquer et à approfondir le recentrage sur la politique publique et d'encourager la mobilisation et la vigilance des citoyens. Il est suggéré de continuer à actualiser les cadres légaux et normatifs qui visent à améliorer la gestion des ressources humaines et financières du secteur public.
32. La coopération devra renforcer une stratégie de développement national qui articule la politique sociale, ainsi que les politiques relatives à l'économie et à la production, en utilisant les orientations régionales et territoriales fondées sur l'égalité et la protection.
33. Il est suggéré d'harmoniser les liens de travail avec d'autres institutions dont les activités ont trait directement à la promotion d'activités productives, par exemple, la génération d'emplois et de revenus pour une vaste proportion de la population équatorienne, notamment les femmes et les jeunes parents, et de renforcer l'appui aux enfants et aux adolescents qui vivent dans le pays mais sont les fils et les filles d'émigrés.
34. Un autre élément à améliorer sont les alliances qui permettent d'influer sur la politique publique pour approfondir ainsi l'impact du Programme. Il est suggéré d'adopter une orientation à plus long terme pour éviter de répondre exclusivement à des propositions conjoncturelles et aux acteurs qui ont un certain pouvoir politique. Il est aussi recommandé que le Programme joue un rôle plus dynamique et réfléchi, toujours dans le cadre des accords passés avec le pays, et adopte une stratégie de communication avec les donateurs locaux qui lui permette de montrer des résultats concrets et immédiats et de leur faire comprendre la portée de l'objectif et les avantages des résultats produits.
35. L'analyse du budget devra tenir compte de la question de l'égalité des chances, qui permet d'engager le débat interinstitutions sur les thèmes de l'égalité des sexes et de l'interculturalité. Ainsi, d'autres capacités du secteur social se mobiliseront en faveur des enfants et des adolescents. Dans le cas de l'interculturalité, il est recommandé de renforcer le caractère multiethnique et multiculturel de l'Équateur, et de prendre en considération les différences entre les droits individuels et les valeurs et modes de vie collectifs des cultures autochtones et afro-équatoriennes. Il faudra également encourager le dialogue et les débats interinstitutionnels qui visent à promouvoir un meilleur sentiment d'appropriation.

36. L'UNICEF devra relier plus étroitement les activités qu'il mène en faveur des enfants et des adolescents et la défense des droits de la femme, afin d'encourager des changements importants dans les relations entre hommes et femmes. Il convient d'élaborer une politique qui guide le travail institutionnel sur ce thème et qui favorise la coopération avec des acteurs soucieux de défendre l'égalité entre les sexes.
37. S'agissant de la mobilisation des citoyens, il est suggéré aux mouvements et aux organisations qui font partie du Programme de réfléchir à leur mode de gouvernance, à leur représentativité et à leur couverture. Il conviendrait aussi qu'ils adoptent des mécanismes démocratiques pour recruter leurs membres et choisir leurs directives. Il leur est en outre recommandé d'étendre leur influence au-delà du cadre du gouvernement central.
38. Il est conseillé au Contrat social pour l'éducation de préciser la signification de certains principes, comme celui de l'universalisation de l'éducation de base et celui des « Textes pour tous », qui sont trop généraux pour influencer sur la structure de l'éducation. Il lui est aussi suggéré de trouver une définition de la notion de qualité de l'éducation, d'établir des finalités et de définir des indicateurs de suivi.
39. Le Programme devra conserver son pouvoir de mobilisation auprès du secteur privé pour inciter ce dernier à continuer à appuyer l'UNICEF, et pour convaincre les entreprises et les corporations donatrices et participantes d'augmenter le montant de leurs contributions. Pour cela, il est suggéré qu'il les tienne informées et qu'il entretienne leur motivation; et qu'il rende compte régulièrement des activités en cours et des résultats obtenus par le Programme.
40. L'UNICEF devra travailler de manière plus durable et plus étroite avec d'autres acteurs de la coopération internationale, principalement les institutions du système des Nations Unies regroupées au sein du Plan-cadre des Nations Unies pour l'aide au développement (PNUAD). L'objectif sera de mener une action concertée visant la réalisation des droits des enfants et des adolescents en Équateur.
41. Partant de l'expérience des deux Programmes sous-régionaux, ProAndes et Amazonía, il est recommandé que l'UNICEF coordonne davantage ses activités locales avec celles des Programmes nationaux et renforce le recentrage sur la politique publique au niveau local. Il lui est suggéré d'unifier les Programmes locaux et nationaux, sans toutefois négliger les particularités de chaque territoire et de chaque communauté.
42. Il est recommandé à l'UNICEF de concentrer ses activités sur les territoires qui offrent les meilleures possibilités de rétroaction et où le travail peut s'appuyer sur des réseaux nationaux. De même, il devra choisir les zones où l'impact du Programme est le plus manifeste et qui pourront par là même inciter d'autres communautés et territoires à se rallier aux politiques en faveur de l'enfance et de l'adolescence.
43. Il est recommandé de modifier la structure interne du bureau de l'UNICEF pour qu'il soit mieux adapté aux orientations adoptées et aux nouvelles formes de gestion. À ces fins, il faudrait : 1) modifier la manière dont sont hiérarchisées les composantes thématiques, opérationnelles et géographiques; et 2) renforcer la théorie et la méthodologie pour accompagner le travail en équipe et pour offrir une vision intégrée et intégrale de l'enfance et de l'adolescence.

44. D'autres recommandations sont les suivantes : 1) intégrer l'adolescence au prochain Programme de coopération, car elle est la grande absente du Programme actuel; 2) renforcer la vision intégrale du développement des jeunes enfants; et 3) promouvoir les interventions liées à la famille et à sa communauté immédiate.

1. Introduction

1.1. Description

This report presents the findings of the UNICEF 2004-2008 CPE, Country Programme Evaluation, for Ecuador. It identifies major achievements and lessons learned in implementing the programme, as well as the nature and dimension of challenges encountered. The findings of this evaluation were drawn from several participatory processes of dialogue and consultation with stakeholders involved in the programme,¹⁹ including UNICEF technical staff and representatives of the central Government, local governments, civil society partners and the private sector. Their perceptions and opinions directly enriched the outcome of this evaluation.

1.2. Background and justification of the evaluation

Over the past two decades, Ecuador has experienced unstable socioeconomic, political and institutional conditions, including constant changeover of authorities and ministerial agendas. It has also undergone a variety of State reform process in an attempt to penetrate the world of open, competitive and interdependent economies. These varied, incomplete processes appear to have an important point in common: public institutions and State leadership in the fields of education, health and social protection have weakened, with a direct impact on the situation of children and adolescents.

This general panorama also converged with economic and financial crisis conditions in late 1999, forcing a change in country strategies for UNICEF cooperation. It was time to replace remaining vestiges of the relief approach that had prevailed in the 1970s, centered around support for the provision of basic public services, as well as the 1980s focus on institutional capacity building. These were replaced with the 1990s emphasis on developing public programmes to provide services for children and adolescents, which since 1999 has been oriented more toward the adoption of public policies to promote a favourable environment for the exercise of the rights of children. More sustainable results have been achieved, in terms of providing greater social inclusion and equity-based development.

This evaluation took place one year after the UNICEF-ECUADOR midterm review, required by UNICEF New York and conducted with support from The Americas and Caribbean Regional Office (TACRO). It is the last in a series of evaluations performed by the Evaluation Office in New York entitled "Country Programme Evaluation Methodology and Guidance Development Project," financed by the Department for International Development of the Government of the United Kingdom.

The stated purpose of the CPE is to review Cooperation Programme (CP) strategies in light of results actually obtained.. It should also help build ownership among the different national counterparts so the cooperation programme can ultimately become more integrated and effective in the national setting. This means the evaluation will pinpoint the main outcomes of UNICEF cooperation Programme and their contributions to the country; in this way, it will contribute to the design and formulation of a new cooperation programme between UNICEF

¹⁹ The UNICEF-ECUADOR cooperation programme has emerged from the meeting of the minds between UNICEF and national institutions, and the term will be used with this meaning throughout the document. Under no circumstances should cooperation be understood as pertaining exclusively to UNICEF.

and Ecuador for the next five years. This evaluation holds particular importance, considering the diversity of activities and projects undertaken by UNICEF cooperation in Ecuador and the need for the design of a new programme with the Government in 2008. The evaluation will encourage parties to cooperate with one another as they formulate, implement and evaluate public policies and actions for children in Ecuador.

1.3. Objectives and scope

Objectives

The objectives of the evaluation, according to the terms of reference, were:

- a) To evaluate the **relevance of the Cooperation Programme** i) with respect to the situation of children and adolescents in Ecuador, ii) with respect to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), and iii) in the current socio-cultural context of national policies and strategies.
- b) To evaluate to what degree and in what way the cooperation programme, including national actions and contributions, reflects the **rights approach** and includes gender and inter-cultural perspectives and results-based management.
- c) To evaluate the **added value** and the results of the cooperation programme at different levels, in terms of public policies for children and adolescents in Ecuador.
- d) To evaluate the contribution of the cooperation programme toward **coordinating and synchronizing** different local, national and international stakeholders concerning the rights of children and adolescents.
- e) To examine the degree to which the cooperation programme results are **sustainable** and whether it is coordinated at the local and national levels, thus supporting decentralization strategies.

Scope

Evaluations of UNICEF cooperation programmes in the countries are understood as strategic reviews of the orientation and principal content of programmes and interventions. They do not provide an exhaustive analysis of all specific activities and projects. This means that evaluations focus on general themes and strategic aspects of cooperation.

In view of the complexity, diversity and heterogeneity of cooperation programme actions, it was decided from the very beginning that the evaluation would cover a sampling of cases. It was also agreed that the evaluation should focus on four strategic dimensions that hold special interest and importance for the forthcoming Ecuador-UNICEF cooperation programme, but received limited coverage in prior evaluations:

- a) The contributions and benefits of the CP (both UNICEF and national counterparts) for developing and implementing policies that will allow for the effective exercise of children's rights.
- b) The degree to which national stakeholders have taken ownership (expressed as concepts, messages and practices) of approaches and instruments developed jointly, with particular emphasis on applying the rights-based approach, the gender perspective and intercultural awareness.
- c) The scope and limitations of actions undertaken by duty bearers, both nationally and locally, to guarantee citizen rights.

- d) Progress made to synchronize the lines of action being applied and to coordinate with local, national and international stakeholders.

For the above mentioned reasons, the evaluation is intended to shed light on certain trends or patterns present in the cooperation programme, in UNICEF and in its counterparts, in the framework of its strategies.

1.4. Methods

The essential compass for this evaluation was the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System.²⁰ In particular, evaluators adhered to clear guidelines in order to ensure that findings would be useful (ownership by key stakeholders), feasible (politically viable and cost effective), appropriate (impartial, respecting the rights of participants, reflecting cultural and gender sensitivity) and accurate (relevant information).

In order to meet their stated objectives, evaluators selected a sampling of cases considered typical of the cooperation experiences. Three cases of national scope were chosen. The first, the Social Contract for Education (CSE), designed to institutionalize the first year of basic education. The second was the Observatory of Children and Adolescents (ODNA), with policies to offer special protection and counteract child abuse. The third was the issue of maternal and infant health under the new Women's Zero-cost Maternity Bill. These cases were considered representative of the focus areas set forth in the cooperation programme—basic intercultural education, special protection for children, and maternal and infant health and nutrition—all of which have an impact on families and children.

Meanwhile, the evaluation team also worked with cases in three local communities: Riobamba, Macas and Esmeraldas. They were selected because they are particularly rich in terms of:

- synchronization with national programmes;
- a diversity of stakeholders involved and participating in developing and implementing actions specified in the framework of cooperation;²¹
- the amount of the investment;
- the maturity and age of the experience;
- the relative poverty of the population;
- a diversity of regions from around the country (coastal, highlands and Amazon regions);
- the size of the local government and local population;
- gender and intercultural issues present in the project or cooperation.

Methodological criteria for evaluation were discussed extensively with UNICEF representatives, and the choice of methodology included selection of instruments and techniques for meeting objectives. In keeping with this basic philosophy, evaluators talked with approximately 225 people covering a diverse range of stakeholders (such as policy makers, partners, implementers and rights holders) and following different research formats (see Table 1).²² Much of the

²⁰ Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System. United Nations Evaluation Group. United Nations. 2005.

²¹ A "stakeholder" is understood as any legal entity or person directly involved in the activities of the cooperation programme, whether through a binding contract or explicitly voluntary participation.

²² Many people were represented in more than one setting. Of all participants, 52% were adult women, 37% were adult men, 7% were girls and 4% were boys.

information provided was triangulated and validated by cross-questioning several types of stakeholders and by reviewing secondary information (reports, published documents).

Table 1: Spheres, participants and instruments of evaluation

| | | | | | |
|--|------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Central | | Validation workshop (7) | Interviews (4) Validation workshop (1) | Interviews (17) Validation workshop (15) | Interviews (9) Validation workshop (16) |
| Macas | Observations (2) | Focus groups (12) Interviews (5) Validation workshop (4) | Focus groups (23) Interviews (14) Validation workshop (6) | Interviews (7) Validation workshop (5) | Validation workshop (5) |
| Riobamba | Observations (2) | Focus groups (10) Interviews (8) | Focus groups (20) Interviews (6) Validation workshop (3) | Interviews (7) Validation workshop (3) | |
| Esmeraldas | Observations (2) | Focus groups (30) | Grupos focales (7) Interviews (11) Validation workshop (4) | Interviews (4) Validation workshop (7) | Validation workshop (2) |
| Other: Azuay, Cañar, Guayas, Manabí, Pichincha | | | Validation workshop (3) | Interviews (14) Validation workshop (11) | Validation workshop (2) |
| Total participants | 6 | 41 | 69 | 74 | 35 |
| | 225 | | | | |

Source: Evaluation team, 2007.

Evaluators used the following methodological procedures:

- Review of internal UNICEF documents on the orientation and management of the cooperation programme.
- Review of official binding documents between UNICEF and national counterparts.
- Review of studies, documentation and evaluations of specific projects and activities of the cooperation programme.
- Interviews and group workshops with key informants from partner organizations and the designers of policies and programmes.
- Discussions and focus groups with involved citizens, both women and men.
- Field visits to selected intervention sites under the cooperation programme.
- Direct observation by participants in institutions and by families and children from communities involved with the projects.
- Panel discussions with experts on specific subjects relevant to the evaluation and to research methods.
- Participatory workshops to validate evaluation findings and receive comments and suggestions from stakeholders in the cooperation programme.

1.5. How the evaluation was organized and what factors affected the process

This work was done on cases and territories selected for evaluation between January and May, 2007, under the terms of the agreement signed with the UNICEF Evaluation Office headquartered in New York and TACRO .

The evaluation took place in three stages. The first was to collect information from primary and secondary sources on the situation, activities and results of the programme and its components. The evaluation team also worked with stakeholders involved in cooperation in order to gain insight into the logical framework and identify certain indicators of output, outcomes and impacts relevant for the evaluation. This provided a basis for documenting information collected on findings, outcomes and recommendations, in a draft report and preliminary presentation.

The second stage called for workshops and discussion forums with stakeholders representing the cooperation programme. The results of the first stage were presented and participants were invited to offer their perceptions, reactions, observations and recommendations. This stage included participation not only by stakeholders and institutions targeted in the first stage, but also representatives of organizations of women, indigenous peoples, afro-Ecuadorians and people with disabilities.

The purpose of the third and last stage was to document observations and recommendations made by different stakeholders, including UNICEF and its counterparts. Meanwhile, the evaluation team discussed the main lessons learned and strategic recommendations, to be incorporated later into the final report and closing comments.

Information was organized into three thematic fields:

- Applying the approach for developing rights-based public policy.
- Internalizing the rights approach, the gender approach and intercultural awareness.
- Coordination between national and sub-national institutions.

A number of factors contributed to the success of the evaluation. i) Information on the cooperation programme was already available, as was an earlier evaluation and studies on various relevant issues and the general situation of children and adolescents in Ecuador. ii) UNICEF-Ecuador provided cooperation and logistic support to coordinate data collection activities including interviews, workshops and field visits. iii) National counterparts and programme partners were accessible and willing to cooperate with the evaluation team. iv) The academic and administrative staff of FLACSO provided methodological and logistic support.

At the same time, the evaluation also faced a number of challenges. In the first place, evaluators had insufficient access to various kinds of input needed for evaluating the cooperation programme: i) Limited information was available on the responsibilities of the various parties and counterparts involved in the cooperation activities and on the products and results expected from them. ii) There was little communication or agreement between policy makers and programme partners and stakeholders, concerning the policies and rights perspective and its implications, and this made it difficult to reconstruct the cooperation approach. iii) Regular information was not forthcoming on the current status and changes in staff and human resources working with UNICEF. iv) Evaluators had little access to up-to-date statistics on children and adolescents. Furthermore, the evaluation was situated within a complex environment: i) A changeover took place in the Government administration and most authorities, making it necessary to contact former officials who had participated in cooperation in the past. ii) Simultaneous changes occurred with UNICEF personnel in the Ecuador offices, in the regional office in Panama and at headquarters in New York, much of them involving direct oversight of the evaluation. This produced successive, sometimes contradictory, changes in the approach, emphasis and presentation of the evaluation.

The final evaluation report was delivered in August 2007.

2. The backdrop of cooperation in Ecuador

"Yes, we children all have the right to education, we have the right to life and all men and women have the right to life, health, education, child development, participation" (testimony of Mar[i]).

2.1. Brief description of the Ecuadorian setting

Ecuador in recent years has been living against a backdrop of instability and social, political and economic conflict. Seven different presidents came and went over the course of the previous decade (1997-2007). Three were removed shortly after entering office. These years witnessed swift corrosion and a widening gap between the work of government, electoral options, and daily life of the people.

Society has reacted with remarkable swiftness to the failure of these administrations to fulfill their obligations. Clearly, Ecuadorian society has been gaining more awareness and a greater ability to demand answers, and the majority of the population is increasingly dissatisfied with the relative inability of public action to take a stand against problems that have remained too many years unaddressed.

Ecuador has failed to offer opportunities to the majority of the population—opportunities for employment, education, healthcare or participation. Two years ago (2005), 40% of the population at the poorest end of the spectrum enjoyed 15.1% of total income, while at the other end, the wealthiest 10% held 34.3% of the country's wealth. This situation has worsened over the past 10 years (since 1995), when the relationship between these two deciles of the population was 17.1% versus 30.5% (ECLAC, 2006).

Nor has the country managed to reverse the conditions of poverty affecting a high percentage of its population. Official sources reveal that four of every 10 inhabitants cannot afford the basic basket of necessities (INEC, 2006). While official information on urban areas suggests a reduction in poverty rates (poverty in the cities declined from 31.8% to 25.5% during the 1999-2006 period), in rural areas the situation appears to have stagnated in recent years (rural poverty in 1999 totaled 68%, and seven years later it was still 64.2%) (SIISE, version 4.5, INEC, 2006). Official information shows a population of 4.8 million children in Ecuador, seven out of 10 of whom are living in poverty (MEC, 2006).

2.2. Problems of children and adolescents

The right to life

Ecuador has made great efforts to reduce maternal and infant death. Mortality rates have dropped to about half those registered 25 years ago (162.1 maternal deaths and 54.3 infant deaths per thousand live births).

This progress can be attributed to a variety of factors. Especially significant has been the expanding coverage of health care services, especially for prenatal care, along with an increase in the number of births assisted by skilled birth attendants. This is a response to information campaigns to increase compliance with the Zero-cost Maternity and Childcare Assistance Bill (LMGAI). In addition, women are now better educated, and immunization rates are rising so

significantly that the country can now claim 16 years free of polio and nine years with no cases of measles.²³

The current nutritional status of children compares favourably with figures from four or six years ago, in both urban and rural areas. Even so, by 2004, an alarming one fifth of Ecuador's children continued to suffer from chronic malnutrition. The situation is most serious in the countryside, where three of every 10 children failed to attain normal growth for their age. Also disturbing is the widening nutritional gap from 1998 to 2004 between urban children and those living in the countryside. While nutritional rates for rural children in 1998 were 11 percentage points below those of urban children, by 2004 the difference between the two had risen to 16 points, with children in rural areas still at the low end.

High rates of malnutrition serve as a warning bell. They reveal that thousands of Ecuadorian families are unable to meet their food needs due to steady erosion of their purchasing power, while government nutrition programmes have fallen short, failing to meet the needs of social groups they were designed to address.

The right to education

Education has improved substantially in recent decades, especially in reducing illiteracy and increasing the overall number of years of schooling. For example, illiteracy today stands at 9%, having declined from nearly 12% at the beginning of the last decade. Overall schooling for the population has risen steadily, climbing from 3.6 years of school in 1974 to 5.1 years in 1982, 6.7 years in 1990 and 7.3 years in 2000 (SIISE, version 4.5). Elementary education, measured in terms of net enrolment, surged in the 1980s (having begun the decade at 68.6%), holding steady at around 90% in the following years.²⁴

Deficiencies remain, nonetheless, along with failure to improve and expand educational opportunities for the Ecuadorian population. Today 700,000 people, most of them women (59%), still do not know how to read or write, and a little over one fourth of the population struggles with functional illiteracy (MEC, 2006).²⁵ The supply of education, generally lagging behind demand, continues to grapple with problems of quality,²⁶ high repetition rates²⁷ and high dropout rates.²⁸ All this is compounded by the shortage of equipment and facilities in many institutions, stubbornly high numbers of schools still operating under the full responsibility of a single person,²⁹ and wide gaps between cities and the countryside.

²³ These achievements could lose ground if immunization against preventable diseases does not become truly universal. The Survey on Standards of Living found that by 2006, polio vaccination coverage had slipped to 81%, a decline of 5.3 percentage points from 1999. Over the same eight years, coverage of MMR (the combination vaccination for measles, mumps and rubella) dropped from 89.1% to 63.1% (SIISE, version 4.5).

²⁴ Net enrolment refers to the number of people of a given age who are enrolled or who attend an educational facility at any level (SIISE, version 4.5).

²⁵ This figure reveals a serious problem of discrimination, and in general, the situation has direct negative repercussions on the status of children. Many studies have shown that healthy development in children depends to a very high degree on the mother's educational achievements, because of the relationship between mothers and their children in the early years of life.

²⁶ World Bank surveys of educational quality found that Ecuador posts the lowest rates of the 19 Latin American countries, with serious deficiencies in language learning and mathematics achievement (MEC, 2006).

²⁷ On average, children need an additional 0.91 years to complete their basic schooling (MEC, 2006).

²⁸ According to information from the Ministry of Education, rural areas posted elementary school dropout rates of 5.07% from 1999-2004, while urban areas averaged 3.86% (2006).

²⁹ Official figures show that of the 14,270 schools in Ecuador, 44.4% are single-teacher institutions (SIISE, version 4.5).

Child labour

In Ecuador, 789,071 children between five and 17 years of age were at work in 2001. This figure fell to 514,674 in 2005. Such progress can be ascribed to a number of factors. Most significantly, the State, through the Ministry of Labour, became actively involved in fighting child labour. It conducted campaigns featuring national and international personalities and institutions, encouraging people to report instances and raising public awareness.

Two thirds of Ecuador's youngest workers, from five to 17 years of age, labour in rural areas, a pattern that remained unchanged throughout the period of analysis. Most of these young workers received no payment for their labours, and their distribution by occupational category was: 58% in agriculture, 11% in manufacturing industries, 3% in construction, 14% in commerce and the rest in other positions (ILO, 2002). Some of the children working in agriculture are engaged in agroindustries for export, especially bananas and cut flowers; many of their activities are very hazardous to workers of such tender age.³⁰

Problems old and new

This picture cannot be understood in isolation, but must be considered in conjunction with overall conditions that have been growing worse in recent years. Specifically, the issues of human trafficking and sexual exploitation of minors began to draw attention in 2004 and since then have been publicized more explicitly and directly by the media. A study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) found that in 2003, an estimated 5200 minors were being sexually exploited in Ecuador, and of the country's 25,000 sex workers, some 5000 were adolescents (*Diario Hoy*, 2005).

It is also true that children experience the most serious consequences of international and national migration, being exposed to cultural practices that destabilize family roles and place this sector at greater risk. An estimated 150,000 children and adolescents from 12 to 18 years of age are living in Ecuador while their parents are outside the country, and two of every 10 children from six to 12 years of age do not live with their parents (CRS, 2007).³¹

All this is compounded by a culture that expresses itself on a daily basis as abuse of children and adolescents. Available information shows that 52% of the population from six to 11 years of age, approximately 870,000 children, are growing up in homes governed by a culture of punishment (ODNA, 2006), and four of every 10 children have been hit by their teachers (CRS, 2007).

"In order to respect the rights of children, people need to be taught, because some of them have sort of closed minds and think (...) if they just smack them it will fix everything, but if they were more open, or had a little more education, maybe they would understand things better" (testimony by Juan).

An understanding of the culture of violence and abuse of young people explains why every four days, an adolescent takes his or her own young life, and every day another 10 attempt to do so. This abusive culture cannot be seen in isolation from the fact of early pregnancy among thousands of teenage girls. Indeed, over the past three years, an estimated

³⁰ One of the most detailed studies of child labour in the banana sector was conducted by Human Rights Watch (2002). ILO addressed the situation of children working in the cut flowers sector through a study of plantations in Cayambe, in the province of Pichincha (2003).

³¹ Information on trafficking of persons is very difficult to obtain, especially in the subset known as sexual exploitation of minors. As a cautionary note, the figures given in this report should be considered approximate and can serve only as a basic guide.

seven percent of all births were to adolescent girls under 18 years of age (13,000 per year) (2006).

Changes in social expenditures

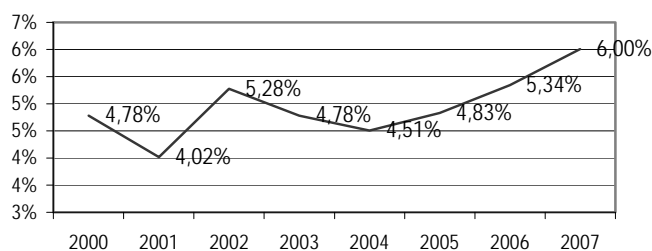
"Today we hear a lot more talk about social expenditure than 10 years ago (...); the Ministry of the Economy and Finance is discussing clear spending priorities" (Rafael Donoso, Grupo Faro).

The effective exercise of the rights of children and adolescents presupposes consensus-based social commitments and firm political decisions; it also demands sufficient resources to pay for programmes, projects and actions that will guarantee improved living conditions for these sectors.

One clear indicator of the State's priorities is the allocation and use of sufficient public resources to guarantee that rights are respected. It is therefore encouraging to note that since 1999 the proportion of public revenues allocated for social investment, especially education, health and social welfare, has been rising. Since that year, the budget for these purposes has increased more than fivefold, from US\$ 629 million to US\$ 3.22 billion.

Since 2004, social expenditures as a share of GDP have generally been on the rise, apparently reversing the status of social policy as subordinate to the cyclical vagaries of economic performance. Today there is a better understanding of the need to guarantee universal coverage in the fields of health, education, nutrition, drinking water and sewerage, resulting in a shield of protection for resources allocated to "social expenditures" (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Changes in social expenditure as a percentage of GDP



Source: MEF, 2007.

These figures reveal that since 2000, Ecuador has made an effort to allocate more and more revenue to social sectors.³² This progress is especially noteworthy considering that the country was experiencing political instability and economic problems during the same period, including a banking crisis, steep and growing inflation and adoption of the United States dollar as the national currency, all of which occurred in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

³² It is impossible to overlook the contribution UNICEF has made in the move toward higher social expenditures. Indeed, UNICEF played a critical role among the institutions that advocated defense and protection of social expenditure (Jara and Vega, 2006 and Bustelo, 2006).

Social expenditures grew even as the country enacted a new law on fiscal discipline at the beginning of this decade—a law that set fiscal restrictions at the macro level and limited the growth of prime expenditures as a measure of bringing the public deficit under control. Starting in 2007, there was also a clearly visible emphasis on social spending, which now absorbs 33% of the total State budget. Despite an overall decline in total expenditures, allocations for this sector have clearly risen.

The growth in social spending should nevertheless be considered in light of other events taking place in the region. During the 2000-2007 period, Ecuador was among the countries that allocated the lowest percentage of domestically generated wealth to promoting equality, investing in their people, developing their capacities and expanding opportunities. It channeled less than 10% of GDP into social expenditures. These figures stand in stark contrast to the fact that in recent years, Ecuador has been the fastest growing country in the region, posting 4.6% growth compared to 2.8% for the region of Latin America and the Caribbean and three percent for South America (ECLAC, 2006).

Indicators of living conditions for children and youth in Ecuador unquestionably improved in the 1990s. Since the present decade began, however, there has been no significant or detectable improvement in the situation of children and adolescents in this country, nor indeed is there evidence of clear deterioration in all fields. Some indicators reveal progress, such as declining numbers of children with low birth weight. Others appear to have stagnated somewhat, including rates of chronic malnutrition in children, which in six years improved by only two percentage points (from 33% in 1998 to 31% in 2004).³³ In the case of education, although improvements were recorded in earlier decades, enrolment appears to have stalled at almost every level, except in rural areas. The country has clearly experienced difficulties meeting its commitment to achieve universal, high-quality basic education. At the lowest extreme, indicators such as maternal and infant death rates have actually regressed slightly from progress made in earlier years. This situation is worsened by severe social problems detrimental to children and adolescents, such as human trafficking and migratory flows, the consequences of which are increasingly visible.

Available indicators also reveal that, despite the growing emphasis on increased social expenditure, the higher volume of resources has not succeeded in narrowing gaps or guaranteeing that the human and social rights of children and adolescents are respected. Growth in social expenditure, in and of itself, is not enough to ameliorate structural problems afflicting Ecuadorian society, such as unequal distribution of wealth, social exclusion or profound disparities from one region to another. Nor can this growth suffice if, at the same time, nothing is done to improve management and coordination skills in an institutional framework that in recent years has been cracking and weakening faster and more systematically than ever. It is equally important to transform the structure of social spending, which today is allocated to cover salaries and paychecks in the social sector more than direct investment targeting the most needy groups.

³³ Experts agree that at some point it becomes very complex to improve rates of chronic malnutrition and maternal and infant death. Tackling malnutrition and mortality rates directly, using technical or management tools, is quite difficult in the face of social marginalization, problems with geographic location and structural factors such as extreme inequality in the distribution of wealth or persistent poverty (Paul Martin, former UNICEF representative in Ecuador).

2.3. Public policies for children and youth

In the past, Ecuador has targeted the situation of children and youth by focusing on three basic themes: health, education and child protection. As also occurred in other countries of the region, children and youth were approached as people in a temporary transitional stage who needed to be molded and protected by adults. For more than three decades (1960-1990), the State proffered a variety of responses in an environment where social and citizen behavior had been basically passive and receptive. This situation began to change in the early 1990s, when social movements broke onto the scene and began to demand the effective exercise of citizen rights (Unda, 2006). In the case of children and adolescents, that same decade saw the emergence of a movement that sought to replace the image of children as passive recipients of services or beneficiaries of protective measures and behaviors (ODNA, 2004: 34). This new movement was rooted in the international struggle for the rights of children and culminated with the 1989 approval of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Ecuador in 1990.

The country began to experiment with a new view of public policy for children, led by the move toward a more mobilized and involved citizenry, the presence of activist committees for the protection of children's rights, the permanent Ecuadorian forum for children and adolescents, and the arrival of support from national and international institutional stakeholders.³⁴ It culminated in the 10-year Plan for Children and Adolescents, the Agenda for Indigenous Children and the National Plan of Action for Children. All these marked a first effort to mesh policies that had previously been disparate. This overlapped with the drafting and dissemination of two evaluations of the situation of children. Additionally, reports were submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, and a special push was given to the System of Social Indicators on Children and Adolescents (SINIÑEZ) (ODNA, 2004).

Changes in the 1990s consisted mostly of legal reforms and new ideas about the participation of children, through amendment of the Juvenile Code (1992), reform of the Women's Zero-cost Maternity and Childcare Assistance Bill and inclusion of the rights of children and adolescents in the 1998 Constitution. The National Consultation on Children and Adolescents was very significant, with the participation of nearly 460,000 children who gave their opinions on priorities for the next government (ODNA, 2004 y 2006). Child protective services also improved with the creation of the Special Police for Children and Adolescents as a programme to improve law enforcement capacities, and introduction of the Assistant Ombudsman for Women and Children. The role of the UNICEF cooperation programme in these processes was to facilitate and reinvigorate the debate, in all cases encouraging the country to pay special attention to children and adolescents and to find coordinated, carefully synchronized methods for tackling the problems that afflict this sector.

Policy dialogue is one of the key actions in a cooperation programme. Although the process is lengthy, it yields excellent results.

In 2003, as a result of these changes and stemming from a process of discussion with the participation of around 18,000 people (ODNA, 2004), the new Code for Children and Adolescents went into effect. Not only did it replace the earlier Juvenile Code, but it also introduced a new approach to children's and youth affairs by setting aside concepts based on

³⁴ The committees were conceived by social sectors as a strategy to advocate for rights and to disseminate the content of the Convention. The Forum is a network of Ecuadorian nongovernmental organizations whose purpose, in addition to pushing for political and legal reforms and monitoring compliance with the Convention, is to serve as a forum where children and adolescents can express themselves (ODNA, 2004).

protection and assistance in favour of a perspective of children and adolescents as rights holders. In the political sphere, the most important implication of this new body of laws was to reaffirm the State's responsibility to the children and adolescents of Ecuador, with no exclusion of any kind. Under the new laws, the State safeguards the enjoyment of, access to and guarantee of these rights.

It was in this legal framework that the National Decentralized System for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents began to take shape in 2004, triggered by the creation of the National Council for Children and Adolescents. The adoption of the new legal code facilitated approval of the National Ten-year Plan for Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents. The purpose of this plan was to work toward the country's stated goals of complying fully with State and social obligations to this sector of the population.

Thus, progress took shape on three public-policy fronts: a decentralized system, a National Council for Children and the 10-Year National Plan for Comprehensive Protection. In 2005, the National Covenant for Children and Adolescents was signed with the two-year goal of promoting high-priority policies to target this sector through coordination between the National Children's Council, ministries of the social sector, sectional governments and 23 social and international organizations. At the same time, comprehensive protection for the rights of children was declared a State policy. The UNICEF cooperation programme exerted significant influence in bringing about these achievements. It made technical and financial contributions to the task of defining and structuring institutional and political adjustments and worked to ensure that the discussion and final implementation of these measures remained on the agenda at all times.

These processes also had a local component, which by 2007 entailed signing 19 provincial accords for children and adolescents and setting up 76 canton-level councils for children and adolescents and 12 cantonal boards for protection of rights (CNNA-INNFA-MBS, 2007). In addition, five networks were created for comprehensive protection of children, along with 14 advisory councils (CNNA, 2007).

In short, much has been done since ratification of the Convention in the 1990s to adopt more modern policies, and the move picked up greater speed with the enacting of the Code. The newly emerging policy framework is setting aside the handout approach of the past and the kinds of short-term, disperse and fragmented responses that characterized public action for children and adolescents. Instead public policy is moving closer to an approach based on the concept of rights and designed to achieve concerted, coordinated action by an array of institutions.

Overall, the paradigms that governed public action for children and adolescents underwent significant change over the past few years. Significantly, these changes coincided with ongoing shifts in the discourse and practices of cooperation in general and UNICEF in particular. Meanwhile, citizens were developing greater awareness had begun to push for and insistently demand adoption of the rights approach, a view that gradually began to permeate public institutions. This convergence of two essential forces—more active citizenship and a changed approach to cooperation—ultimately succeeded in pushing major turnarounds in State actions to address problems faced by children and adolescents.

In the field of education, for example, the adoption of the 10-year Education Plan for 2006-2015 as State policy provides an opportunity to begin implementing long-term policies that cannot be subordinated to the priorities of private or individual interests.

With respect to special protection, the 2005 reform of the Criminal Code formally recognizes the rights of children and adolescents by criminalizing sexual crimes against them for the first time in Ecuador's legal history. Similarly, the recently approved National Plan to Fight Trafficking in Persons (2006) sets policies the State will adopt in coming years to ensure that crimes associated with human trafficking are prevented and punished and to restore the rights of victims, especially minors and women. The national plan to eradicate sex crimes in the educational system creates policies to eliminate these crimes and mechanisms to protect and restore the rights of victims.

In the area of child care, the country has adopted a programme entitled Operation Child Rescue and has created the National Bureau for Children and the Family, both of which have added nutritional programmes to their agendas. The Child Development Fund holds a mandate to institutionalize early education. Other programmes with implications for child and adolescent welfare are: i) the Social Protection Programme (previously known as Human Development Bond) that pays subsidies to mothers in order to improve child nutrition and education indices; ii) the Zero-cost Maternity Programme, and iii) the AIDS Monitoring and Surveillance Program.

In the area of health care, the most significant step consisted of reforms to the Women's Zero-cost Maternity and Childcare Assistance Bill, whose content is based on a rights perspective.

The main orientation for addressing nutritional problems continues to be serving vulnerable groups. Programmes currently active include: the National Diet and Nutrition Programme (PANN 2000) for children up to two years of age, operating under the Ministry of Education; the *Alimentate Ecuador* Programme (PAE) for children from two to five years of age, and the School Nutrition Programme for children from five to 14, both of them under the tutelage of the Ministry of Social Welfare. All three programmes, with a total budget of around \$50 million, are coordinated by the Comprehensive System of Diet and Nutrition (SIAN).

In summary, a listing of the country's current policies and programmes to improve the situation of children and adolescents clearly reveals that strategies and actions have adopted a much clearer notion of citizenship, despite the continued existence of programmes that still retain the handout approach. The present situation marks significant progress from past years. The new, gradually maturing strategic framework tends to favour the establishment of agreements and synergy that will truly improve the situation of children and adolescents in Ecuador.

3. The UNICEF-Ecuador cooperation programme

3.1. *Historical and philosophical background of the cooperation programme*³⁵

The UNICEF-Ecuador cooperation programme derives from institutional changes that both the organization and its counterparts have instituted in response to shifts in the surrounding environment. The programme in the 1970s reflected a relief mentality that concentrated on delivering services and inputs. By the following decade, this approach had been replaced by an attitude oriented more toward providing institutions with new technologies and processes for serving children, motivated by a concern for bolstering national capabilities. In the view of the UNICEF team, this new working paradigm marked progress forward from the previous stage.

Starting in 1990, the capacity building work was enhanced with a growing focus on social programmes guided by the move toward "adjustment with a human face" being promoted by the United Nations system at that time. This gradual change in emphasis received a critical push with the enactment and subsequent ratification of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and as UNICEF became one of the pioneering institutions in promoting the rights approach in the system.

In summary, the interviews and the bibliographic review suggest three stages in the development of the UNICEF cooperation programme. The first lasted until the 1970s and focused on providing vaccinations, food supplements and services for the most vulnerable groups.³⁶ A second phase, beginning in the 1980s, sought to strengthen institutional capacity and support government ministries and various public and private institutions; the idea was to help them develop agendas whose priorities and strategies kept a focus on the situation of children and adolescents. A new type of work began ten years later, starting in 1990, with a basic focus on structuring public programmes to serve children and adolescents. This work was possible because public institutions serving this sector had grown relatively stronger. These changes stood as clear evidence that the UNICEF cooperation programme was evolving and adapting as time went by in response to ongoing changes in the country's institutional, political and social conditions. Clearly, UNICEF was reading the environment promptly and accurately. Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore the real impact of the UNICEF programme as it influenced and contributed to changes taking place in the national public institutional structure.

Starting in 1999, UNICEF began to centre its activities on the field of public policy, finding ways to interweave social policy with fiscal policy and affirm equity as a duty of the State (Bustelo, 2006: 4) and more forcefully incorporate the rights perspective. This change of direction was a necessary response to the country's intensifying crisis expressed as rising poverty, declining GDP, currency devaluation, an upsurge in inflation and weakening real wages, all consequences of declining prices for oil, Ecuador's primary export (Ibid.: 9).

³⁵ This section was prepared mostly on the basis of interviews with the UNICEF-Ecuador technical staff, especially Cristian Munduate, Paul Martin, Ludwig Guendel and Berenice Cordero.

³⁶ The expression "relief approach" refers to the fact that there was little talk of improving or expanding capacities and opportunities for the population or the institutions, due largely to the country's weak social and institutional fabric at that time. In any case, this notion was not introduced by the evaluating team, but extracted from interviews with UNICEF personnel. As an example, Bustelo (2006: 21) notes that changes taking place in UNICEF entailed "setting aside former operating methods under which UNICEF assumed major responsibility and enjoyed high visibility, and instead learning to concentrate on promoting actions whose responsibility was held directly by the different sectors of society. The organization had to make the leap from taking its own ethical and programme initiatives, to true transformation of practices by transferring the lead roles to social stakeholders."

Given this change in the intervention strategy, UNICEF was no longer interested in selecting just one group of strategic partners. Instead it began operating under more inclusive procedures, aiming to strengthen "the moral imperative that children, at all times and under all conditions, may exercise their rights, while at the same time guaranteeing effective action to accomplish this" (Ibid.: 12). It therefore set about building broad social recognition of the problems affecting Ecuadorian children and adolescents and ensuring that information would be more transparent and available.

"This marks a conceptual and strategic shift in the programming of UNICEF-Ecuador, which then began to make itself felt systematically in public policies from the perspective of ethical positioning, political advocacy and intervention in the budget, promoting social consensus, citizen mobilization and oversight and political content, consistent with the approach of children and adolescent rights" (Guendel).

3.2. Strategic objectives of the 2004-2008 cooperation programme

Objectives

The 2004-2008 cooperation programme, based on lessons learned and outcomes achieved under the earlier programme (1999-2003), guidelines provided by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), and input collected in discussions with a diversity of national stakeholders, set forth seven results to be achieved "in cooperation with other interested parties from the Government and nongovernmental organizations, and with United Nations agencies and other donors" (UNICEF, 2004c):

- a) "Children from six to 12 years of age must receive seven years of high-quality basic intercultural education.
- b) Children and women must have access to health programmes that respect their cultural values in order to combat malnutrition, anemia and death rates among children and mothers.
- c) Women must have access to programmes that lessen vertical transmission of HIV/AIDS, and adolescents must have programmes that prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS.
- d) Children under five years of age, especially the poor, must have access to early child development programmes that respect their cultural values.
- e) Children under 15 years of age should be protected from working in hazardous conditions or in activities that prevent them from attending school.
- f) Abused children must have access to legal protection and rehabilitation programmes.
- g) The rights of children affected by emergencies must be protected."

Taken from the 2004-2008 Country Programme Plan of Action between the Government of the Republic of Ecuador and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

These proposed results fit into the framework of long-term objectives for UNICEF cooperation activities. They are directed toward "guaranteeing that all children enjoy 10 years of basic high-quality intercultural education; that they grow up healthy and well-nourished; that they can grow in an environment that fosters their development, respects their culture and in which they are

cared for and protected against abuse and exploitation of all kinds; and that they live in families that can meet all their basic needs" (UNICEF, 2004c).

The cooperation programme operates under a framework agreement with the country that includes the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Welfare, with all their attending departments and sections, and implements specific agreements with provincial and municipal boards. Such agreements translate into strategic partnerships with stakeholders in the field, enabling them to work together for children from a rights perspective. They include activities for implementing and improving strategies and sub-components of the cooperation programme, such as enforcement of the Women's Zero-cost Maternity Bill, intercultural bilingual education, improved nutrition, as well as strategies such as results-based planning, "the fiscal magnifying glass" and participatory budgets.

Strategies

In order to bring about these results, the programme called for implementation of strategies that would combine advocacy, support for the development of national and municipal public policies and strengthening national and local capacities. It incorporated gender and intercultural perspectives and citizen participation and mobilization, as well as the development of innovative models of public policies to ensure practices that would produce protective and stimulating family environments. Finally, it sought to strengthen national and local capacities for emergency response, including both prevention and action. The glue holding these strategies together was a public policy approach from the rights perspective.

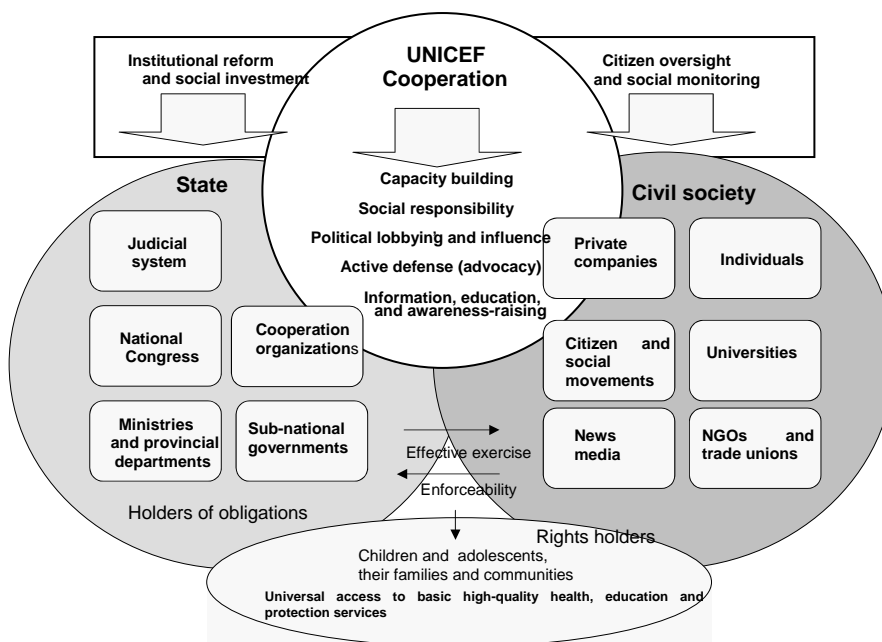
Two sub-national programmes operate alongside these strategies: ProAndes and Amazonía. They are designed to work in local settings, hand in hand with provincial authorities, indigenous and community organizations, and church-based grassroots communities. While ProAndes covers 14 cantons on the coast and in the highlands, the Amazonía programme is being implemented in nine cantons of the Eastern region. In both cases, participating cantons were selected on the basis of three essential considerations: poverty rates, openness and technical capacity in municipal offices, and pre-existing basic institutional capacity. The Amazonía programme also gave special consideration to the need for support in conflict situations affecting provinces on the Colombian border (Jara and Vega, 2006: 63).

The 2004-2008 cooperation programme is structured into four operative components: institutional reform and social spending, intercultural education for all, health and nutrition, and participatory monitoring and social mobilization. Each component in its own right contains sub-components that guide intervention strategies and areas of emphasis.

3.3. Principal stakeholders in the cooperation programme (CP)

The rationale of UNICEF cooperation programme interventions begins with the assumption that partnerships need to be built and maintained with strategic stakeholders in the State and civil society. The purpose of these partnerships is to trigger qualitative changes that will improve living conditions and welfare for children and young people. The following graph (Figure 2) is an attempt to synthesize the rights-based public policy approach that UNICEF-Ecuador has been promoting in recent years, in which various strategies are interwoven with different types of counterparts and partners.

Figure 2: Strategies and stakeholders in UNICEF-Ecuador cooperation



The cooperation programme targets the public agenda and government decision-making by providing cooperation and technical assistance to the State (central government as well as sectional governments) and by molding a more responsible, participatory and demanding society. Partnerships with civil organizations and companies are a critical element of this work, as are relations with the media and opinion leaders. The desirable side-effects and impacts of cooperation programme intervention should be not only better public policies for children and adolescents, but also greater awareness among overall Ecuadorian society (ideas) and better actions (practices) by the State, civil society and the private sector. Together, these can eventually improve the living conditions of children and youth.

One objective of the cooperation programme is to build consensus with social sectors, and to this end, it has created mechanisms for identifying "strategic partners" and "counterparts" for the specific purpose of developing strategic actions in a given setting, at a specific time and in a limited space.³⁷ Counterparts are authorities and public organizations associated with policies for children and adolescents, both in leadership and in budgetary and regulatory affairs. Accordingly, partnerships have been established with ministries in the social sector (Education, Health, Social Welfare) and with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and under these, with ministers and undersecretaries.

³⁷ Strategic partners are understood to mean "public figures" able to attract some amount of attention and public opinion, as well as nongovernmental organizations and civil society movements with a degree of responsibility, competence or interest in solving problems of children and adolescents. Cooperation entities are ideally suited to generating public opinion and sensitizing stakeholders. One of the strengths of UNICEF is its ability to command greater visibility in the media for the most critical problems of children and to frame these problems as public policy concerns.

In field cases examined for the purposes of this evaluation, cooperating institutions are of a different nature: the central government, represented by the governor; the Ministry of Education and its Spanish-speaking and bilingual provincial offices, responsible for all educational establishments in the province; the Ministry of Health and the provincial health department, supervising the different health-related tasks in hospitals, clinics and health posts; and the Ministry of Social Welfare through programmes such as ORI and FODI. The provincial government is represented by the provincial council, and the local government, by the office of the Mayor, cantonal councils and a few local and international NGOs. UNICEF also interacts with social organizations working with children and adolescents, and with private companies.

3.4. Rationale of the rights-based public policy approach

UNICEF, committed to promote a favourable environment for the exercise of the children and adolescent rights, identified the need for a social contract. It mapped out the process by promoting an exercise in citizen dialogue and consensus. In order to change the situation of children and adolescents, it began drawing attention to the country's ethical commitment to these sectors, summarized in the universal and comprehensive nature of their rights.

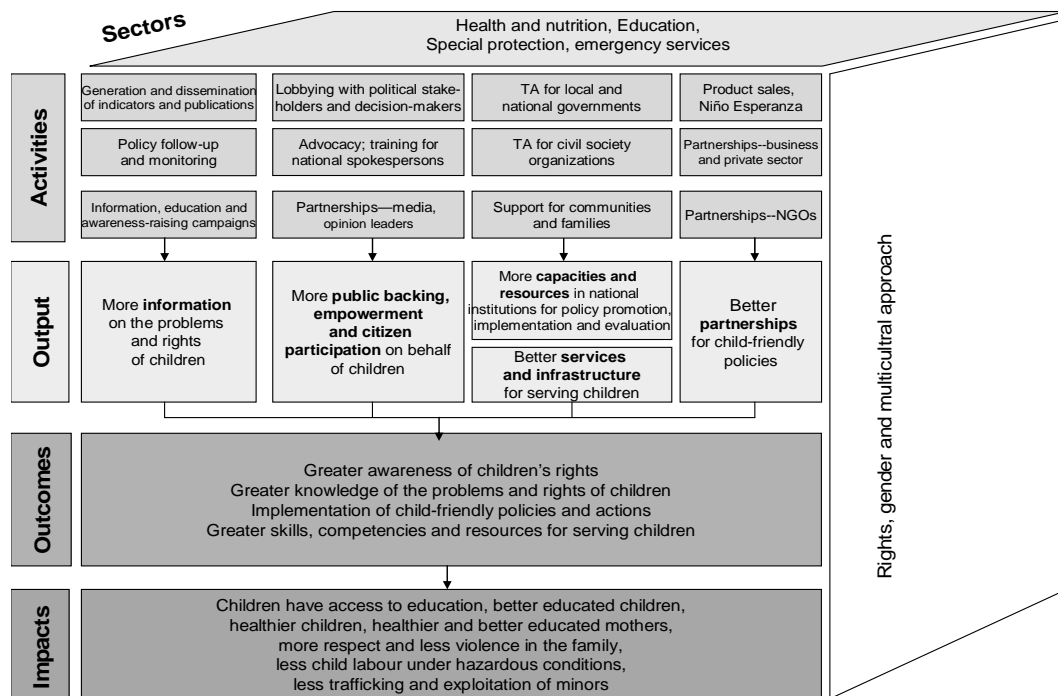
What was the best way to build this collective commitment and achieve politically viable actions?³⁸ UNICEF decided to concentrate on processing and disseminating information; it introduced indicators that shed a bright light on the problems that children and adolescents face when their rights are not respected. With this in mind, it designed an index on the rights of children and adolescents. This information is designed to raise awareness among political and institutional stakeholders and society as a whole and show how important it is to take concerted action and create favourable conditions for the effective exercise of the rights of children and adolescents.

Meanwhile, it was conducting a separate study to determine how the State allocates resources for the social sector; it then promoted dissemination of budgetary and economic information using language accessible to broad sectors of society. In addition to analysis and regular publication of information about budget trends and their impact on social investment, UNICEF provides ministries in the social area with technical assistance for developing their budget requests, support in drafting a social budget and backing for negotiations with the Ministry of Economics and Finance. Subsequently, it conducts advocacy for the social budget with the National Congress (Guendel).

UNICEF decided to become involved in monitoring the budget as a way of drawing attention to the clear need for close coordination between social policies and fiscal policies. Given concerns over the past few decades for safeguarding macro economic balances, these two areas of policy action had grown skewed, to the detriment of resources intended to improve welfare for the population. This type of work is based on the premise that the budget, including the composition of revenue and the allocation of expenditures, is the single most important economic policy tool for allocating resources needed to promote social protection.

³⁸ UNICEF believes that a political feasibility plan should cover three variables: political consensus, technical programme agreement and a communication strategy (UNICEF, 2007c).

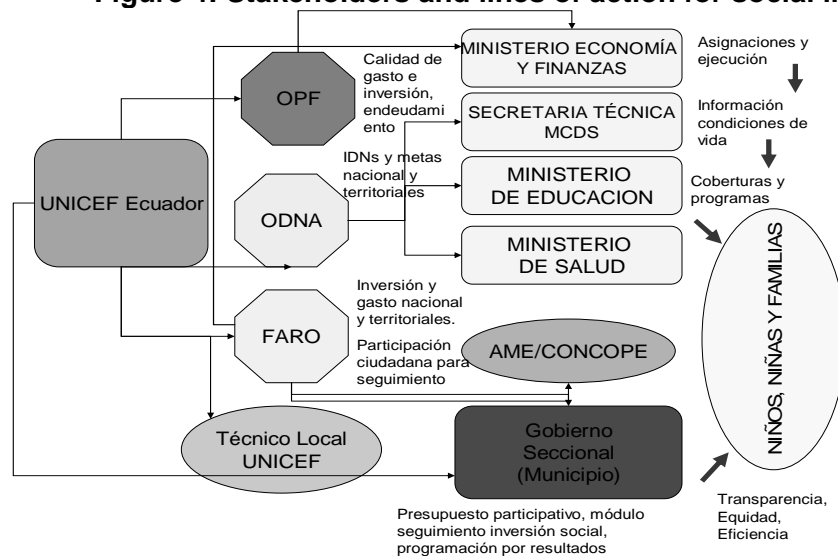
Figure 3: Logical framework for the UNICEF cooperation programme in Ecuador



Developed by: FLACSO evaluation team.

Even though UNICEF has acted with special forcefulness on fiscal policy, its public policy advocacy work reaches far beyond this sphere. Indeed, UNICEF has contributed to processes of rethinking the structural causes that inhibit the effective exercise of rights. This exercise has pointed to the role of legal and regulatory frameworks, the profile and daily activities of institutions, the need to change attitudes and practices especially regarding society's indifference to the appalling situation of children and adolescents, all of it from the perspective of building an inclusive society that will lead to universal enjoyment of rights.

Figure 4: Stakeholders and lines of action for social investment



Source: UNICEF

The synergy of these strategies triggered social mobilization and citizen oversight and culminated in demands that the government honour its obligation to respect, promote, protect and uphold rights. Ultimately, society has insisted on the need to reverse the logic by which public policies are developed, moving away from the handout approach and patronage-based benefits, to universal coverage, transparency and oversight of State social investment.

"UNICEF does not play the role of implementer; if we did, we would reach far fewer children. Instead we focus on changing certain structural causes so that rights can become universal." Cristian Munduate, UNICEF representative, Ecuador.

UNICEF intervention in Ecuador has now adopted the rights approach as its ethical foundation. No longer does it focus exclusively on services for children with unmet needs, but instead works to guarantee the effective exercise of rights to which all human beings are entitled. It seeks to create a favourable social, political, legislative and economic climate where all children and adolescents can expand the range of available opportunities, widen their freedom of choice and strengthen their capacities (see Figure 4).

Because the long-term perspective has been combined with a focus on attaining short-term goals, citizen oversight has taken on unusual features. It is conceived not as a strategy for confrontation with the State, but as a means to developing and strengthening skills for priority-setting, resource allocation and planning in the social ministries and other national entities responsible for developing social policies. Nevertheless, movements for citizen oversight have occasionally taken a stance opposed to plans and actions by government entities, producing a degree of friction with State authorities. Thus the challenge is to improve skills for guiding and coordinating social policies under the charge of the Technical Secretariat of the Social Front and the ministries participating therein, and to work for well-coordinated interventions based on equity and the promotion of equal access. Another goal is to support the design and implementation of sectoral plans and programmes and give greater momentum to the Decentralized System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents. The line of action at local levels concentrates on supporting efforts by sub-national governments to improve their budget-writing process, and strengthening their work to develop and programme local policies and plans for social guarantees in the areas of health, education and special protection. The chain is made of many links: citizen awareness, participation, oversight and enforcement, transparency in management of information, monitoring State investments and support for building institutional capacities to incorporate the rights approach into public policy. All these links are needed to advocate for better public policies and create environments favourable to children and adolescents. They have served as the basis on which to build concrete tools for demanding that the State fulfill its obligations emanating from established rights. In the end, this momentum led to the creation and operation of the Observatory on Children and Adolescents (ODNA), the Social Contract for Education (CSE) and the Observatory on Fiscal Policy (OPF). All these became forums for participation, monitoring and dissemination, bringing together a multiplicity of eyes and voices. Many tools have been developed to improve capacities at the local level. Chief among them are the municipal module for monitoring social expenditure, results-based planning, and development of an index to measure compliance with rights in provinces and cantons (UNICEF, 2007c).

The continued effectiveness of the public policy approach brought changes in UNICEF. The various components have become more integrated, both conceptually and operationally, leaving behind the view of separate, isolated programmes and projects in favour of more programme-based intervention. The work has led to a "concept of comprehensive protection based on

shared responsibility by civil society and the State to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents" (Guendel).

Two additional factors deserve comments because of their pioneering nature in the country. The first is the interest and openness that UNICEF has achieved in the media that today is helping to position the situation of children and youth as an issue of national interest. The second is the campaign to attract interest in the private sector, which is increasingly committed to supporting a better quality of life for these groups.

"The objective of cooperation was to redefine the relationship between the State and families (...) in terms of recognizing problems, improving the transparency of information (...), empowering the media, civil society and the ministries;" "(...) partnerships with civil society and the media serve as mechanisms to pressure for the continuity of policies and agreements in the face of so many political shifts." (Paul Martin, former UNICEF representative in Ecuador).

3.5. The cooperation programme and the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)

The intended purpose of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) is for all agencies of the United Nations system to contribute to a common agenda that ranks goals, objectives and areas of development by priority, based on the particular needs of each country. The idea behind this framework for assistance is to harmonize United Nations system interventions so as to maximize the breadth and extent of programme impact. This is especially desirable in view of worldwide commitments set forth in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and responsibilities that Ecuador has acquired under other international conventions and treaties.

It is worth remembering the tenets of the Paris Declaration, to the effect that international cooperation efforts, both multilateral and bilateral, should be oriented toward achieving the MDGs. It was in Paris that the countries and institutions came together in 2005 and agreed to make development assistance more effective, adapt and apply cooperation programmes to forms of development consistent with the particular situations of each country, establish timetables, indicators and goals pointing toward a horizon of 2010, and improve systems for evaluating and overseeing the progress of development cooperation. At the same time, countries receiving development cooperation undertook to exercise leadership and to develop and implement their own national development strategies by means of broad-based consultative processes, translate these national development strategies into priority-ranked, results-oriented operating programmes, and take charge of coordinating assistance in all spheres.³⁹ Five strategies were offered to translate these intentions into reality. First, member countries will exercise strict authority over their own development policies and strategies and will coordinate development actions (taking ownership). Second, donors will support national development strategies, institutions and procedures of the member countries (alignment). Third, every effort will be made to ensure that donor actions are more harmonious, transparent and collectively effective (harmonization). Fourth, results-based management processes will be implemented. Finally, donors and partners will assume shared responsibility for development outcomes (African Development Bank et al., 2005).

³⁹ However, Ecuador was not present among participating countries that signed this declaration (African Development Bank et al., 2005).

The UNDAF is binding and serves to formalize the commitments of the United Nations system to each country. This is why the UNDAF is developed through a shared assessment process conducted by all the agencies involved, and it addresses the particular country's social, economic and political problems and its potentials and opportunities for tackling them. This assessment study, known as the Common Country Assessment (CCA), first undergoes a process of validation with national public sector and private sector stakeholders to determine how the United Nations system, the government and society will coordinate their endeavours to solve problems.

The most recent UNDAF in Ecuador ran from 2004 to 2008, a term that coincided with the implementation period for the UNICEF cooperation programme. This common time frame for implementing the two instruments proved to be a strong point that merits emphasis. One of the advantages of this overlap is that it has encouraged parallel evaluations that can more easily identify the UNICEF contribution toward meeting goals set in the UNDAF, and highlight ways that the UNDAF has contributed to improving UNICEF intervention.

The UNDAF identified three areas requiring high priority attention in Ecuador. a) The first is the country's development model that has led to a precarious production and labor market structure, resulting in concentration of wealth and stubbornly persistent poverty. b) A second is excessive dependency on exploitation of natural resources; this creates environmental stress that heightens Ecuador's vulnerability to natural disasters and other threats and jeopardizes the quality of life for the population due to loss and damage to the natural resource base on which they depend for survival. c) Third, public sector action has been minimal; specific examples include regressive fiscal policy, inadequate social investment, and a political system that is not representative or even functional, generating a volatile, unstable and fragile environment in which to govern (United Nations System. 2002: 11-16). Together, these three areas constitute a social structure marked by inequality and exclusion; "reversing this is the major challenge for the country and for development cooperation" (United Nations System, 2004: 9).

In order to address these problems, the UNDAF identified three high-priority areas for cooperation, each one having set goals. Cutting across them as essential shared themes are achieving gender equality and promoting intercultural awareness (United Nations System 2004: 13-20):

- Reduce poverty by providing access to high-quality basic social services and production activities.
- Guarantee environmental sustainability.
- Strengthen democratic governance and transparency.

UNDAF, while emphasizing international commitments acquired in the Millennium Development Goals, is directed toward making sure that United Nations interventions are well coordinated and always consistent with the areas of emphasis established in the national government's programmes.⁴⁰ At the time the framework was drafted, these programmes could be summarized in five areas of policy focus: a) fighting corruption, b) competitiveness and reactivating production, c) fighting poverty and exclusion, d) policies for dynamic, sovereign participation in international affairs and e) security.

⁴⁰ These areas of emphasis were determined by the National Dialogue for Unity and Development, promoted by the Lucio Gutiérrez administration that was elected in 2001 and removed from office two years later.

UNDAF includes an outcome matrix to be used for monitoring and evaluating compliance. It lists the direct effects expected by the end of the programme cycle, as well as direct effects of the country programme. In all cases, it specifies the national and international public and private entities that will take part in achieving these ends.

3.6. Resources for programme implementation

A total of US \$13.9 million was budgeted for implementation of the five-year program, of which 28% came from regular resources and 72% from other funding sources. An additional US \$6,675,000 was allocated to the total budgets of ProAndes and Amazonía, which will be in effect from 2002 to 2007. ⁴¹

Fundraising and private sector partnerships

UNICEF cooperation in Ecuador is financed through both national and international sources. Of total income generated, only 11% consists of regular resources from UNICEF International, while another 30% pertains to government grants from developed countries, 24% to the committee and 16% to special thematic funds. The remaining 18% is raised locally. The programmes that attract the most local funding are high-quality intercultural education, institutional reform and social mobilization.

In the interest of increasing cooperation funds, UNICEF-Ecuador has a division responsible for fundraising, partnership building and public relations with private sector organizations and businesses. ⁴² Local fundraising is conducted in three ways: a) corporate partnerships, b) direct marketing to individuals, and c) sale of UNICEF cards and products. Working in conjunction with the programme division, it also develops and presents projects to governments of donor countries and companies from abroad.

Some donors decide to work with UNICEF because they trust that their resource donations will be used for investment to overcome poverty and tackle the lack of basic services in communities. They are also interested in positioning themselves as businesses that care about society. While it is true that these companies value cooperation work, considering UNICEF unique and appreciating its emphasis on strengthening national policies and institutions, they do not always succeed in internalizing these values in their own work. They appreciate the fact that meetings are held regularly to evaluate cooperation, but they also complain that there is not enough specific information available on progress and results of programmes in the territories, and they fear that UNICEF could become a slow-moving, indecisive bureaucratic organization. Some of these donors, in addition to requesting more information and focused attention, expect to be seen not only as "check writers," but also as "co-authors of development" in order to sustain their interest and participation.

With a small operating budget (US\$ 300,000 per year), this cooperation work was able to raise US\$ 1.5 million in 2006, of which US\$ 1.12 million came from the *Niño Esperanza* campaign, and US\$ 418,000 from product sales.

Data show that by 2006, the cooperation programme had spent fully 44.6% of the budget projections, and that expenditures incurred by the national sub-programmes totalled 67.6% for ProAndes and 35.1% for Amazonía (see Table 2).

⁴¹ For this period, the ProAndes budget totals US\$ 3,750,000 while the Amazonía budget is US\$ 2,925,000.

⁴² Interviews with Leticia Cervantes and Alejandro Ponce, PCD Division, UNICEF, and the focus group workshop with representatives of various donors, including Diners, Holcim and OCP.

Expenditures from 2004 to 2006 totalled US\$ 9.8 million, of which 63% pertained to the national programme, and 37% to sub-national programmes. Of total resources spent, 33.5% was used to improve intercultural education, 27.2% for institutional reform (including social investment, decentralization and development of public policy), 19.7% for participatory monitoring and social mobilization (including information on children's rights), 8.3% for development, services and protection, 6.5% for health and nutrition and 4.7% for other purposes.

Table 2: Cooperation programme budget expenditures, 2004-2005

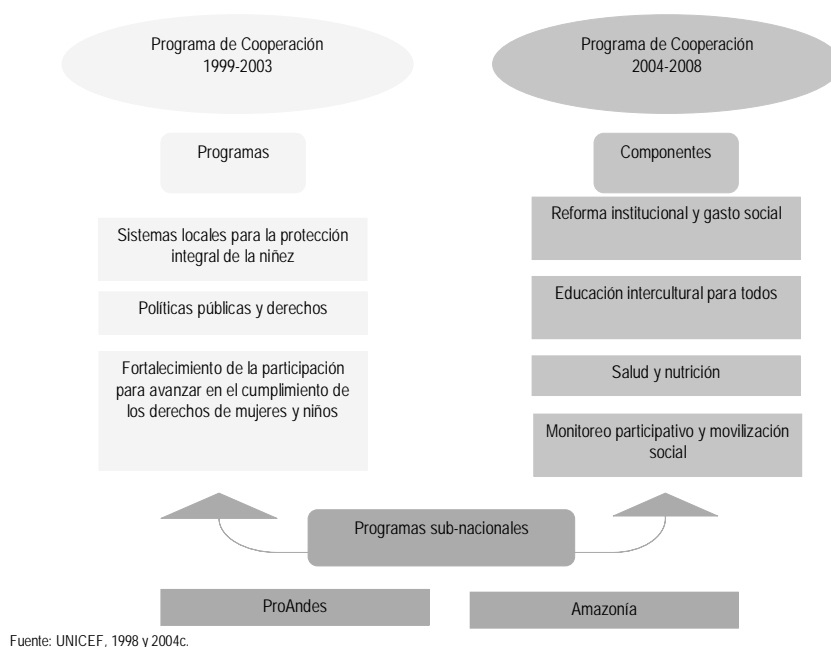
| Programme/Project | 2004 | | 2005 | | 2006 | | Total 2004-2006 | |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Allocated | Spent | Allocated | Spent | Allocated | Spent | Allocated | Spent |
| Intercultural education for all | 880,270.56 | 878,963.85 | 658,226.72 | 657,801.21 | 1,591,585.88 | 1,205,809.26 | 3,130,083.16 | 2,742,574.32 |
| Health and nutrition | 170,854.20 | 167,854.20 | 246,738.66 | 246,729.78 | 238,299.02 | 221,141.87 | 655,891.88 | 635,725.85 |
| Institutional reform and social investment | 581,826.43 | 581,826.14 | 593,773.05 | 592,245.58 | 331,714.38 | 328,758.40 | 1,507,313.86 | 1,502,830.12 |
| Participatory monitoring and social mobilization for children's rights | 632,342.75 | 632,342.75 | 404,275.11 | 401,224.83 | 279,104.02 | 268,222.05 | 1,315,721.88 | 1,301,789.63 |
| Total country programme | 2,265,293.94 | 2,260,986.94 | 1,903,013.54 | 1,898,001.40 | 2,440,703.30 | 2,023,931.58 | 6,609,010.78 | 6,182,919.92 |
| | | | | | | | | 0.00 |
| ProAndes | | | | | | | | 0.00 |
| Decentralization and public policy | | 374,812.43 | | 389,534.57 | | 389,812.21 | | 1,154,159.21 |
| Basic education | | 213,705.47 | | 77,532.93 | | 56,968.90 | | 348,207.30 |
| Services for minors | | 293,983.70 | | 172,500.86 | | 48,311.71 | | 514,796.27 |
| Special protection | | 31,453.88 | | 36,181.23 | | 30,398.11 | | 98,033.22 |
| Programme support | | 178,123.77 | | 112,999.65 | | 133,023.23 | | 424,146.65 |
| Total ProAndes | | 1,092,079.25 | | 788,749.24 | | 658,514.16 | | 2,539,342.65 |
| | | | | | | | | 0.00 |
| Amazonía | | | | | | | | 0.00 |
| Early child development | | 30,286.88 | | 98,705.13 | | 65,004.00 | | 193,996.01 |
| Basic intercultural education | | 23,546.01 | | 84,970.53 | | 65,004.00 | | 173,520.54 |
| Information on children's rights | | 69,151.26 | | 139,051.96 | | 415,120.77 | | 623,323.99 |
| Programme support | | 20,463.74 | | 18,602.46 | | | | 39,066.20 |
| Total Amazonía | | 143,447.89 | | 341,330.08 | | 545,128.77 | | 1,029,906.74 |
| Grand total | | 3,496,514.08 | | 3,028,080.72 | | 3,227,574.51 | | 9,752,169.31 |

Source: Information supplied by UNICEF-Ecuador.

3.7. Comparative analysis between cooperation programmes for 1999-2003 and 2004-2008

Both the current and the previous UNICEF cooperation programmes fit into the framework of a public policy development approach. This is why, in general terms, implementation of the two programmes reveals certain continuity, without significant variations that would imply ruptures or sudden changes of direction (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Transition of the cooperation programme 1999-2003/2004-2008



However, a more detailed analysis reveals three subtle differences between the two programmes:

1. The earlier programme placed its emphasis on fighting poverty, particularly by meeting the felt need for certain basic services, while the current programme places more focus on addressing the inequality characteristic of Ecuadorian society.⁴³ This change in emphasis points to a major conceptual and strategic shift away from action narrowly targeting certain visible expressions, and instead attacks basic structural problems.
2. The earlier programme pursued an intervention approach based on the concept of building public policies "from the bottom up."⁴⁴ By contrast, the current programme emphasizes interaction between the local and national levels, more in tune with the real dynamics of social and political processes.

⁴³ The 1999-2003 programme mostly supported the poverty reduction activities introduced in 1997 by the Social Front (UNICEF, 1998), while "the 2004-2008 programme will focus (...) on reducing cultural, economic, social and political inequality" (UNICEF, 2004c).

⁴⁴ More specifically, the 1999-2003 programme states that "the process of building local systems will provide input for actions to define public policies at the national level."

3. The shift from programmes to components should not be understood as a strictly formal change. Working under the programme mentality means that each element operates as an autonomous unit in and of itself, making coordination very unlikely. By contrast, a cooperation programme organized by components can generate processes that are better coordinated and more closely interconnected. This gives the impression that, at least at the conceptual level, the different stakeholders have more fully internalized the notion that all rights are equally valid and important and that they are indivisible and interdependent.

3.8. The first stage of evaluation: midterm evaluation of the cooperation programme

The midterm evaluation of the current cooperation programme, conducted in 2006, identified several achievements. A summarized look at these accomplishments can serve as a useful point of departure for the current evaluation. A brief review of the accomplishments of the cooperation programme through 2006 reveals the following:

In the institutional field, UNICEF supported the successful establishment of the National Council for Children and Adolescents, canton councils, canton boards for the protection of rights, and programmes to train judges and judicial personnel in managing the Code for Children and Adolescents.

In the area of social investment, the evaluation recognized UNICEF contributions to developing and disseminating up-to-date, reliable information on fiscal performance, which led to an increase in budgetary allocations for social spending. This conclusion is consistent with statements by Bustelo to the effect that the final result of changes in the intervention strategy was satisfactory. Trends in social spending were reversed, society succeeded in gaining a deeper understanding of the budget, and "morally desirable and collectively anticipated alternatives" were developed (Bustelo, 2006: 16).

Under the heading of participation, the experiences of building the 2006 Social Development Agenda revealed the limitations of continuing to manage isolated, narrowly targeted policies. Instead, it showed how important it would be to undertake a sectoral reorientation process better able to guarantee universal access to basic services. In this same field, UNICEF has continued to support operations of the Observatory on the Rights of Children and Adolescents that by 2006 had already compiled indices on the rights of children for all the provinces in the country.

In the field of protection, the evaluation recognized the role of a variety of social stakeholders, including UNICEF, in introducing reforms to the Criminal Code to mandate harsher punishment for child sexual abuse. In addition, it noted that UNICEF had worked toward the eradication of child labour, contributing to the creation of a child labour inspection system under the charge of the National Committee for the Eradication of Child Labour (CONEPTI). In addition, it had combined forces with the Export Promotion Corporation (CORPEI) to raise awareness of child labour among businesses in the agroindustry export sector.

In its work to promote education, UNICEF and other social stakeholders, especially the Social Contract for Education, played a leading role in drafting the 10-year Plan for Children and Adolescents by providing research and by supporting processes of dialogue and reflection. UNICEF, in coordination with public and private national institutions as well as cooperation agencies, also supported the development of education modules and teaching models, such as family community child education, and a variety of programmes that directly benefit the access

of children to education (primarily "textbooks for all," advocating the hiring of teachers and literacy training for women).

In the field of health, UNICEF, working hand in hand with health authorities, has supported immunization campaigns, strengthening of the Epidemiological Surveillance System (SIVE Alerta) and control of iodine deficiency disorders. Faced with the higher risk of vertically transmitted HIV/AIDS, UNICEF has helped develop a protocol for early diagnosis in pregnant women. Since 2001, together with other stakeholders, it has been working to institutionalize the Women's Zero-cost Maternity and Childcare Assistance Bill, in a successful push to protect the budget needed for the operation of this programme.

In the field of communication, UNICEF "has succeeded in becoming a reference point of ethical, political and technical standing and has created a favourable climate for changing citizen attitudes about protecting the rights of children and adolescents" (Jara y Vega, 2006: 56-57). A pioneering effort in this direction was launching the "*Niño Esperanza*" programme in partnership with the Ecuadorian television channel ECUAVISA. UNICEF has also begun to lead processes for social responsibility to push for a change in values, attitudes and behaviors toward others and toward nature.

Finally, the ProAndes and Amazonía sub-national programmes have logged achievements in six areas: increased local budgets for social actions, local public policies, institutional capacity building, fortifying citizen participation and oversight, improving flows of coordination between the local and national levels, and applying the crosscutting perspectives of intercultural awareness, gender equality and social responsibility.

4. Results and experiences through 2007

4.1. Results and experiences from cooperation programme implementation

The UNICEF cooperation programme has led to a number of processes and dynamics in communities and national organizations and among diverse stakeholders, partners and counterparts. Because UNICEF enjoys considerable credibility and prestige, it has been successful at mobilizing entities from the central government, sub-national governments, and social organizations and movements. All these have become interested in acquiring more information and knowledge about the situation of children and adolescents and about the problems they face, both old and new. Their interest has led them to now discuss measures necessary for outlining strategic actions and establishing goals. This dynamic has attracted highly diverse stakeholders, all associated with the problems of children and adolescents, albeit sometimes from opposing ideological positions. One such project is the Social Contract for Education (CSE), with the participation of such diverse stakeholders as the Ministry of Education and the teachers union (UNE), along with leaders from the media and universities. Both the CSE and the ODNA stand as pioneering initiatives in the country because of their ability to attract political and social sectors with diverse interests, rally them around a common theme, and inspire commitment and dialogue. This contribution of UNICEF cannot be ignored.

Cooperation has been critical in creating openings for dialogue and social oversight. For example, the Social Contract for Education has adopted the cause of enforcing the right to education for children and adolescents in the country, and the Observatory on Children and Adolescents has achieved much in raising citizen awareness about the situation of children and youth. Most of these openings were created for the purpose of promoting a particular right or drawing attention to situations that affect children and youth; in so doing, they help deepen democratic processes.

The UNICEF intervention strategy encouraged society to recognize problems affecting children and adolescents in Ecuador and called for the design of an index on the rights of children and adolescents. This instrument, by using indicators, paints a clear picture of the problems children and young people face when their rights are not respected. The information has helped raise awareness among political and institutional stakeholders and society as a whole and show how important it is to take concerted action and create favourable conditions for the effective exercise of the rights of children and adolescents.

The evidence suggests that, because of the influence of cooperation, more children are entering school as part of the project for widening access to first grade. Some families are better nourished and are fighting malnutrition as they relearn more appropriate traditional eating habits and incorporate nutritional values into their daily lives. Other families are benefiting from the incorporation of cultural differences into health services, and progress has been made in setting up councils and a protection system. It can be stated unequivocally that the cooperation programme is facilitating agreements between stakeholders at different levels of government, so necessary for creating public policy.

Information produced from a public policy perspective easily serves as a basis for research on issues affecting children; this in turn triggers the dynamic processes of monitoring compliance with the rights of children and reporting breaches.

At the same time, UNICEF promoted closer scrutiny of the State's allocation of resources to the social sector by disseminating budgetary and economic information, with transparency and in a way that was accessible to broad sectors of society. UNICEF also lent technical assistance for designing the budgetary pro forma used by ministries in the social area. It supported negotiations with the Ministry of Economy and Finance and concluded by advocating for the social budget in the National Congress.

Numerous processes and openings introduced by cooperation eventually were translated into agreements, decisions and policies. In many cases, the rights of children can be respected only to the extent that public resources are available for this purpose. UNICEF, responding to this situation and in agreement with its counterparts, has helped define concrete priorities and goals that will make it possible to record actions taken and measure achievements and outcomes. This strategy demonstrates that firm steps are indeed being taken, but without losing sight of long-term perspectives and visions.

The UNICEF contribution to developing legal frameworks made it become possible to conduct various projects—the "fiscal magnifying glass," results-based planning, the participatory budget and application of the Children's Code.

The "fiscal magnifying glass," which is part of a strategy for monitoring social investment, has produced information that local governments need for making public policy decisions and has facilitated a better understanding of how much money is going into social expenditure in these territories and what the money is used for. Results-based planning has made it possible to set a minimum working agenda on behalf of children with the participation and consensus of the most significant local stakeholders, especially in education and health. It has also helped improve management skills and produced synergy with other stakeholders in the field, improving local public policies on behalf of children. In certain territories where a participatory budget was adopted, the population was able to demand that canton-level plans be carried out, even when changes were made in local government leadership. It also placed a damper on practices of patronage. Finally, in certain territories, local children's councils have been set up as established in the Code for Children and Adolescents. These bodies set local policy for special protection of minors.

Positioning the problems of children and adolescents

Cooperation has also facilitated debate on the problems and rights of children and adolescents and has succeeded in positioning them at various levels. Indeed, these issues have taken a front-row seat, expressed as certain changes made in the structure of State. Most notably, public agendas have been created, such as the Plan for Children and Adolescents and the 10-year Plan for Education. Another example is approval of appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks, such as the Children's Code and the Protection System. Growing amounts of public budgetary allocations are being made for children, such as protective clauses on social expenditures that target vulnerable groups, and the gradual increase in these allocations through approval of budgetary items for public programs on education, health and protection. This work has also prompted contributions, donations and funds both from foreign governments and from locally-based private companies, oriented toward carrying out specific projects to benefit children and adolescents.

All this has created the need, within the framework of the cooperation programme, to make public pronouncements on the problems of children and adolescents and to use media resources, lobbying and production of supportive but previously unpublished information. This

has gone hand in hand with growing and strengthened citizen mobilization to defend the rights of children, and implementation of actions for compliance. At the same time, the drawing power of UNICEF and its ability to mobilize have been strengthened by the institution's neutral image and high prestige. This is especially true because, with limited resources, it has succeeded in bringing about measures that favour certain outcomes, and has always managed to read the national context successfully and to demonstrate flexibility and a willingness to adapt to new circumstances. The experience of cooperation, at the time UNICEF underwent an ethical and moral change of direction (Bustelo 2006), has often been right on target; but it has also demanded constant intermediation with stakeholders and respect for their own dynamics, in an endless process of negotiation.⁴⁵

Another important related consideration is building partnerships with the media and with opinion leaders whose voices are heard by citizens and their families. UNICEF has won over the media, attracting their interest and gaining considerable openness; this has allowed it to position the situation of children and youth as a matter of national concern. Examples of this were the campaigns "look me in the eye" and "if your candidate does not know how to change education, change your candidate," developed with media support.

The UNICEF contribution to the UNDAF

The UNDAF text acknowledges three contributions by UNICEF: 1) building UNDAF from a human rights based approach, 2) supporting the design, approval, implementation and budgeting of interventions at the public policies level and 3) introduction of the idea of citizen oversight. In these areas, UNICEF played a pioneering role that was gradually assumed and adopted by other agencies.⁴⁶

Because the development and implementation of the UNDAF is a relatively new initiative, this framework has not yet been structured under a binding mandate. It is merely indicative, providing general programme orientation, and certain elements remain to be fine-tuned and completed. Achieving full coordination and synchronization of efforts and resources among all the different United Nations agencies is a process still in construction. The positions and purposes articulated in the UNDAF do not always take concrete shape at the operative level because certain underlying institutional attitudes and behaviours still need to be changed. Similarly, there is a clear need to accentuate and highlight the value of cooperation and coordination instead of competition.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Bustelo (2006: 13-21) states that the ethical and moral shift that occurred in UNICEF took shape through three stages: grounding, formalization and consolidation. In the first stage, "UNICEF-Ecuador created an ethical image that children can exercise their rights even in the midst of crisis," and for this purpose it offered certain strategies for income redistribution (elimination of the subsidy on consumption of electricity that benefits only higher-income sectors, and creation of a system of subsidies for the zero-cost maternity program). Also in this first stage, UNICEF decided to learn about and interpret real-life conditions in Ecuador so as to produce an assessment of the current situation and focus its attention on issues that truly aroused the country's interest, including both macro economic and budgetary matters. It would then be able to demonstrate that "economic and social policies can and must be mutually reinforcing and adjusted simultaneously in response to the crisis." The second stage, formalization or implementation of this moral turnaround, took shape in the Social emergency Plan adopted by President Gustavo Noboa at the beginning of his term (2000). This process bore much fruit. Work began on "mapping out the scholarship programme for school children, pre-existing nutritional policies were redesigned, efforts were undertaken to develop a programme for healthy and free maternity and the Solidarity Bonus began to take shape." Finally, the consolidation stage revolved around two key points: reorientation of social expenditures, and support to promote citizen oversight and active commitment.

⁴⁶ Interviews with Ludwig Guendel and Fernando Pachano.

⁴⁷ Interviews with Ludwig Guendel (UNICEF) y and Fernando Pachano (United Nations System).

These limitations are real, and it would be a mistake to overlook the true value of vigorously pursuing greater synergy in the work of all the agencies. Even so, there is no question that implementation of the UNDAF and other cooperation programmes, particularly the one promoted by UNICEF, has clearly achieved a close match with national priorities.⁴⁸ One of the reasons for this is that United Nations intervention was based on a sound, consistent analysis and extensive knowledge of Ecuador's problems and potential, as expressed in the Common Country Assessment.

Commonalities between the UNDAF programme approach and the contents of the UNICEF cooperation programme merely provide an opportunity to enrich and add to its management processes and develop two-way feedback.

Limitations, restrictions and gaps

Some of the processes and results seem to operate under certain constraints, especially in the real lives of families, communities and cooperating institutions, because they are limited to the particular territories and regions where cooperation is active, and are not widespread through the region or the nation. Those individuals, families and institutions that maintain a relationship (especially a direct one) with the cooperation programme reveal a greater awareness of children's rights, promotion of gender equality and respect for cultural diversity. Even beyond cultural and intergenerational differences concerning notions of violence, abuse and labour, this awareness is coloured by geographic location and the socioeconomic status of individuals, and it seems to reflect little understanding of concomitant responsibilities and obligations. This is reflected not only in different levels and degrees of ownership by stakeholders, but also in unequal structures and penetration by the State at the local level, and in traditionally exclusive institutional practices.

An additional result of the cooperation programme is that wide gaps between words and practice are becoming increasingly evident. For example, many families understand the theory of rights, and passing generations have reflected progressive change in certain key notions; nevertheless, actual compliance is hampered by poverty and the persistence of violent daily practices that remain unchanged. In institutions that are in close contact with children and families, such as schools and health clinics, certain practices (such as discrimination, abuse and poor service) survive alongside or in opposition to the notions and words of teachers, health professionals and civil servants. Structural problems of inequality, marginalization and exclusion persist in communities. In these scenarios, public institutions still lack the skills and resources necessary to serve families and make respect for rights a reality.

Cooperation programme interventions continue to face certain significant challenges. First, national counterparts are still taking very little ownership of the programme's approaches and implications when dealing with the problems of children. Second, the management and operation of public programmes and interventions continues to be weak even though their objective is to ensure universal coverage of basic services and protection of children's rights. This in turn reveals very little follow-up or monitoring of actions and stated goals. Third, citizen oversight movements promoted by cooperation entities generally enjoy consensus on the purposes and objectives of their work. Nevertheless, certain underlying differences remain concerning final outcome. In particular, some challenge the continued exclusive use of

⁴⁸ This does not mean that other agencies have failed to adopt similar trends as well. If UNICEF action is especially highlighted in this chapter, it is because the purpose of this document is to evaluate the UNICEF cooperation programme.

interventions targeting the government and central institutions, with little attempt to reach out to farther-flung provinces and cantons. Others question the legitimacy and representativeness of these movements and whether they have the right to confront government authorities or take particular public actions. Fourth, certain issues are receiving little attention by cooperation agencies, such as activities with adolescents and parents-to-be, or responses to new and emerging problems such as the children of emigrants.

In general terms, the cooperation programme has promoted negotiation processes and facilitated opportunities for ongoing dialogue with various stakeholders. One of the key features of this interrelationship has been the exchange of knowledge and mutual learning.

4.2. Results and experiences of selected projects

4.2.1 Positioning education as a national priority through the Social Contract for Education

The Social Contract for Education (CSE) originated as a movement for giving direction to national education goals and making them sustainable. It is not an implementer of policies, but instead performs active defense and advocacy to generate consensus positions that can yield policies. The CSE arose because UNICEF understood that designing social policy is not necessarily accomplished by providing advisory services to the Ministry of Education. Instead it means creating the right backdrop so that emerging policy will be relevant, requested and even demanded.⁴⁹

The CSE initiative has attracted participation by social groupings and institutions from both the private and public sectors, and it is funded by a variety of sources. In 2005, the institution's total budget was US\$ 201,901. UNICEF contributed 50.9% of this total, that is, US\$ 101,136. The 2006 budget totalled US\$ 345,238, with a UNICEF contribution of US\$ 170,460, or 49.3%. For 2007, UNICEF has contributed US\$ 233,083 to the budget that has yet to be finalized.

The CSE pursues three key objectives:

- 1) Encourage the State of Ecuador to discharge fully its present responsibilities for education policies.
- 2) Support the collective development of education policies.
- 3) Build up citizen oversight for compliance with these education policies.

"The CSE agenda was not inspired by an international agenda. Rather, it arose from the need to translate into practice the provisions contained in the 1998 Constitution. Although it is strictly national, it but does not contradict the countless international agreements such as the MDGs or the Jomtien Declaration and the Dakar Framework for Action on education for all (...) The basic inspiration for the Social Contract is the citizenry, building citizenship, exercising human rights, especially the right to education, where the State becomes a guarantor of this right and moves toward universalization" (Milton Luna, 2007).

The achievements of this organization include:

- 1) Positioning education as a top national priority with the promise of human development and citizen mobilization.

⁴⁹ Interview with Juan Pablo Bustamante, UNICEF Education Officer.

- 2) Promoting and establishing processes for monitoring social investment in education to ensure universal coverage.⁵⁰
- 3) Steadily increasing the State budget to attain universal coverage of basic education.
- 4) Promoting the notion that education should be understood in association with health and special protection of children's rights.
- 5) Conceiving education as a right that is essential for building a State and a national character.

In synthesis, the Social Contract for Education has lent momentum to an extensive body of initiatives. It has advocated to enlarge budget allocations for social investment in education. It has demonstrated that education entails social responsibilities shared by the State and families, and is not the exclusive province of specialized technical experts. The overriding purpose has been to change paternalistic mentalities in providing and allocating resources for this sector.

4.2.2. The maternal and infant health programme and application of the Women's Zero-cost Maternity Bill

The Zero-cost Maternity and Childcare Assistance Bill (LMGAI), enacted in 1998, was a crucial outcome of three processes: 1) demands by the women's movement for sexual and reproductive rights, 2) reforms arising from the health sector in favour of local, decentralized management of legally mandated health benefits, and 3) the implications of the right to free, universal access to health services for women and children.

The work fostered extensive discussion, dialogue and coordination with institutions working for gender equality, and as a result, this dimension has been successfully introduced into health care practices.

Since the time it was first enacted, the law has stood as public policy because of its two broad objectives: free access to health services, and universal coverage of benefits. This has been possible because of the way the law was enacted at different levels and because of the exercise of citizen oversight through women's user committees.

The cooperation programme backed actions to advocate for the management and institutionalization of the new law and for strengthening government and civil stakeholders involved in the co-management model, through technical advisory services to the central government and its different agencies.⁵¹ A key initiative was creation of the implementing unit in 2002. This work focused on institutional strengthening, producing information that holds public value or entails specific knowledge, internships, and seeking out allies. Little was done, however, to sustain women's user committees or build up their capacities.⁵²

"The LMGAI jump-started the exercise of active citizenship through committees of users in which women exercise their citizenship in the field of health, demanding that the law be respected" (Ninfa León, UE/LMGAI, 2007).

Special mention should be made of the work to institutionalize vertical childbirth positions (also known as traditional humanized childbirth) in health units working with indigenous communities,

⁵⁰ Interview with Grupo Faro.

⁵¹ Staff members from the UE/LMGAI and CNNA recognized the critical importance of UNICEF technical advisory assistance.

⁵² Evaluations and feedback on the cooperation programme, obtained in the validation workshop for women's user committees.

a process that meshes intercultural and gender dimensions. As part of this effort, vertical childbirth is now being taught as part of the medical curriculum of a State university.

The LMGAI is the only earmarked programme with a pre-allocation in the public-sector health care budget, and thus has the financial resources needed for its work. This would suggest that it is self sustainable. Shortfalls do occur, however, because the budget is insufficient to cover all payments. The only way to make up the additional financing would be to reengineer the budget and strengthen local stakeholders.

The financial component of the law's management model includes a mutual health care fund, set up with profits from the Solidarity Fund. This produces US\$ 15.1 million per year for the law. Another 3% comes from special consumer taxes, which vary year to year. Of the US\$ 537 million allocated by the State to the health sector, the LMGAI receives 4%, earmarked exclusively for this programme.

In 2006, UNICEF contributed US\$ 79,000 for the maternal and infant health program, based on its plan of action, to implement technical assistance activities in the UE-LMGAI, the CNNA, MSP and a variety of health services. According to the 2007 annual plan of operation, the UNICEF contribution totals US\$ 180,900 in support of the MSP within the maternal and infant health programme.

4.2.3. Special protection in the cooperation programme

The government recently institutionalized the protection system, whose primary objective is the comprehensive protection that the State, society and the family must guarantee to all children and adolescents to facilitate their development and the full enjoyment of their rights. Activities for special protection under UNICEF cooperation are designed to have a twofold impact: in the State-public sector and in the private sector. They are based on application of the Children's Code that has been in effect since 2004.⁵³

Through advocacy with the State, UNICEF is helping to set up a protection system under the National Council on Children and Adolescents (CNNA), that itself is interested in decentralizing protection.

Just as the Children's Code says, responsibility for comprehensive protection also includes civil society. This is why the cooperation programme targets the business sector on a platform of "shared responsibility."

The special protection programme will be sustainable if it brings together numerous stakeholders and creates a flexible special protection fund to finance diverse types of services.

UNICEF cooperation has been a good source of support and a good ally, thanks in large measure to its representatives. Certain representatives adopted the national agenda and supported it fully (...) I believe there was a serious repositioning of UNICEF when it understood that this country does have social stakeholders, and these stakeholders can do without them, that they need to forge partnerships and common alliances in order to build a shared agenda. Work with these social stakeholders has produced a line of thought, a design and an institutional proposal for the comprehensive protection of children and adolescents" (Manuel Martínez, INNFA, 2007).

One result of the work with indigenous organizations and citizen oversight movements was the construction of the Agenda for Indigenous Children, with the intervention of student

⁵³ Interview with Berenice Cordero.

governments. Another was development of the intercultural education project to implement family- and community-based child education, design strategies to guarantee inclusion in the schools and build learning networks. These participatory and intercultural processes triggered the development of information capsules on rights and the production and dissemination of information on the situation of children in indigenous nation groups.

The programme "united for the right to identity" is another instance of good coordination between the different levels of government. It opened the way for late registration of births in Morona Santiago based on a partnership between INNFA, the National Council for Children and Adolescents, and the former CONAM.

The Niño Esperanza programme

It was against this backdrop that the *Niño Esperanza* programme took shape, eventually becoming a focus of communication on social responsibility and fundraising. This initiative sparked other activities to communicate information about rights, such as NNACE (Child and Adolescent Reporters of Ecuador), a programme consisting of a network of children and adolescents who broadcast information, from their own perspective, over a private television channel.

Investment for comprehensive protection

Starting in 2005, the National Council on Children and Adolescents (CNNA) signed several cooperation agreements with UNICEF. The purpose has been to facilitate operation of the National Decentralized System for Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents and creation of its bodies.

In 2005, UNICEF provided US\$ 65,400 in funding. The counterpart (CNNA) contributed US\$ 25,000. In 2006, UNICEF provided US\$ 315,600 in funding. The counterpart (CNNA) contributed US\$ 150,500. Under another agreement signed for 2007, UNICEF will finance US\$ 183,615, while the counterpart (CNNA) will provide US\$ 115,000. This agreement is now underway.

4.2.4. The Municipality of Morona

The cooperation programme began working in Morona in 2002. It offered technical assistance for institutionalization of the participatory budget as a means to consolidate the local development plan, with an eye to upcoming sectional elections and the possibility of a changeover in authorities.

Cooperation in Morona is based on an agreement with the Consortium of Amazon Municipalities, whose objectives are set forth in the Amazonía programme: a) application of child care practices for five-year-olds, with an intercultural perspective; b) access to high-quality bilingual intercultural education for all; c) generating information and promoting participation in monitoring the rights of children in the Amazon region.

Starting in 2004, the cooperation programme introduced a more comprehensive vision that consisted of the following components: a) monitoring social investment, b) intercultural

"More opportunities became available because of the participatory budget in the Municipality. The budget is no longer managed on the basis of friendship and personal loyalty, but now people think about future development of the community" (President of the Federation of Neighborhoods of Morona, 2007)

education, c) culturally appropriate health care and d) special protection. At the same time, strategies were outlined for strengthening public policy management skills and for generating information. Another initiative was to promote citizen participation and seek opportunities for social oversight and for supporting the construction and application of legal frameworks.

UNICEF has invested US\$ 237,989.50 in the province of Morona over the past three years. The 2004 outlay of US\$ 26,568.42 rose to US\$ 116,998.39 in 2005, followed by US\$ 94,422.69 in 2006. The 2005 investment was larger because it included contributions from the governments of Finland and Holland, while the 2006 figure reflects support from the government of Finland only.⁵⁴

Stakeholders involved in cooperation at the local level are: the local government, including the mayor and his management team; the Provincial Department of Health and the relevant health areas; the Provincial Department of Bilingual Education, and the General Directorate of Vital Statistics, Identification and Identity Cards. A full network of institutions is working on special protection, with representatives of INNFA, the Spanish-language department of education, the ombudsperson and others.

Cooperation activities in this territory are associated with the development of policies for improving education in terms of quality, access and an intercultural approach, reaching children under the age of five through family- and community-based early education. The work has also focused on access to health services by pregnant women and children under the age of one, as well as a monitoring system to detect children who are not in school. Bilingual intercultural education has improved through training, technical assistance, exchange of experiences, development of new materials and overseeing their use. Finally, the programme has introduced the concept of rights among significant local stakeholders and has provided students and authorities in secondary schools with training on children's and adolescent's rights.⁵⁵

The cooperation programme in Morona has been working to design and jointly apply a proposal for social management to build capacity in institutions.

Another achievement was greater citizen oversight. The population has now taken ownership of the participatory budget and is demanding that it be continued.

Unmet challenges remain. The first seven years of basic education are not yet universally accessible for children from six to 12 years of age, nor is a high-quality education with an intercultural, gender and environmental focus. There is still a need for greater citizen monitoring of rights, a consensus-based social agenda for developing social policies at the local level, and local public policies for protecting the rights of children.

4.2.5. The Municipality of Riobamba

In 1997, the cooperation programme began working in Riobamba. From that date until 2004, the emphasis was on delivering basic social services. Analysis had shown that "local governments, including that of Riobamba, lack the political and management skills necessary for developing local public policies designed to narrow the significant social gaps that exist in Ecuador."⁵⁶

⁵⁴ This conclusion was drawn from an analysis of annual UNICEF reports to other cooperants.

⁵⁵ Progress Report: Promoting Sustainable Development on the Banks of the Santiago River.

⁵⁶ ProAndes Ecuador. Final report to the Spanish Committee, January to June 2005.

The focus changed in 2004, and attention turned to advocacy and funding to implement public policy with a rights approach pointing toward:

- Achieving universal education.
- Implementing the Women's Zero-cost Maternity Bill.
- Improving rates of nutrition.
- Creating and consolidating the Canton Council of Youth and Families
- Improving management in the Municipality by introducing indices on children's rights, results-based programming, the social investment module and the "fiscal magnifying glass."

Many stakeholders are present in this territory. To begin with, the local government carried out activities to strengthen its own management skills and the "Best Buy" program. The provincial council worked with the national representative of the Ministry of Education (provincial departments of Spanish language and intercultural bilingual education) to support universalization of first-grade education. It also worked with the representative of the Ministry of Health (the provincial health department), together with the local government, to implement the Zero-cost Maternity and Childcare Assistance Bill.

The UNICEF investment in Chimborazo from 2004 to 2006 totalled US\$ 161,665.25. The 2004 figure was US\$ 71, 221.23, followed by US\$ 26,765.24 in 2005 and rising to US\$ 63,678.78 in 2006. After 2006, the figure includes the UNICEF contribution to the Provincial Council of Chimborazo.

The cooperation programme in Riobamba has made much progress. The proposal for social management is now established and is being applied in partnership. The ethical and political leadership of the local government has grown stronger as part of a new understanding of problems affecting children and the adoption of tools to begin solving them. Much has been done to build consensus on behalf of children among institutions at various levels of government and to strengthen management skills (results-based programming). Institutions are now better managed because of access to information and through training and technical assistance. The programme has facilitated access to the resources needed for child-friendly policies (social investment module) and has helped create a local council on children. Finally, it supports the implementation of specific high-priority projects by means of strategic alliances for aligning multiple efforts and maximizing resources.

Many issues remain unaddressed or need to go much deeper. The quality of education should be greatly improved, and families need formal and non-formal services for psychosocial and affective child development, health, nutrition and protection with an intercultural perspective. Special protection services are not being provided, nor are programs for abused and battered children or child abuse prevention activities. Enforcement mechanisms need to be implemented in the canton-level rights councils, and there is a great need for organization and social and institutional mobilization in support of children's and adolescents' rights.

"Neither parents, nor are civil society, nor communities nor children directly involved. They should be in the workshops. It all looks very nice on paper. If we go out there, it becomes very clear-- they know nothing about the Code for Children and Adolescence, they are unaware of children's rights, at least the main ones such as health, education and nutrition, and they don't know who is on the council. This is as far as it goes" (focus group with teachers in the Provincial Department of Bilingual Intercultural Education of Chimborazo).

Much should be done to strengthen the base of support in civil society, equipping the population to take ownership of resulting information (indices on the rights of children, "the fiscal magnifying glass") and begin monitoring the rights of children and adolescents.

4.2.6. The Municipality of Esmeraldas

The cooperation programme has been working in Esmeraldas for 18 years, and until 2004 it focused on delivering basic social services and supporting the population in the areas of nutrition and health. Starting in 2004, UNICEF proposed a change of direction, and cooperation began to centre around advocacy and funding for the development of a rights-based public policy.

The main achievements of the cooperation programme, aimed at guaranteeing the rights of children and adolescents, were institutionalization of the Esmeraldas Canton Council for Children, building partnerships, aligning efforts and disseminating information on the rights of children and adolescents, to build a base of support.

The new approach to cooperation is still on hold in Esmeraldas. The programme has yet to introduce the idea of joint development and adoption of a process for social management and citizen oversight, paving the way to political consensus and effective implementation of plans of action to benefit children.

In a setting where local governments have few management skills, it is very difficult to promote the use of certain tools, such as results-based programming, without the presence of technical personnel from UNICEF to help oversee the process. Isolated actions continue to be the norm, and stakeholders lack a vision of comprehensive approaches to social issues. In a situation such as this, the challenge for UNICEF is to work not only with public institutions, but also with civil society organizations able to promote processes, as occurred with the Esmeraldas Canton Children's Council.

5. Conclusions

5.1. Relevance

The UNICEF Ecuador cooperation programme, adopted for 2004-2008, unfolded in a climate of political and social instability. It also occurred at a time when the country was beginning to redefine strategic public action for children and adolescents. Consequently, the goals of the cooperation programme are now more consistent with the country's own vision of the future for children and adolescents.

The strategies and thematic components emphasized by UNICEF cooperation are a clear response to actual conditions in the country and the real situation of children and adolescents. The programme even reflects local and regional factors, as it makes allowance for specific settings, stakeholders and institutional capacities. This consistency is due partly to the fact that the programme grew out of a situation analysis of national and regional conditions, as was mentioned in the midterm review.

The relevance of cooperation is reflected in the thematic components on special protection, maternal and infant health and high-quality intercultural education, seen from the perspective of national cases mentioned in Chapter 1 and described in the previous chapter. Indeed, since the 1990s, the State has been gradually losing leadership in building public policies for these sectors. As an example, the recently founded Observatory on Child and Adolescent Rights (ODNA) can be considered relevant because it is producing knowledge, data and statistics on the current status and exercise children's rights at the national, local and regional levels. Especially significant is its work to develop an index on the effective exercise of rights. Moreover, the Social Contract for Education (CSE) has given momentum to an extensive body of initiatives. It has advocated for more generous budget allocations for social investment in education and demonstrated that education entails social responsibilities shared by the State and families. The overriding purpose has been to change the paternalistic mentality governing the provision and allocation of resources for this sector. Cooperation activities in the territories are no exception. In two of the three communities studied (Morona and Esmeraldas), the presence of central government institutions is weak or negligible. This is why cooperation work is so important for public organizations and local communities.

While the public-policy orientation is already in effect at the national level, the idea is to replicate it in each local setting, keeping it flexible and adapting it to diverse contexts. The study examined local thematic projects intended to strengthen education and health care systems, working in partnership with provincial departments and subnational governments. It was evident that these projects reach poor, extremely remote areas that receive very few services or none at all, from the State and the central government. As an example, one of the poorest areas of the country, Esmeraldas in the Cayapas River region, was able to receive education support because of a strategic partnership with the office of the Archbishop.

Although the cooperation programme now reaches remote, very poor areas, the most marginalized and vulnerable families in these territories feel that State programmes and policies do not yet benefit them. These families live under conditions of extreme poverty, isolated from social networks. Their children tend to drop out of school in order to work and are exposed to family violence and sexual exploitation.

The changes in living conditions for children and adolescents in contact with cooperation cannot be clearly verified, beyond a perhaps heightened awareness of rights and their entitlement to those rights. Nevertheless, it can be inferred that the seeds of change are being sown in those families that have sustained contact with UNICEF cooperation. This is particularly visible in the dynamics involving the understanding and incorporation of rights concepts in the language that children and their mothers use, even though such concepts may not be clearly evident in many of their daily practices. There are also signs that, because of the influence of cooperation, more children are probably going to school, some families have improved nutrition, cultural differences are being introduced into health care services, access to first grade is spreading, and special protection councils and systems are being set up. Moreover, some mothers claim that the situation of children is improving. If these findings are borne out, it will be possible to conclude that UNICEF cooperation is helping the country advance toward improved conditions for children and toward relevant public policies.

In conjunction with this, certain values are implicit in UNICEF cooperation work, such as prevention of violence, child labour and child abuse. However, these positions sometimes run counter to certain values and practices found among families in remote areas. For example, mothers often claim that they need to punish their children: "Yes, of course I hit him because otherwise he will get into trouble."⁵⁷ The participation of children in household activities and labour is also commonly seen as part of their learning and growth.

Some stakeholders from local governments and communities also ask cooperation programmes to respect and strengthen local processes and offer greater flexibility in applying certain methodologies and tools (such as results-based programming, participatory budgets and even the rights based approach). They insist that they cannot work with the same model in all territories and institutions. Even more radical are those stakeholders that see UNICEF and its cooperation programme as proponents of an agenda conceived by outsiders and brought in by the United Nations, sometimes without considering the reality, complexities and degree of development of a country and its communities.

Finally, certain stakeholders have emphasized that adolescents are largely absent from the cooperation programme. They also point to the need for a more comprehensive vision of child development and for adding interventions that involve the family and its immediate community.

Both at the national level and in the territories, UNICEF cooperation is highly regarded in the public mind and has considerable drawing power among national and subnational government entities. Working with UNICEF allows counterparts to appeal to others, build consensus, and align efforts. This is most visible when diverse stakeholders are mobilized and more resources become available to support actions and policies on behalf of children, in a setting of budget cuts and institutional constraints. None of this would be possible if cooperation were not highly flexible and able to read the national and local environment together with participatory counterparts, on the basis of key information and discussions with authorities and social stakeholders. In this sense, cooperation induces processes of discussion and social consensus that are highly relevant to national conditions.

5.2. Rights based approach

For UNICEF, working under the rights based approach has meant moving away from institutional practices focused solely on improving the situation of children and adolescents in

⁵⁷ Testimony of a mother in Esmeraldas.

vulnerable social sectors, and more toward finding interventions that will guarantee universal coverage of social benefits targeting children and adolescents. Its emphasis has been on advocating for public policies and, as a result, developing policies framed in a rights based approach. This effort has taken shape through the declaration of universal access to basic education—currently held as a State policy based on a national consultation conducted in November 2006—or the Zero-cost Maternity and Childcare Assistance Bill that protects all mothers regardless of their age, social status or nationality. The rights approach has also led to citizen forums that UNICEF has helped create. For example, the Social Contract for Education has been fighting for enforcement of the right to education for children and adolescents in the country, and the Observatory on Child and Adolescent Rights (ODNA) has worked to raise citizen awareness using the index of compliance with the rights of children and adolescents.

In general, it is easy to see that notions of child and adolescent rights are being expressed more consistently by families and subnational government officials, citizen oversight movements and central government entities that are involved directly or indirectly with UNICEF cooperation. UNICEF has promoted the idea of rights inherent to children and adolescents among national and local partners and counterparts. Less explicitly, it has also introduced rights involving gender equality and intercultural relations that, according to technical people interviewed, continues to be an unfinished task requiring more in-depth UNICEF action. UNICEF has also worked with citizen oversight movements to create information capsules on rights and to develop and disseminate information on the situation of children in indigenous nation groups.

All this has required discussion, dialogue and coordination with institutions active on these issues, such as CONAMU on gender, and ECUARUNARI and the Intercultural Bilingual Department of the Ministry of Education, in the case of intercultural education nationwide. In some territories, the programme also works with indigenous and Afro-Ecuadorian communities and organizations. In the former case, indigenous populations, it has undertaken consultation processes with the groups, including construction of the Indigenous Agenda and formulation of the intercultural education project. It has also worked for approval of specific policies, such as its focus on gender equity through the Women's Zero-cost Maternity Bill.

In addition, stakeholders have not only incorporated these ideas into their own discourse and policies, but in some cases, have done so with very little question. For example, notions of rights are widely accepted among the employees of subnational governments, but at the same time, there is little understanding of what this implies for public programmes.

Most of the people who took part in the evaluation deemed relevant and significant the fact that UNICEF had incorporated a rights perspective into the principles and concepts of cooperation and had been disseminating the content of this approach among institutional and organizational stakeholders with which it worked. Nevertheless, the adoption of this approach poses at least the following questions: Is it enough to promote the rights of children and adolescents and to formulate public policies for this sector when certain structural causes persist? Even more to the point, what are the implications if these persistent structural causes, found in institutions and cultures, actually interfere with the effective exercise of other rights, and if these other rights are themselves essential conditions for improving the situation of children and adolescents? Second, how can a rights approach, based on the logic of Western thought, be reconciled with the culture and cosmology of ancestral peoples and nationalities living side by side in Ecuadorian society? In other words, what can be done to suffuse the rights based approach with a dimension of intercultural awareness among stakeholders in the country? Along these same lines, some interview subjects noted with concern that rights-based principles were leading children to take on responsibilities that are complex and difficult for those so young,

such as children being prodded to participate in municipal councils on children and labour. They also noted a widening gap between the demands and implications of rights and the responsibilities and obligations they entail.

Results-based management in the CP⁵⁸

The objective is to achieve the effective exercise of children's rights. In order to meet this objective, cooperation agencies, in agreement with counterparts, must set specific priorities and goals by which to mark progress and measure accomplishments and outcomes. The country does, however, face certain difficulties in producing up-to-date information on the situation of children and adolescents, particularly at the level of communities and cantons, and disseminating it effectively. Information is critical, not only for uncovering the problems of children and adolescents, but also for making decisions, setting goals and monitoring the progress of those who are responsible for implementing national and subnational programmes and policies. Momentum has been building along these lines. Clearer goals are being set to tackle problems and shortcomings involving children, and information is becoming more transparent on budgets and on the implementation of programmes designed to bring about results.

From a strictly formal standpoint, the cooperation programme is quite structured in presentation, with a logical sequence that links together the outcomes, strategies, components and subcomponents. Nevertheless, this format is not necessarily compatible with current dynamics practiced by UNICEF, which emphasizes promoting and monitoring processes for guiding public policy, political dialogue and advocacy. With its highly structured nature, the programme takes a much more executive, vertical approach to intervention that no longer reflects UNICEF practices. Such an apparent contradiction poses certain formal difficulties; even more worrisome, however, is the fact that the formal design of the programme does not reveal or express the characteristics of current institutional practice (summarized as a flexible and versatile approach) that can easily be adapted and adjusted to current conditions, without losing its vision. This richness is overshadowed by technical/operational positions that are very evident in the content of the document. If these positions are contrasted with current practices, it becomes clear that even the new management paradigm adopted by the institution failed to do away with the current rigorous, formal, rigid design so inappropriate to current conditions. In the view of the evaluation team, any work that is built around a public policy perspective would need a programme that emphasizes clear visions and perspectives, along with strategies and guidelines that have a flexible profile more easily adapted to changing environments. The logical models in common use are inappropriate for handling public policy activities because the contribution of any cooperation agency locked into this operating approach is essentially swallowed up by the response of governments and counterparts. The scope of the CP is basically to influence, not to implement or drive actions directly.

Nevertheless, the greatest difficulty and the most severe constraint on outcomes is that they are explicitly presented outside the framework of institutions and their governance system. The achievement of universal basic education or access by women and girls to maternal-infant health care programs, for example, does not depend directly or exclusively on UNICEF and its cooperation. Indeed, UNICEF has little control over planned outcomes. As a result, it could easily overestimate its role as catalyst in a process that generally triggers mobilization of other

⁵⁸ Results-based management means the CP is designed to achieve desired results and information is available to improve decision-making.

stakeholders, or just as easily, underestimate its role when national public institutions seek responses other than those anticipated.

Evaluating the contribution of cooperation, already a difficult task, becomes even more complex in the presence of an intervention strategy that emphasizes the development of public policy. In this process, UNICEF combines forces with its counterparts and other stakeholders pushing for similar solutions. In the best of cases, this leads to collective strategies in which the role of the individual is diminished and no single originators can be identified.⁵⁹

Admittedly, it is quite difficult to evaluate achievement of outcomes proposed in the CP (see the text box in section 3.2 listing cooperation programme objectives and strategies for 2004-2008). Even so, many strategies were successfully launched—advocacy, support for the development of public policies, institutional capacity-building, incorporating the dimensions of gender and intercultural awareness, and citizen participation and mobilization. Clearly, implementation of this programme was influential in bringing about substantive changes in the State's handling of issues relevant to the situation of children and adolescents. The public policy approach that UNICEF has championed since the late 1990s has unquestionably made a significant contribution to development of the institutional and regulatory framework that has been in effect since the beginning of this century, and for improving indicators on children and adolescents.

Contribution and progress in the performance of the UNDAF

The evaluation of the cooperation programme shows that UNICEF has made substantial contributions in two areas of high-priority attention: reducing poverty through access to basic high-quality social services, and strengthening democratic governance and transparency. It has upheld initiatives to provide outreach and technical assistance services for promoting public policies on education and health, and improving the performance and management skills of national institutions, especially those involved in implementing social policies, programs and projects.⁶⁰ It has also worked side by side with efforts to spark greater awareness among citizens who, with increasing force, are clamouring for the effective exercise of human rights and for greater participation.⁶¹ With regard to the crosscutting themes of gender and intercultural awareness, certain significant actions stand out (such as UNICEF participation in formulating and applying the Zero-cost Maternity and Childcare Assistance Bill), but cooperation programme contributions are still insufficient. This is because these crosscutting themes have not yet spread into educational practice, nor have they yet been applied to an understanding of the world views of indigenous peoples and tribal nationalities whose dynamics of organization and social and cultural cohesion are not based on the same precepts as Western law.

UNICEF played a pioneering role in developing the UNDAF (United Nations Development Assistance Framework), making particularly valuable contributions to the rights-based approach

⁵⁹ This fact was clearly recognized by Paul Martin, former UNICEF representative in Ecuador. In an interview, he noted that under a relief-based intervention strategy such as that practiced by UNICEF in the early years, the agency held almost absolute control over results. When the agency moved to a capacity-building strategy, this control gradually lessened and is now quite limited. Under today's approach of advocating for public policies, it is very difficult to measure specific UNICEF contributions to the process.

⁶⁰ UNICEF has also contributed to the discussion of the public budget, measures to increase social investment, and capacity-building in public institutions at both the national level and locally (especially in municipalities). Various stakeholders have recognized the value of these contributions, which have been documented in a number of publications (see, for example, the midterm review of the UNICEF Cooperation Programme, Jara and Vega, 2006, and the Bustelo article "Cooperación en tiempos de crisis", UNICEF, 2006).

⁶¹ This was the case, for example, when UNICEF lent momentum to create and operate initiatives such as the Social Contract for Education, the Observatory on Child and Adolescent Rights and the Observatory on Fiscal Policy.

used in the programme structure of the framework. It also created the possibility of initiating interventions based on support for the design, approval, implementation and budgeting of public policies and introduced the concept of citizen oversight.

Guidelines established in the UNDAF call for collective action toward achievement of the MDGs. The UNICEF cooperation programme made direct contributions to five of the eight objectives that target the situation of children and adolescents: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger (goal 1), achieving universal primary education (goal 2), reducing child mortality (goal 4), improving maternal health (goal 5), combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (goal 6).

5.3. Added value

The added value of cooperation activities derives jointly from UNICEF, national counterparts and other partner cooperants. This is because cooperation is part of a process that embeds the cooperant in a social fabric within an institutional mesh, with its own perceptions, values and action approaches. This is the only way to understand that UNICEF "redefines itself through cooperation" and that its added value is not exclusively its own. There is a partnership of thought and action in which social stakeholders develop and in which UNICEF is present.⁶²

This added value can be identified in the ethical content imposed by public policy. In the case of the Social Contract for Education, it takes the form of credible actions and proposals. It plays the role of catalyst, bringing together technicians from the Ministry of Public Health, the women's movement and the Ministry of Education to promote the Maternity Bill and children's rights to health and nutrition. It also serves as an inter-institutional agent for supporting the family and community through the Special Protection Programme that is developing methods to prevent violence against children. This ethical content has also been translated into means of social participation and citizen oversight that serve as opportunities to monitor social investment.

Another added value driven by UNICEF is the pressure exerted by new social stakeholders, such as social and citizen movements, faced with deinstitutionalization of Ecuadorian society. Similarly, the determination to protect social expenditures has significant impact in a State such as Ecuador's, whose budget is largely pre-allocated with disincentives for expansion. Such a setting offers minimal maneuvering room for the development of public policy, especially when expenditures and budget execution are of poor quality. Thus, one of the goals of joint cooperation activities has been to shed light on this problem and exert social pressure to change the rules of the game that have governed the State since the petroleum era began. As another example of added value, the joint activities uncovered various forms of violence against children and adolescents and sought to produce information on this subject through the use of indices on the effective exercise of the rights of children. This unavoidably leads to various forms of social action in the field of special protection. The subcomponent on special protection has served as a pivot for numerous proposals to defend and protect children and adolescents. Its added value lies in its ability to intertwine initiatives from different perspectives that have diverse effects. Thus, special protection for children has become a field where various social stakeholders converge and exercise responsibility.

In small and medium-sized local governments, UNICEF brings particularly high added value because it works to help build and jointly apply a proposal for social management and begin to guarantee the rights of children and adolescents. All this is based on national and local

⁶² Interview with Juan Samaniego.

agreements designed to fulfill the 10-year Plan for Children. Indices on the rights of children have proven useful for generating information. This, together with the practice of monitoring social investment, has instilled in local governments a greater sense of accountability, which in turn has tended to eliminate ingrown practices of cronyism.

Along the same lines, cooperation opened up several valuable fronts for exerting an impact on the growth and complexity of everyday problems affecting children and adolescents and on the unique experiences peculiar to individual families, communities and cooperation institutions. In general, the individuals, families and institutions that are involved in cooperation have acquired a more acute awareness of children's rights, promotion of gender equity and respect for cultural diversity. This can be heard clearly in the words of children, parents, teachers, physicians and government workers. Unfortunately, such experiences are exceptional because direct cooperation actions have been narrowly focused. At the same time, national and local public institutions have displayed serious shortcomings in programme management and operation capacities at a time when access to basic services is becoming universal and the effective exercise of children's and adolescents' rights is spreading.

5.4. Coordination

Programme implementation obliges the UNICEF team to address a variety of dissimilar, heterogeneous niches of intervention simultaneously. This could easily inhibit the effectiveness and efficiency of project management and detract from the added value that the organization should be channeling toward its counterparts. Building and implementing public policy certainly entails a process of negotiating with different stakeholders and at many levels. Even so, it is complex for a single programme to address so many fields at the same time, especially in the midst of a social, political and cultural setting marked by diversity, fragmentation and disparity in abilities and resources.

When the many stakeholders working with the cooperation programme are so diverse, a single institution must adopt a wide variety of roles. UNICEF has served as a mediator by working to build a discourse that favours the social dimension over and above the fiscal perspective. It has lent technical assistance as public policies were being discussed and designed. It has promoted new opportunities for citizen oversight and has served as an adviser to local governments. At times, certain stakeholders have even visualized UNICEF in an activist role, probably because of its commitment to take a stance with respect to the performance of social expenditures. Because it takes many different roles, its actions are often interrelated and based on the strategies of the CP; however, UNICEF intervention could have a more significant and sustained multiplier effect if it could coordinate more effectively with the activities of other agencies. Indeed, the body of guidelines offered by the UNDAF is a valuable initiative that should be internalized for activities of the United Nations system.

Moreover, by taking on a particular role, UNICEF is implying that it sees special qualities and skills in the stakeholders working with it. For example, it began promoting opportunities for public oversight when it perceived the need to involve citizens and awaken their awareness about enforcement of rights. In the same way, its activities as a technical assistance institution can take place when facilities and institutional frameworks are in place and when processes exist, with social and institutional backing, to guarantee that they will be sustainable. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note how UNICEF and other cooperation agencies rate local governments. Rather than institutions of the State, these governments are seen as representatives of more specific interests, the voice of the population in their cantons (UNICEF,

2006).⁶³ Without ignoring the fact that local governments can develop activities more in tune with local needs, it should not be forgotten that they continue to be public-sector institutions whose dynamics are different from those of so-called "civil society."

The cooperation programme has lent its momentum to a number of causes, such as developing collective and national projects, generally with a long-term perspective. It is important to emphasize that the subcomponent on special protection is present in each and every one and is coordinated at the local level through subnational governments and canton-level protection councils. All the key components of cooperation (education, health care, reform and social investment) include activities and projects for improving protection. For example, the component on high-quality education calls for activities to train teachers and educational administrators in prevention, detection and treatment for children who are victims of domestic abuse and violence.

The LMGAI has forgone the decentralization model in favour of co-management between the State (through the Ministry of Public Health) and municipalities, coordinating at the local level through women's user committees. Nevertheless, for addressing issues of gender inequality, the cooperation programme is not yet fully compatible with stakeholders such as CONAMU, which would like "to be a partner to UNICEF in order to mainstream the gender approach in all cooperation activities" (reference group), or the project on guaranteed universal health care.

In this sense, it is undeniable that State institutions are clearly fragmented from one another, carrying out disparate activities and performing functions of unknown effectiveness or scope. Indeed, some counterparts have suggested that the loss of real State capacities and results could be associated with worsening indicators on children and adolescents. They also note that, while there is a regular process of coordination among United Nations agencies, this does not produce much synergy: "In the end, local governments [are] autonomous, and we do what we believe best, but in the UN there is no consensus on what needs to be said to counterparts. Some say one thing, others say another, and this can cause considerable wear and tear on counterparts."⁶⁴

A number of citizen groups and private sector institutions pursue objectives similar to those of the cooperation programme. However, their work has lacked cooperation or coordination, especially at the local level, where they participate very little. Nevertheless, many of them are willing to work together and are hungry for information and regular feedback on their efforts and contributions.

The current organizational structure of UNICEF, which has undergone several changes, is still not fully adapted to the new dynamics. For example, the agency does not appear to have struck a proper balance between the programme team and the operations team. Nor are there any apparent reasons why subnational programme implementation and programme responsibilities are of similar weight and comparable importance. Under the paradigms that guide UNICEF management, the two subnational programs, ProAndes and Amazonía, should serve as channels to incorporate local problems into the process of developing, discussing and implementing public policies. Rather than holding a position equal to that of programme

⁶³ One component of the cooperation programme document explicitly cites "mobilizing local authorities and community organizations to demand access to safe water and sewage systems," and places various institutions on a common level despite their diverse types of membership, structure and purposes (UNICEF, 2003).

⁶⁴ Marcia Gilbert, Council Member, Municipality of Guayaquil (validation workshops).

responsibilities, they should be subordinate to guidelines that emerge from education, health care, nutrition and institutional reform.

The same could be said for the component of participatory monitoring that, with the use of different types of instruments, should supplement and enrich involvement and social ownership of the approaches, visions and policies promoted by the cooperation programme. From a management standpoint, it would be a complex task to assign thematic responsibilities (components on institutional reform and social expenditure, intercultural education, health care and nutrition) to the same level as geographic responsibilities (ProAndes and Amazonía) or operating tasks (participatory monitoring).

The decision to organize the cooperation programme by components marked a qualitative leap forward; however, a yet-unfinished task is to stop managing "sectoral" components that produce a fragmentary view of the rights perspective underlying UNICEF work. This latent tendency can mask the interrelationship and interdependence among rights.

Given its very structure, the cooperation programme often becomes entangled in the shortcomings of Ecuador's non-decentralized system. Programmes can be identified at the local level working with bilingual intercultural education (Morona, Riobamba), having a profound impact on community- and family-based child education; but at the national level, certain issues (such as the Social Contract) have not found a foothold, so there is little understanding that the last year of community- and family-based child education pertains to the first year of elementary school. The opposite is also true. For example, the programme is working successfully with the National Council on Children and Adolescents (CNNA) at the national level, but there is no technical support for developing local agendas on the councils. "Every law has a council, producing a proliferation of councils at the local level that makes coordination very difficult. This erodes participatory processes and tends to distort information and produce budget shortfalls."⁶⁵ As a result, CNNA action produces a multiplicity of canton-level councils that with the passage of time, feel completely disconnected because they have no clear view of what institutions they can join. A canton council is not an objective in itself, but an endpoint where public policy can dock.⁶⁶

There are also cases of good coordination among various levels of the State, such as the programme "United for the right to identity." The programme began with the recognition that many children have never been inscribed in State birth records. A partnership was therefore created between INNFA, the National Council for Children and Adolescents and the former CONAM to provide a means for inscribing children in Morona Santiago, whether at birth or later. This experience subsequently spread to other provinces in the country. The same did not occur with other successful processes such as vertical childbirth that ought to be replicated nationwide.

Thus, although the cooperation programme does initiate dialogue and learning processes at the national level, along with visibility and media exposure, its presence and coordination at the local level have been neglected. Such an environment, characterized by a large number of stakeholders, sometimes poorly coordinated and not very effective, calls for much more rigorous action to meet common, consistent goals.

⁶⁵ Comments by local partners.

⁶⁶ See the work of Yuri Buaiz, *El sistema de protección integral del CNNA. Trabajo de sistematización. Draft report, publication not yet authorized, April, 2007.*

5.5. Sustainability

Policies and strategies promoted by the cooperation programme should be sustainable. Whether or not this is the case seems to be associated with the presence of cooperation at the national level and support by the national government and central-level counterparts. Clearly, the cooperation work has developed an ability to promote dialogue and discussion among stakeholders who are highly heterogeneous, even antagonistic, to conceptualize the exercise of public policy and to motivate significant citizen, social and private-sector movements. This ability, once fully established, has led to the institutionalization of national policies and strategies for children and adolescents, decisions by public organizations, legal frameworks and national social budgets. Several examples include the enactment of the Code on Children and Adolescents, criminalization of sexual practices with minors, and institutionalization of the LMGAI.

In an example of a different kind, the Social Contract for Education and the ODNA, which tend to be very closely associated with UNICEF and the United Nations, have succeeded in lessening their financial and political dependency on UNICEF and have begun to diversify their sources of financing, the content of their agendas and activities, and the types of strategic partners and members they seek. The ministries are in a somewhat different class, as they do not receive substantial contributions from the cooperation program. As a result, their work sometimes goes in a different direction or they have little interest in participating, especially when their responsibilities and the anticipated outcomes are not defined clearly in advance.

One case of significant progress was institutionalization of the national protection system. Another was enactment of the legal framework and allocation of public resources by the central government. As a result, the executive secretariat of the system, known as the National Council for Children and Adolescents, has begun to operate. An additional success story was the transfer of juvenile courts, previously under the Ministry of Social Welfare, to the protection system. The process provided several opportunities to equip juvenile court judges with training on the rights approach. Future challenges entail genuine implementation of the system at the national and local levels in order for benefits to reach all citizens, men and women alike. This means the State will need to allocate sufficient amounts of personnel, infrastructure and localized resources, as well as coordination and backing for canton-level protection councils, with agendas and resources clearly assigned. There is also a need to deepen inter-institutional coordination, especially with the police and the judicial system, to guarantee enforcement.

With respect to work in outlying areas, actions promoted by the cooperation programme appear to be critically unsustainable. As already described, the programme promotes policies and produces a variety of processes and actions, many of them quite relevant to real conditions in the country and its regions. Sometimes, however, this work is not sustained over time; in the best of cases, it survives but with variable degrees of intensity and quality. While "UNICEF transfers values, methodologies and ways of working to many technicians, all too often these same people change duties or leave their jobs altogether, which means the programme is always starting over."⁶⁷ Moreover, the work with national and local counterparts often lacks a clear definition of responsibilities and anticipated outcomes or short-term and long-term goals, nor are responsibilities assigned for monitoring and evaluation. No provisions are made for gradual cutbacks of support or for creating mechanisms to transfer the work over a reasonable period. This leads to situations such as that in Esmeraldas, where decades of continuous cooperation work have produced results and outcomes that tend to fade away.

⁶⁷ Comments by local partners.

Certain conditions that undermine the sustainability of the cooperation programme are associated with organizational constraints both on UNICEF and on its counterparts and partners. For example, UNICEF technical employees are restricted from monitoring and deepening the development of local policies. Or for example, administrative regulations encourage annual employment contracts for staff working on projects that last longer than one year, which tends to encourage opportunistic behaviours by consultants and coordinators. At the same time, local counterparts, unless they are located in the larger and more populous municipalities and regions, have minimal management skills and resources, and thus become highly dependent on contributions of the cooperation programme in order for the work in their territories to proceed. At the local and national levels, public organizations continue to experience high turnover among technical staff and have limited institutional capacities for the performance of their duties.

For all these reasons, cooperation must carefully consider the sustainability of policies for children and adolescents--how they function, operate and are evaluated. Only then can innovative, exciting theories, legal frameworks and allocated budgets be translated into truly viable service programs for citizens and an effective guarantee of children's rights. These factors will determine whether the cooperation programme is sustainable in the future, enjoys direct support and is consistent with national and local strategies and agendas. Other critical areas include the quality of partnerships with organizations that are already up and running and have a proven track record, and the degree to which central and local governments and the private sector have taken ownership of agendas and policies. This calls for a steady flow of communication to provide feedback on knowledge, abilities and lessons learned.

5.6 Opportunities and challenges for cooperation in the Ecuadorian setting

Ecuador continues to be marked by political volatility, economic swings, and rigidity and flux in institutions. Nevertheless, the working environment holds out certain encouraging opportunities for cooperation. In general, Ecuadorian citizens and institutions have begun to display growing awareness and heightened political sensitivity. They are more open and willing to organize and participate in discussing, formulating and implementing strategies and actions to improve living conditions, particularly for highly vulnerable groups such as children and less developed communities. It is part of a national trend toward political renewal and civic growth. More and more groups and sectors are now willing to take an active part in solving their own problems. This applies especially to children themselves, as well as students and young professionals, and certain companies and organizations with a sense of social responsibility and human development. An equally striking trend is the rise of citizen pressure for decentralization of the State, along with growing credibility and executive capacity of sectional governments and leaders. At the same time, central government administration has begun to display social leadership and a political stance favourable to the active defense of citizen rights, reclaiming the role of the State in formulating and implementing effective policies on behalf of the most vulnerable sectors and groups. This opens many doors and points the way toward cooperation on behalf of children's rights, facilitating the adoption of policies to make these rights truly enforceable and respected.

Naturally, this context also creates certain barriers that cooperation must recognize and consider. In the first place, some counterparts, partners and even a few donors have held back, clinging to approaches based on handouts and paternalism. As a result, cooperation activities could find themselves continuing to adopt this approach in their objectives and strategies. Another hazard is institutional rigidity among organizations, especially public agencies, and the

persistence of fiefdoms and cronyism. Finally, the sustainability of cooperation could be endangered if no progress is made toward a more in-depth approach to structural problems. Unless management skills are upgraded, institutionalized policies and programmes will never be implemented truly or effectively, nor will they be able to produce results, benefits and services for citizens who are the rights holders.

6. Lessons learned

6.1. Role and orientation of cooperation

Over the past four years, cooperation between UNICEF and Ecuador has made great strides in expanding coverage of such services as basic education, health care and nutrition, and creating a system of special protection for children and mothers. Among its achievements are the design, discussion and approval of public policies in the form of legal frameworks, newly created institutions and allocation of public resources. The work has also succeeded in broadly disseminating, promoting and defending the ideas of intercultural awareness and gender equality as inalienable rights of children and young people in Ecuador, thus raising expectations among institutions and revealing gaps in meeting these expectations. The central challenge still remaining is to find ways for the cooperation programme to shift from an approach oriented toward stimulating change, to one that promotes implementation of such change. It must move from a focus on designing and creating policies, to one that favours implementation and operation of services associated with these policies. Finally, it must advance from an approach that revolves around encouraging and strengthening members and organizations of civil society and the public sector, to one in which citizens themselves find the answers to their problems.

The turnaround occurred in 1999 and subsequently deepened under current cooperation. It more explicitly adopted a focus on building rights-centred policies as an ethical reference point, and it has been critical in motivating and mobilizing various stakeholders in Ecuadorian society. Finally, it has reoriented cooperation to take on tasks and occupy openings that had been scarcely exercised or noticed in the past. Even so, this approach is assumed and assimilated differently by the various levels and stakeholders targeted by cooperation: central government ministries and entities, civil society and private sector movements, subnational governments and organizations, ministers and civil servants, communities and families. Ecuadorian society is thus demonstrating its heterogeneity and the different degrees to which innovative concepts and ideas are able to permeate.

For the purposes of cooperation, all this highlights a continuing challenge to intervene and show results in different environments, cultures and regions. The first step is for counterparts to gain a clear understanding of the public policy approach and take ownership of it, in accordance with their own conditions and peculiarities, so they can then apply it in areas to which local stakeholders are committed. But the long-term role of UNICEF cooperation in Ecuador must not focus only on designing and creating policies, but also on supporting the implementation of policies to benefit rights holders.

6.2. Cooperation and work in the national sphere

UNICEF cooperation appears to have covered all of Ecuadorian society, network fashion, a strength that underlies its work with central entities. Because of the network, all social stakeholders, whether private or public, national or local, will assume shared, successive, alternating roles in calling the State to account. The idea of a network—a concept that may not appear in official programme documents—expresses an understanding that social hierarchy is of no matter for dealing with public policies to protect children in areas that affect their lives: education, health care and a favourable environment for them. The concept also accommodates differences in interests, power, degrees of influence and legitimacy.

In its interconnected work with government institutions, UNICEF has proven to be a stakeholder able to penetrate political realms and perform well in that environment, not only by facilitating processes, but also by influencing State decisions and public opinion. Counterpart institutions have been more inclined to adopt the cooperation approach for themselves. This internalization process appears to have occurred more easily and quickly among political leaders, that is, top authorities and rulers (mayors, prefects, ministers) than among technical and administrative personnel or national and subnational bureaucracies. Cooperation must begin to understand and strengthen this weakness, bringing to bear its drawing power and political influence to counteract the often inadequate State management and operation of public policies that were designed to ensure universal coverage of basic services and protection of children's rights.

6.3. Citizen oversight movements and social control of public policies

Cooperation programme actions envision society as a network. This means that any of its links may be woven by different social stakeholders, and that in this fabric, any individual can take ownership of education, health care or special protection and be an agent of responsibility, co-responsibility and promotion of human values. There is no other way to understand social mobilization, a concept that some analysts narrow down to nothing more than street politics or mass rallies. In the view of the cooperation programme, social mobilization is also part of networking, whether through observatories or through other mechanisms for case reporting and pressure.

Authorities and high-level officials in central government entities seem to be in constant flux; what never changes is the problems and citizen pressure to find solutions. Citizen oversight has come to serve as a type of anchor for policies in favour of children and adolescents in an unstable social and political environment where sectional governments, citizen movements and civil society organizations enjoy credibility and have taken on a more active leading role. This is why the cooperation programme was well advised when it decided to promote these movements and institutions, making them part of its work to generate and disseminate information on problems of children and adolescents. It was also right to include them in active defense of rights, assigning them the task of political advocacy in government decisions and agendas.

Unquestionably, an essential element of social control is raising awareness and drawing attention to problems or rights violations through the media, because this is the way to create favourable public opinion. Because of media attention, society is now expressing great interest in cooperation. This can be considered an achievement because it turns the communications media into key allies for positioning issues of children and adolescents. The best examples were the campaigns "look me in the eye" and "if your candidate does not know how to change education, change your candidate."

Nevertheless, social control develop or gain a clear voice unless civil society accepts it and takes ownership of it. The only effective way to organize citizen oversight is through points of convergence that bring together similar visions and sometimes contradictory views. The Social Contract for Education, the Women's Zero-cost Maternity Bill and Special Protection are associated with deeply divergent national counterparts and partners that are willing to work together because these programmes all share a common feature—their proposals for universal, comprehensive coverage.

Similarly, citizen oversight movements promoted by cooperation programmes need to build consensus on their current position and future relevance. They need to widen their geographic radius of action and legitimacy, based more on the added value of their own activities and services, and less on the nature of their members and supporters. Certainly, if these movements gain greater legitimacy and become better accepted, they can redouble their actions for reporting violations and actively defending the rights they uphold. Indeed, such movements may well take stances that are opposite to certain actions and policies of the State, thus complicating the supposed neutrality and nature of cooperation. This is why it is best to work from inside the movements, the counterparts and UNICEF itself and encourage an internal process of reflection for deciding how to prolong and support these strategies, or otherwise, how to introduce changes and programme shifts that will bring UNICEF intervention into line with possible new political and social scenarios in the country.

6.4. Cooperation work in the local and community sphere

In its work with communities, the cooperation programme brings effectiveness, new meaning and greater energy into rights-based public policies. Threaded through all this, however, are the underlying limitations and constraints in resources and capacities, revealing major gaps between theory, discourse and practice. They is why, when it works in communities, it should take a comprehensive approach in its application of strategies and networking with public and private organizations. In such a setting, it would appear that the cooperation approach alone, particularly its strategies for advocacy and social investment, are insufficient to strengthen and implement comprehensive local policies for children and adolescents. The only exception would be if political support and commitment are present, along with activities for monitoring, technical assistance and continuous citizen oversight of public investment and management. Similarly, it makes no sense to develop local-level information on the effective exercise of children's and adolescents' rights, or to mobilize resources, unless local goals are identified and agreed upon in the framework of local development plans and the 10-year Plan for Children.

The imbalance between work at the national level and at the local level, as well as lack of coordination between the two, casts doubt on the sustainability of results and experiences. Many interviewees agreed that the cooperation programme is not sustainable locally and that the work is limited to the action and understanding of the UNICEF technician, regardless of his or her abilities. Local society and communities appear to be much more complex, and it is not enough to transplant universal theories of rights without understanding the institutional framework. Local municipalities and governments constantly question the Children's Code and struggle to decide where to place its institutions, what functions they should assume or how to understand them. It would appear that the idea of this public policy was to fulfill its own mandate more than encourage an analysis of local conditions as a preliminary phase for institutionalizing its provisions. Local conditions shape the sociological environment that determines whether or not a policy can be implemented, and specifically, whether any precept of the Children's Code, for example, can be sustainable and ongoing.

Community-level work may encourage sectional governments and local organizations to take on roles and functions that legally do not pertain to them, or for which they may not have sufficient resources for implementation. This could eventually be interpreted as an intervention that is not authorized within the guidelines and standards of the State, and create expectations in other communities and regions that may remain unmet by cooperation agencies or the State itself. It is therefore best to target and concentrate local intervention on the regions of greatest poverty, with the worst indices of children's rights and the strongest commitment by local networks, in

order to produce a demonstration effect that will encourage other populations to follow similar strategies and purposes.

6.5. Conditions that most favour or impede change

In the framework of UNICEF-Ecuador cooperation, certain specific conditions tend to favour proposed changes. In working with national counterparts, a number of circumstances particularly facilitate achievement of results. The first is to keep open channels for dialogue and intervention and for building consensus with broad sectors of society. This is an inherent part of democratic-style network activities on behalf of a problem or cause, and will encourage civil society and citizens as a whole to express their own views and defend their own rights. This approach has also facilitated circulation of information about progress being made with the situation of children, the degree to which their rights are being respected, and the experiences of implementers. An important part of this, in working with communities, is an ability to read the context, with its particular qualities, and to step into line with the plans of sectional governments and other local organizations. Another favourable condition is a high degree of commitment and ownership by counterparts. This identification is expressed through the amount of resources they commit, the institutions that participate and the institutional capacities available for strengthening the operation, management and monitoring of public actions.

At the national level, one of the conditions least favourable for getting results is society's perceptions about public policies, influenced by a paternalistic, condescending style of management that gives short shrift to the idea of individuals as bearers of rights inherent to the human condition. This problem is associated with the history and political culture of Ecuador, the existence of local chiefdoms, paternalism and caudillos, all of it exacerbated at regional levels. In addition, relationships between the State and civil society are defined through a one-way process: corporate growth of the State. A public policy, by contrast, welcomes universal access by civil society in the style of an open public forum. Another difficulty is social fragmentation in Ecuador and organizations that are out of synch with one another, making it impossible to think of human rights as a problem of daily life. An added factor in working with communities is the temptation to apply recipes, without considering the uniqueness of each individual territory, and building partnerships with public organizations only. Even worse is the kind of fragmentation that can occur when a large number of local, national and international stakeholders, such as NGOs and other cooperation agencies, are all working for similar purposes.

7. Recommendations

7.1. The role of UNICEF in Ecuador

The cooperation programme cannot ignore apparent stagnation or even setbacks in indicators on children and adolescents, even as State resources increase. Nor is it blind to the poor management of these resources, which could reveal that the State's capacities are declining and that sectoral approaches that prevailed in the past have run their course. All this brings into direct question the role that cooperation should assume and the orientation it should follow in the face of national weaknesses.

The first response must be to find holistic and multisectoral ways, means and approaches to intervention. Cooperation, and especially national counterparts, needs to support social policies oriented toward children and their families and exert pressure for these measures to be tied to economic and production policies. All this must operate in the framework of national, regional and territorial development strategies based on equality and welfare. Another critical step is to seek out strategic allies such as cooperation organizations and United Nations agencies with expertise and advantages in these matters. Other needs include: working more closely with local and community organizations; activities to train and coach the employees of local governments and public organizations; and ensuring that citizens and children receive proper services from municipal employees, teachers, doctors and nurses, police officers and judges.

It is also important to continue working with national and subnational counterparts, especially cabinet ministries, provincial departments and local governments. Further discussion is needed of reforms to improve or attenuate structural factors that prevent these governments from performing effectively. Cooperation can also promote processes to modernize the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern human and financial resource management in the public sector. Naturally, this issue is highly sensitive due to opposition by interest groups and State unions; but it is critical if the operations of public agencies are to become more effective and transparent and if they are to lend useful services and guarantees to families and children. Thus a valuable role for the cooperation programme, in conjunction with other specialized bilateral and multilateral donors, could be to foster and support discussions and agreements on modernization processes. This will be an important step toward accepting and implementing modern mechanisms for selecting, compensating and retaining qualified, competent staff. It would be wise to position strategic allies that can promote, pressure and guide governments and their institutions in this area.

Another useful tactic would be to identify and consider higher impact interventions in programmes designed to improve the welfare and living conditions of families and children. This calls for a regular review of effective practices adopted in the national context, and compiling information on national and international studies already performed.

An additional necessary task is to develop better indicators that will highlight clearly the contribution that the UNDAF (United Nations Development Assistance Framework) has made under commitments signed with the country, thus drawing attention to the contributions of all the agencies in the United Nations system. The UNDAF outcome matrix, like the IMEP-Ecuador 2004-2008 (Comprehensive Plan for Monitoring and Evaluation, UNICEF, 2004b), contains variables (effects, outcomes and indicators) whose achievement does not depend directly on United Nations management.

Support for management and follow-up of social expenditures

Protection of social expenditures is an opportunity to improve public budget allocations to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged social sectors, as experience shows that it is not enough merely to have a larger volume of financial resources. In this new stage, UNICEF must contribute to defining, designing and applying instruments and tools to analyze the quality of expenditure.

On a related note, as UNICEF becomes involved in monitoring and analyzing the budget, it must at the same time work to incorporate an equal opportunity approach so that concerns about gender and intercultural awareness are mainstreamed in budget distribution as factors that will help mobilize all of society's resources on behalf of children and adolescents.

An additional suggestion is for the tasks of information gathering, analysis and dissemination to be assumed directly by observatories and citizen oversight movements that cooperation has built up in relevant programme spheres.

Institutional reform and inter-institutional coordination

The current situation holds out significant opportunities for cooperation activities in the area of institutional reform. Although much progress has been made in the field of public policies to improve the situation of children and adolescents, earlier management styles still subsist, with their fragmentation, non-comprehensiveness, and piecemeal interventions. In response, UNICEF can play the role of building bridges among the many programmes and projects that target children and adolescents and clearly defining the tasks and responsibilities of each one. This will unquestionably lead to greater efficiency, effectiveness and quality of benefits.

UNICEF in Ecuador will always build its activities on the foundation of its own long-term mission and objectives and the way it reads and interprets national and local situations. Nevertheless, all these roles, duties and responsibilities must be discussed and agreed upon with national and local counterparts. Moreover, the UNICEF long-term objectives and future vision must always be consistent with its emphasis on promoting, creating and maintaining environments that are favourable to children and adolescents. This includes strengthening their access to essential services in education and high-quality health care, and systems to protect them from mistreatment, abuse and exploitation, as well as economic and social conditions that will allow families to meet their basic needs. The statement of key outcomes, measured from a baseline, must articulate goals to be met and, as a subset of these, steps to lessen disparity and territorial exclusion and to reduce the presence of vulnerable groups.

Along these same lines, cooperation strategies should more heavily emphasize implementation, operation and management of public policies that have been approved and institutionalized. Taking a more comprehensive approach, these working strategies for cooperation can be grouped as follows:

- a) Research, monitoring and advocacy. Processes of citizen oversight and defense of rights must be tied to the creation of knowledge in critical areas of cooperation.
- b) Legal-institutional reforms and advisory assistance in public policies.
- c) Operation, management and innovation of networks/systems for citizen services.
- d) Design and implementation of gender and intercultural approaches.

The programme has traditionally concentrated on certain classic spheres where it applies these strategies for its in-country work: maternal and infant health and nutrition and high-quality intercultural education and special protection.

7.2. Strengthening networks and strategic partnerships

Social audit and civil society organizations

A critical step for making the cooperation programme more effective and giving it greater impact is to create partnerships able to conduct advocacy and contribute to public policy. Partners should be selected, and agreements with them should be drafted, as a function of the programme's cooperation mission and objectives and in the context of interventions. Alliances must never arise from spontaneous needs or proposals, nor should they be a reaction to the political power of stakeholders. Cooperation should therefore take a more proactive, reflexive and transparent role in considering, evaluating and selecting partners.

In the area of citizen mobilization and social monitoring, movements and organizations sponsored by the cooperation programme should consider improving their governance, representativeness and coverage. They can do this by introducing democratic mechanisms for adding new members and choosing leaders, and they should seek more influence at the regional level, getting away from the sphere of the central government. It is also a good idea to work with nongovernmental organizations that have demonstrated effectiveness and a track record of achievements related to activities that the cooperation programme would like to promote. In the case of new organizations and allies yet to be added, the cooperation programme should use more transparent, competitive mechanisms. For example, funds can be made available through competition and open tenders in which organizations may participate with a proposal or project addressing a problem. Another possibility is to give preference to networks and alliances of public and private organizations over individual organizations.

In view of the fact that the Social Contract for Education is a citizen movement with a demonstrated ability to intercede with the education establishment, it would be important to specify more clearly the meaning of its policies and positions such as universal coverage of basic education or textbooks for all. As written, these principles are too general to have any real impact on the structure of education. This same movement should also work toward discussing and building consensus on concepts of high-quality education for use in defining indicators to be applied to agreements, goals and follow-up.

Meanwhile, much remains to be done for promoting a citizen oversight movement in the field of health care in the sense of a Rousseau-like social contract, that is, a partnership with civil society that will build up the capacities needed to tackle the dilemmas currently facing this sector. Such a social contract, as recommended, means developing national and local capacities to exercise the role of oversight and monitoring with political influence. It would bring into question the Western health care model and traditional sectoral policies based on a hierarchical relationship between physician and patient, a model whose effectiveness has been declining visibly in recent decades. Quite definitely, it suggests that health and disease need to be understood as a social product, the responses and solutions to which must be found in the particular traits of a given society. This means that more resources will need to be allocated for working in the specific field of health, and partnerships will need to be developed with organizations willing and able to play this role. This could even include the Observatory on Child and Adolescent Rights and other existing organizations.

It is also important to maintain current partnerships with the women's movement, indigenous movement, Afro-Ecuadorian movement and youth movements, with a focus on promoting their participation and raising their voice in policy discussions. The views and problems of movements and organizations for emigrants should also be considered, especially with relation to conditions facing their underage children who remain in Ecuador.

Private sector organizations and companies

It is essential for the cooperation programme to preserve its drawing power and ability to motivate the private sector; it must maintain and build interest and contributions among donor and participating companies and trade groups. This requires a continuous flow of information and regular rendering of account on activities underway and results achieved, which is no less than what the cooperation programme expects from its partners and counterparts. A suggestion for this purpose would be to develop a periodic information product to distribute among partners, something they themselves see as necessary. In addition, events can be held to solicit feedback from donors, not only during project implementation, but also when new projects are in the design and conceptualization phase. Another possibility is to promote awards programmes and other means to encourage those organizations that contribute the most for children and adolescents. Broader partnerships are needed with other media outlets, and massive fundraising events should be held. Donors from foreign governments should be receiving improved informational materials on results and achievements.

Coordination with counterparts and partners

Admittedly, it is not the job of UNICEF to develop multisectoral and comprehensive intervention that will promote the rights of children and adolescents and have an impact on areas such as labour, housing or protection of a healthy environment. Nevertheless, its emphasis on children and adolescents reaffirms the need to improve and strengthen coordination with other stakeholders whose mandate is to promote rights that are closely associated with improving conditions for children and adolescents. From this standpoint, it would be advisable to work on a more sustained basis and in closer contact with other key public and private institutional stakeholders as well as other United Nations agencies in the framework of the UNDAF. This would be a way to ensure concerted, efficient action and greater synergy in the interest of promoting and guaranteeing the effective exercise of rights and thus having a multipronged impact on overcoming the problems that affect Ecuador's children and adolescents.

For example, in order to improve the situation of children and adolescents, it could be necessary to build closer working relations with agencies that directly promote production activities. This is because the lack of employment and income for a large percentage of the Ecuadorian population, especially women and young parents, is demonstrably one of the most significant causes of school absenteeism, high dropout rates, and the recurrence of easily preventable diseases.

In short, this recommendation is intended, not to redirect UNICEF work toward other sectors, but essentially to supplement its interventions with those of other agencies. By combining efforts, they can all have a greater impact on the structural conditions that have blocked substantial improvements in the situation of children and adolescents and have perpetuated the existence of diverse problems in this sector. The UNDAF is a valuable opportunity that must be seized and strengthened in this direction.

Moreover, the cooperation-based relationship between UNICEF and its partners and counterparts must become more transparent and hold out better incentives if it is to achieve anticipated results. This in turn requires agreements and action plans that set clear goals, assign responsibilities and specify mechanisms and institutions for monitoring and verifying achievements. For example, a compact or basic agreement between UNICEF and the government must explicitly define roles and functions for building and implementing policies on children and adolescents. National contributions and counterparts also need to be specified clearly. Financing granted by the cooperation programme must hinge, not only on the promise of hoped-for activities in the future, but also on the achievement of goals and milestones. For working with national and subnational counterparts and project implementers, it would be best to develop multi-year master plans based on their own activities and development agendas (established following participation by their citizens). Such master plans can set a clearly defined horizon for the work and lend greater meaning and legitimacy to activities undertaken from year to year.

Meanwhile, if the monitoring and evaluation system for cooperation programme interventions produces new information on a regular basis, frequent updates can be released on fruitful participations and even on those that are less beneficial. The master plan can also outline preliminary trial periods as well as provisions for termination of working relations with partners and counterparts. The agreement should provide for quarantine periods and include termination clauses in case results are unjustifiably inadequate. Finally, it would be advisable, at least every two years, to evaluate, select and publicize the work of those public and private institutions that make the greatest achievements and contributions on behalf of children and adolescents to encourage their cooperation, as occurs in Brazil.

7.3. Decentralization, autonomy and community work

The cooperation programme in the cantons and provinces of Ecuador runs parallel to its work at the national level, under the ProAndes and Amazonía programmes. In these areas, the handout approach has remained strong, despite steps to shift emphasis to capacity building and public policy development.

The best response to this would be to expressly adopt the public policy focus in local work and unify regional activities under the central cooperation programme, using the same approach and strategies, even though application of this perspective would vary according to the particular conditions in each territory and community.

It is further recommended that the cooperation work focus intensely on those territories that offer the greatest likelihood of lending feedback to national network activities, that dovetail with national-level work and that can serve as a powerful motivator or have a clear demonstration effect for other communities and territories. Additional criteria that should be considered for targeting interventions include:

- Household poverty rates (percentages of unmet basic needs in the first or second quintile).
- The index of rights development (territories whose indices rank far below the national average).
- Community coordination and social capital as measured by the quantity and level of participation by national and local public and private organizations.

In parallel fashion, the programme should work with central government institutions to evaluate and continue to design and implement measures intended to decentralize responsibilities and resources associated with social services of education, health care and protection. In particular, measures should be examined that would assign greater decision-making authority and more resources to implementing units such as schools, health clinics and hospitals, and canton protection councils to give them greater leeway in making administrative, financial and technical decisions involving direct services to children and youth. It would also be important to emphasize areas hitherto absent from cooperation activities, such as working with adolescents and expectant parents.

7.4. Convergence for applying cooperation approaches

The place of individual rights in indigenous and Afro-descendant cultures has historically been a source of conflict. In some cases, the teaching and exercise of individual rights has posed a threat to the survival of ancestral cultures because it challenges their ways of life, philosophies and traditions that successfully built social cohesion, and imposes alien, distant values on the cultural practices of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples. In a country such as Ecuador, home to extreme diversity and the presence of over 20 people groups, it is worth considering the role that UNICEF could play in disseminating a rights approach that sometimes openly contradicts traditional cultural practices. In this direction, the programme could discuss and develop an inter-institutional strategy to specify concepts, principles and guidelines for intercultural life. Sometimes it is assumed that, simply because the country has signed international agreements on children's rights, these rights are known and understood by all national stakeholders. Because UNICEF has a good reputation in terms of public perceptions, it is well placed to make a valuable contribution by promoting opportunities for dialogue, discussion and consensus building. The purpose would be, if not conciliation, at least understanding and valuing the role of individual rights and the values and lifestyles upheld by indigenous and Afro Ecuadorian cultures.

The same suggestion could be made for promoting the gender dimension. Work for children and adolescents provides unique opportunities to link the rights of these sectors with strategies to defend the status of women and to foster substantial changes in gender relations. This is ample justification for a policy to guide institutional work in this field, encouraging dialogue and contacts with stakeholders that are working to foster, promote and disseminate gender equality, with all its practical implications.

In operating terms, the rights approach calls for intense efforts of dissemination and discussion targeting other institutional partners and supporters. This is the way to move beyond the theory of rights toward a daily practice in which rights are enforced and guaranteed.

7.5. UNICEF-based approach to cooperation

The above suggestions could produce changes in the direction and style of cooperation work. In order to be consistent with these changes, a review of the UNICEF organizational structure would be in order so it could respond better to the working approach that underlie its projects. Thematic, operating and geographic components probably should not be held at current levels; instead, conceptual and methodological development should be strengthened to undergird concerted and coordinated work for children and adolescents. In the first place, sectoral officers

could manage products and processes under the central themes (intercultural education, maternal and child health and protection). They would be responsible for making recommendations on key partners to be selected as counterparts and implementers, on effective mechanisms for citizen mobilization, participation and control, and on resource needs, including public budgets and private contributions. At the same time, the areas of private sector and communication should be strengthened, keeping them more in tune with sectoral objectives and giving them clearer responsibilities. They should oversee, not only more effective citizen awareness, social mobilization and fundraising, but also relationships with other partners and counterparts within a system of national and local networks working on behalf of children and adolescents.

Cooperation work demands professionals who are extremely well versed in political processes and institutions and experts in public management and in running social programmes.

The regional programmes, ProAndes and Amazonía, should be joined with the central programme and their administrations merged into one. If they do this, their work can become more decentralized, with regional coordination offices holding greater decision-making power and a more permanent commitment. These merged units should be enhanced with short-term external advisors specialized in the high priority crosscutting themes of social investment and public finance, intercultural awareness and gender, and State decentralization and reform.

Working under a public policy approach has implications at the operating level. For example, because it is difficult to produce highly visible short-term direct results, donors become restless and grow increasingly insistent about seeing how their contributions have been used. Along these lines, it is important not only to deepen strategies for communication and coordination with donors (as detailed in section 7.2) to help them internalize the precepts behind this approach, but also to begin formulating results and products that can be managed under UNICEF governance systems. One tactic in this direction would be to adjust and revise the strategies and activities of the UNICEF cooperation programme. It is time to rethink what needs to be done and when, in order to achieve a given outcome, in each case clearly defining the responsibilities and scope of planned strategies and activities.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Much the same can be said for the UNDAF, an instrument that in the opinion of interviewees eludes effective monitoring because anticipated results, as defined, do not clearly set forth the roles and responsibilities of each agency.

Appendices

Appendix 1: References

- Abramovich, Víctor, (2005), *Una aproximación al enfoque de derechos en las estrategias y políticas de desarrollo*.
- African Development Bank, et al., 2005, *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Ownership, Harmonisation, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability*, s.f.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria, 1987, *Borderlands, La frontera, The new mestiza*, Spinters/Aunt Lute, San Francisco.
- Banco Central del Ecuador, 2006, *Información estadística mensual*, N° 1.850, Dirección General de Estudios, Quito.
- Borón, Atilio, 2006, *Después del saqueo: el capitalismo latinoamericano a comienzos del nuevo siglo* in *Política y movimientos sociales en un mundo hegemónico. Lessons from Africa, Asia and Latin America*, Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO), Buenos Aires.
- Bourdieu, Pierre, 1991, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Bretón, Víctor, 2003, *Capital social y etnodesarrollo en los Andes*, CAAP, Quito.
- Buaiz, Yuri, 2007, *Creación y funcionamiento del sistema de protección integral de la niñez y adolescencia en el Ecuador*, Preliminary report, Draft document.
- Burbano de Lara Felipe, 2002, *Gobernabilidad, democracia y cultura política*, FLACSO, Quito.
- Bustelo, Eduardo, 2003, *¿Retornará lo social?* in *Revista Íconos* N° 17, FLACSO, Quito.
- Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y Adolescencia, 2007, *Rendición de cuentas 2005-2006*, Quito.
- Consejo Nacional de la Niñez y Adolescencia, INNFA, Ministerio de Bienestar Social, 2007, Project "Conformación y fortalecimiento de 72 juntas cantonales de protección de derechos", Quito.
- CRS, 2007, "Proyecto sobre la trata y la explotación sexual comercial infantil", Catholic Relief Service, Quito.
- De la Torre, Carlos, 2002, Afroquiteños: Ciudadanía y racismo, CAAP, Quito.
- Diario Hoy, 2005, "Ecuador, un mercado libre para la trata de personas", supplement, Blanco y Negro, September 17, Quito.
- ECLAC, 2005, *Social Panorama of Latin America 2005*, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago de Chile.
- ECLAC, 2006, *Social Panorama of Latin America 2006*, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Santiago de Chile.
- Fernández, Paloma, 1991, Diáspora africana en América latina. Discontinuidad racial y maternidad política en Ecuador, Servicio Editorial Universidad del País Vasco, Basque Country.
- García, Fernando and Gina Chávez, 2004, El derecho a ser: diversidad, identidad y cambio. Etnografía jurídica indígena y afroecuatoriana, FLACSO Ecuador-Petroecuador Office, Quito.
- Gavilanes, Rocío, 2007, Análisis de los sistemas de atención infantil. Caso de estudio: el Programa Operación Rescate Infantil-Programa Nuestros Niños, thesis for the Master's Degree in Public Policy and management, FLACSO, Quito.
- Grupo Faro, 2006, Calidad con equidad: el desafío de la educación ecuatoriana, Progress report on education in Ecuador, programme to promote educational reform in Latin America and the Caribbean, Contrato Social por la Educación, Fundación Ecuador, Quito.
- Grupo Faro, 2006, Cómo va la inversión social, Boletín N° 18, Twice-yearly publication by UNICEF, Quito.
- Grupo Faro, UNIFEM, UNICEF, 2006, Lupa fiscal cantonal en Morona, Lupa fiscal en Riobamba.

- Guendel, Ludwig, “El Programa de Cooperación en Ecuador. Una experiencia de implementación del área 5 del Plan Estratégico de Medio Término (Borrador para discusión)”, UNICEF, Quito.
- Herrera, Gioconda, 2000, El género en el Estado: entre el discurso civilizatorio y la ciudadanía, in Revista Íconos N° 11, FLACSO, Quito.
- Human Rights Watch, 2002, Tainted Harvest, Child labor and obstacles to organizing on Ecuador’s banana plantations, New York.
- ILO, 2002, “Encuesta Nacional de Trabajo Infantil y Adolescente”, International Labour Organization - Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour and International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), Quito.
- INEC, 2006, Pobreza y extrema pobreza en el Ecuador. Período noviembre 2005-julio 2006, Survey on living conditions. Preliminar findings, Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, SIEH, ECV, IDB.
- Jara, Carlos and Silvia Vega Ugalde, 2006, El enfoque de derechos en el trabajo de UNICEF en el Ecuador. Programa de Cooperación de UNICEF 2004-2006, United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF-Ecuador, Quito.
- Kushner, Saville, 2007, Personalizing Evaluation, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, California.
- Luna, Milton, 2006, La educación en los últimos años en el Ecuador: situación y propuestas, Cuadernos del Contrato Social por la Educación, Cuaderno N° 4, Contrato Social por la Educación, CARE, UNICEF, Quito.
- Maluff, Marcia, 2007, “Violencia en el sistema educativo”, virtual lecture.
- Martínez, Carmen, 1998, Racismo, amor y desarrollo comunitario, in Revista Íconos N° 4, FLACSO, Quito.
- McCall, George, 1984, Social Science and Public Policy, Associated Faculty Press.
- Ministerio Coordinador de Desarrollo Social, 2007, “Agenda de Acción Social”, Ministerio Coordinador de Desarrollo Social, Ministerios del Área Social, Secretaría Técnica del Ministerio Coordinador de Desarrollo Social, Quito.
- Ministerio de Economía y Finanzas del Ecuador, 2007, “Pro forma presupuestaria 2007”, Quito.
- Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, 2006, “Hacia el Plan Decenal de Educación del Ecuador 2006-2015”, First summary version, MEC - Consejo Nacional de Educación, Quito.
- Ministerio de Salud Pública, 2005, Indicadores básicos de salud Ecuador 2005, United Nations, INEC – SENPLADES - Secretaría Técnica del Frente Social, Quito.
- Ministerio de Trabajo, 2007, “Informe Trabajo Infantil”, Quito.
- Moncada, Martha, 2002, “Estudio sobre las estrategias gubernamentales de reducción de la pobreza 1998-2002”, Report prepared for the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Quito.
- Muratorio, Blanca, 2002, “Historia de vida de una mujer amazónica: intersección de autobiografía, etnografía e historia” in Cuadernos de Historia Latinoamericana.
- Nisbet, Robert et al, 1979, Cambio social, Alianza Editorial, Madrid.
- ODNA, 2004, Estado de los Derechos de la Niñez y la Adolescencia en el Ecuador 2003, Observatorio de los Derechos de la Niñez y Adolescencia, UNICEF, Fundación Observatorio Social del Ecuador, Quito.
- ODNA, 2006, Estado de los Derechos de la Niñez y la Adolescencia en el Ecuador 2005, Observatorio de los Derechos de la Niñez y Adolescencia, UNICEF, Fundación Observatorio Social del Ecuador, Quito.
- ODNA, Los derechos de la niñez en la amazonía, costa y sierra, Observatorio de los Derechos de la Niñez y la Adolescencia.
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, 2006, “Frequently Asked Questions on a Human Rights-Based Approach to Development Cooperation”, United Nations, New York and Geneva.

- Ojeda Segovia, Lautaro, 1988, Políticas de bienestar social y participación popular en el Ecuador, ILDIS, Quito.
- OPF, 2004, El gasto en educación, una inversión para el desarrollo, Cartillas Educativas sobre Macroeconomía N° 6, Observatorio de la Política Fiscal – UNDP - UNICEF, Quito.
- Organizational Research Service, 2007, A guide to measuring advocacy and policy, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Seattle WA, USA.
- Ponce Jarrín, Juan, 2001, “El trabajo infantil”, Working documents SIISE N° 12, SIISE, version 4.5.
- Project to Combat Trafficking in Persons in Ecuador, “La trata de personas en el Ecuador”, American Bar Association Latin American Law Initiative Council - United States Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.
- Rico, Blanca, et. al., s/f, Políticas públicas de salud, Serie Innovaciones en Salud, Caleidoscopio de la salud, Mexico.
- Sánchez, Fernando, 2004, Resistencias al cambio institucional en el sector de niñez y adolescencia en el Ecuador, thesis for the Master's Degree in Political Science and Public Management, PUCE, Quito.
- Secretaría del Frente Social, Sistema Integrado de Indicadores Sociales del Ecuador (SIISE), versión 4.0.
- Seoane, José; Taddei, Emilio; Algranati, Clara, 2006, “The New Configurations of Popular Movements in Latin America”, in Politics and Social Movements in an Hegemonic World. Lessons from Africa, Asia and Latin America. Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO), Buenos Aires.
- Serrano, Claudia, 2005, La política social en la globalización. Programas de protección social en América Latina, United Nations Development Account Project on Democratic Governance and Equality in Gender Issues in Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC, Santiago de Chile.
- Sheper-Huges, Nancy, 1997, Demografía sin números. El contexto económico y cultural de la mortalidad en Brasil, in Antropología del desarrollo / Anthropology of Development: Teorías Y Estudios Etnograficos En America Latina / Ethnographic Theories and Studies in Latin America Teorías y estudios etnográficos en América Latina, Andreu Viola, editor, Paidós, Barcelona.
- Tello Mejía, Eudoxia, 2006, “Presupuestos Públicos Pro Equidad de Género contra la Pobreza en América Latina y el Caribe”, research project. Programa de maternidad gratuita y atención a la infancia, Diplomado Superior, Quito.
- The Evaluation Exchange, 1995, “Participatory Evaluation”, Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate school of Education, Volume I number 3/4, Fall.
- The Evaluation Exchange, 2005, “Democratic Evaluation”, Harvard Family Research Project. Harvard Graduate School of Education. Volume XI number 3, Fall.
- The Evaluation Exchange, 2007, “Advocacy and Policy Change”, Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Volume XII number 1, Spring.
- Touraine, Alain, 2000 Can We Live Together? Equality and Difference, Stanford University Press, Palo Alto.
- Unda, Mario, 2006, “Contribución al debate sobre los movimientos sociales” in Entre Voces N° 5, Revista del Grupo Democracia y Desarrollo Local, Quito.
- UNICEF - Grupo Faro, 2007, “Pro forma social 2007: desafíos del nuevo año fiscal”, Quito.
- UNICEF, 1998, “Country programme recommendation, Ecuador”.
- UNICEF, 2003, “Revised Country programme Document”, Ecuador, United Nations Children's Fund. E/ICEF/P/L.9/rev.1.
- UNICEF, 2004, The State of the World's Children 2004 - Girls, Education and Development, United Nations Children's Fund, New York.
- UNICEF, 2004, UNICEF Ecuador Country Programme 2004- 2008.

- UNICEF, 2004a, Country Programme Evaluation Peru-Unicef, Evaluation report, Peru.
- UNICEF, 2004b, "IMEP-Ecuador. Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan 2004-2008", Quito.
- UNICEF, 2004c, "2004-2008 Country programme Plan of Action between the Government of the Republic of Ecuador and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)", Quito.
- UNICEF, 2005, The State of the World's Children 2005 - Childhood under threat, United Nations Children's Fund, New York.
- UNICEF, 2006, "Cooperación en tiempos de crisis", Quito.
- UNICEF, 2006a, The State of the World's Children 2006 - Excluded and Invisible, United Nations Children's Fund, New York.
- UNICEF, 2007, "El Gasto Social en el Presupuesto 2007", Quito.
- UNICEF, 2007a, The State of the World's Children 2007: Women and Children - The double dividend of gender equality. United Nations Children's Fund, New York.
- UNICEF, 2007c, "Políticas Públicas con Enfoque de Derechos: Planificación y Gestión", Quito.
- UNICEF, El enfoque de derechos en UNICEF - Ecuador.
- UNICEF, Hacia la construcción y aplicación de la agenda mínima a favour de los derechos de las niñas, niños y adolescentes indígenas en el Ecuador.
- United Nations Children's Fund for Action, 2002, Amazon Subregional programme - recommendation for funding from OR without a recommendation for funding from RR, E/ICEF/2002/P/L.29.
- United Nations Children's Fund for Action, 2002, PROANDES Subregional programme - recommendation for funding from OR without a recommendation for funding from RR, E/ICEF/2002/P/L.28.
- United Nations System, 2002, Evaluación Común de País - Ecuador, Common Country Assessment (CCA), Visión del Sistema de las Naciones Unidas sobre la situación del Ecuador, Quito.
- United Nations System, 2004, United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), Quito.
- United Nations System, 2004, UNDAF results matrix, Quito.
- United States Department of State, 2006, Trafficking in Persons Report 2006
- Vásconez, Alison, Rossana, Córdoba and Pabel Muñoz, 2005, La construcción de las políticas sociales en Ecuador durante los años ochenta y noventa: sentidos, contextos y resultados, ECLAC. CEPAL, Social Development Division, Políticas Sociales Series N° 105, Santiago de Chile.
- Viola Andreu, 2000, Antropología del desarrollo / Anthropology of Development, Paidós, Barcelona.
- Weismantel, Mary, 1998, Food, Gender, and Poverty in the Ecuadorian Andes, Waveland Press, Inc., Long Grove.
- Yin, R., 1986, The case study as a rigorous research method, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.