

HISTORY OF CPE IN UNICEF

PHILIPPINES 1994

The Multi-Donor Evaluation of UNICEF (MDE) published in 1992 raised a number of issues that might provide country offices a framework within which to examine their country programmes. In its Third Country Programme for Children Terminal Implementation Review (CPC III TIR), UNICEF Manila undertook such an exercise in which the thirteen CPC III projects were neatly fitted into the three major intervention strategies proposed in the MDE (service delivery, capacity building, and empowerment). However, in limiting the analysis to those three strategies, social and resource mobilisation and advocacy were omitted.

The programme could not be judged by MDE criteria because it predated the MDE by five years. The purpose of this evaluation was to reflect on CPC within the context of the broader issues raised by the MDE. These included the rational, transparent, and periodically revised choice of intervention strategies most appropriate to accomplish programme and project objectives, selection of external partners appropriately positioned and equipped to carry out their tasks, mobilisation of human and financial resources, advocacy by UNICEF and assistance in monitoring the national government's accomplishments in eliminating child rights violations and discrimination against women, and financial and management capabilities to effectively and efficiently support and enhance programme implementation.

This country programme evaluation was accomplished through desk review and interviews. Materials reviewed included CPC II and CPC III documents, individual project TIRs and their synthesis document, and the MDE synthesis report. Interviews and meetings were held in Manila, Bangkok, and New York with NGOs, government officials, donors, programme officers, evaluation office personnel and other UNICEF personnel.

MALAWI 1994

The Lilongwe Office requested to undertake an evaluation of its country programme as per the recommendation of the results of the Multi-Donor Evaluation of UNICEF 1992.

The purpose of the CPE was to evaluate the adequacy of the original country programme design, process in implementation and the efforts of the changing political and programme environment.

The methodology followed an in-house process, guided by small Steering Committee, with a consultant facilitator and writer. Staff responded to questionnaires and interviews, plus extended review of programme documentation. A conceptual framework was developed to guide the process. Cross-sectoral / transversal.

The situation in Malawi changed dramatically in 1993/1994, one year after the beginning of the current programme cycle. This raised questions of the appropriateness of the original programme design. Even the original programme design, in unchanged circumstances, had severe limitations with an over-focus on service delivery to the relative exclusion of concerns with community, participation, empowerment strategies and women's advancement. The programme was also over-determined by UNICEF global goals, rather than meeting Malawi specific priorities. There was lack

of distinction between the Malawi national effort to achieve global goals and the country programme objectives as a partial contribution towards this larger purpose.

The evaluation had wider implications for country programme exercises elsewhere, since it critically reviewed the process of planning, and pointed out the possible pitfalls for programme and planning officers.

EGYPT 1994

In 1993 the Executive Board of UNICEF adopted **Decision 1993/5** requesting the Executive Director to ensure that Country Programme Evaluations become an integral part of the country programming exercise. A number of countries for which new long-term commitments were recommended to the 1994 Executive Board were selected for evaluation. Egypt was one of them.

The consultant's Terms of Reference were as follows:

1. Review all relevant documents available at country- level pertaining to the current Country Programme.
2. Assess the effectiveness of the Country Programme based on the following research questions:
 - a) Did the Country Programme meet the objectives set in the Master Plan of Operations (MPO)?
 - b) Concentrating on impact, coverage and costs, what were the achievements of the Country Programme?
 - c) How, if at all, could the resources used for research activities over the five year period have been better deployed to answer questions a and b?
3. Provide suggestions for a detailed monitoring, evaluation and research plan for the next Country Programme
4. Write an evaluation report that will be made available to the Executive Board.

According to the CPE, a brief review of the new Country Programme revealed that the bulk of weaknesses identified by the Mid Term Review and the consultant were addressed in the new Country programme 1995-2000, namely:

- the programme was focused on clearly defined and measurable objectives
- there was no gap between the overall objectives and project objectives
- every programme sector contained its programme goals
- the office had produced a detailed monitoring plan for the country programme goals and indicators had been developed for this purpose
- there was a balance between the national programmes and area based services.

A discussion on Programme Cooperation 1990-1994 and review of the Programmes was included in the Country Programme Recommendation for Egypt before the Executive Board. This report thus concentrated on the achievement of goals/objectives.

THAILAND 1994

The 1989-1993 RTG/UNICEF programme of collaboration had come to an end. A CPE was launched to review successes and weaknesses for development of the 1994-1998 country programme.

The purpose of the CPE was to review overall programme achievements and finding lessons which could be useful to UNICEF's ongoing cooperation with Thailand.

The study approach was comprehensive and oriented towards a selective analysis and report. The study selected intervention strategies and activities that dealt with issues of advocacy, service delivery, capacity building and empowerment of community members, and demonstrated programme changes and the mechanisms and reasons behind such changes. The methodology relied on desk reviews (analysis of existing data).

HAITI 1996

The Haiti Country Programme Evaluation (CPE) was carried out between August and September 1996 by a mixed external and UNICEF headquarters team. This corresponded to a mid-point in the three-year Bridging Programme (1995-1997) which in turn represented a transition phase in UNICEF programming after the 1991-1994 political crisis initiated by the *coup d'état* ousting President Aristide. The period covered by the CPE, 1992 to mid-1996, is one of repeated upheaval and corresponding reorientation of UNICEF programming.

The CPE was designed to feed into such strategic positioning as well as the programme preparation phase for the UNICEF Country Programme starting in 1998. The Haiti experience also raised significant issues which had implications for UNICEF operations in other countries. Among them were the impact of international sanctions on children, the position of UNICEF as advocate of child rights in such a context, the role of UNICEF in emerging or fragile democracies, and the potential for the organization's partnerships with civil society.

The CPE focused on the experience of the UNICEF Country Office, drawing where possible lessons for the organization as a whole.

The Terms of Reference stated the objectives of the CPE as follows:

- to assess the strategic programmatic choices taken,
- to assess the management response to enable implementation of these,
- to make a rapid retrospective assessment of programme outcome in terms of the beneficiary population
- to make an appraisal of potentially sustainable aspects of approaches introduced during the emergency and early reconstruction phases.

The evaluation of strategic programmatic choices was intended to include an examination of the coherence between the situation analysis, programme objectives, strategies and resource allocation as well as the choice of partners, a central issue in the Haiti programme context. Assessment of programme outcome was limited by the difficulties which the CO had developing and maintaining monitoring systems. Consequently, a limited qualitative assessment of community- and family-level coping mechanisms was included to provide a different perspective on the appropriateness of programme choices and thus potential outcomes or limitations.

The Evaluation Team employed a variety of methodologies to carry out the CPE. These included:

- a documentary review;
- unstructured individual interviews with a selection of donors as well as with political or executive-level representatives of key UNICEF partners in government, UN agencies, and NGOs;
- semi-structured group and individual interviews with UNICEF staff in the Haiti CO as well as in headquarters and regional offices;
- workshops with selected NGO and civil service partners, generally at a more technical level, using participatory and visualization techniques.

In addition, individual and group interviews of key informants in the field – community leaders, health agents, community-level committee members, beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries -- were carried out in three sites using a variety of Rapid Appraisal Procedures (RAP). These focused on reconstructing family and community coping mechanisms during the crisis in order to determine the potential impact of UNICEF interventions. Field research also served to cross-check information gleaned from management and coordination levels.

At the time, the CPE in UNICEF was defined by an evolving set of guidelines. Two aspects of the model CPE, as per the guidelines, were downplayed in the case of Haiti due to the nature of programming in the period under study. These were assessment of programme impact and cost-effectiveness analysis.

NIGERIA 1998

CPE Nigeria covered FGN-UNICEF's 1991-1995 Country Programme. The report presented the major findings and recommendations on the relevance, adequacy, cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the projects implemented during the programme cycle. It also dwelled on the appropriateness, adequacy, effectiveness and flexibility of the organisational / management structure and staffing situation of UNICEF Nigeria during the country programme period. The evaluation was carried out through desk research, literature review, field work (covering UNICEF's four zones of operation), and a Focus Group Discussion.

The evaluation took a critical look at the country programme design, implementation and impact on the lives of the target groups in the focus communities. Specifically, the evaluation ascertained the relevance, adequacy, cost-effectiveness, and sustainability of the various components of the country programme. Attention was also paid to the mid-term review of the programme carried out in 1993 and the effects of the corrections on programme management and achievement of targets. The structure and management of operations at UNICEF Nigeria were assessed to establish their efficiency and effectiveness in supporting the achievement of programme goals.

The central objective of the evaluation was to present UNICEF with an independent and objective assessment of its activities and operations in Nigeria. This was to enable UNICEF identify the changes needed in the design, planning, implementation and management of its programme to enhance the fulfilment of its mandate. The evaluation covered the following issues: a) the relevance of the programmes to the priority needs of children and women; b) adequacy in relation to the scale and complexity of the problems; c) cost-effectiveness of strategies and interventions and their sustainability; d) mid-course corrections made and the outcomes of these corrections; and e)

effectiveness of operational support to programmes in relation to systems development, cost sharing, adherence to agreed rules/procedures, efficiency, transparency and accountability.

The Nigerian situation before and during the 1991 - 1995 Country Programme Cycle presented disquieting conditions for the well being of children and women. This was engendered to a large extent by certain dramatic changes in the economic, social and political order in Nigeria. A number of economic measures taken in the context of SAP in 1986 produced adverse side effects: rapid rate of inflation, high levels of unemployment, reduced budgetary allocation to the social sector and considerable reduction in the real income of most Nigerian households. These conditions contributed to worsening poverty in Nigeria with children and women being the worst hit.

These compelling conditions in the Nigerian situation gave additional concerns as to the nature and magnitude of interventions required to adequately meet the challenges posed by the Programme environment, thus the CPE.

This evaluation addressed certain basic issues relating to programme design, programme implementation, management and monitoring. The basic evaluation criteria are the relevance, adequacy, cost effectiveness and sustainability of the CP design, implementation, management and impact.

The evaluation method involved the following activities:

- review of relevant literature on the CP
- reconnaissance visits to Kaduna and Enugu zones
- data collection covering the different levels of UNICEF operations (i.e. National, Zonal, State, LGA and Community) through questionnaires, personal interviews, briefing meetings, literature and Focused Group Discussions (FGD). Data was obtained from UNICEF officials, Government functionaries, NGOs, representatives of benefiting communities

A holistic evaluation of the FGN/UNICEF 1991-1995 Country Programme in terms of whether or not (and the extent to which) the programme design and coverage, programme goals and objectives, programme implementation strategies, the mid-term review and corrections, as well as programme management fit with the identified critical success factors of adequacy, relevance, cost effectiveness and sustainability.

SOMALIA 2002

From June to September 2002, UNICEF Somalia undertook a Country Programme Evaluation with the assistance of a team of external evaluators. The objective was to review UNICEF programmes initiated since 1999, and key management issues. An evaluation at this juncture was necessary in order to reflect upon the evolving context within Somalia and how UNICEF can best respond to and support communities as the organisation enters the planning phase of its next Country Programme. Results were discussed with partners in a dissemination workshop, and contributed to the design of the Country Programme (2004-2008).

An integral component of the evaluation process was the participatory dissemination workshop held in Nairobi in mid-October 2002, which brought together multiple stakeholders, four senior resource persons and UNICEF staff. The workshop not only reviewed the findings and recommendations of the evaluation, but also initiated the first steps in discussing the way forward in programme support improvements.

Following finalisation of the 2002 Country Programme Evaluation, and its related workshop, a workplan for preparation of the Country Programme (2004-2008) was developed and shared with the UNICEF East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) in October 2002. This was preceded with internal reviews and discussions on the scope and direction of the programme.

Based on the evaluation, the programme preparation exercise moved forward within UNICEF to review and discuss the scope and direction of the new programme. A formative workshop was held in Nairobi during January 2003 to consolidate the core elements of the current thinking.

The discussions were informed by the process of updating the Situation Analysis of Children and Women, and a series of studies and surveys in the areas of child protection, education, nutrition and water and sanitation. Subsequent to the meeting, draft strategy outlines for each programme were shared with UNICEF zonal and national partners, and specific consultative sessions were held in each zone on the relevance, appropriateness and feasibility of the proposed strategies, as well as to identify required zonal modifications. With these inputs, a Strategy Paper was consolidated and finalised with feedback from UNICEF regional staff and key partners including donors and operational partners. On the basis of the Strategy Paper and related discussions, a summary Country Programme Document (CPD) was drafted for submission to the UNICEF Executive Board during its June 2003 session.

PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES 2002

The evaluation of the Pacific Programme 1997-2001 was implemented during the first half of 2002. It followed a request from UNICEF's Executive Board in January 2002, when the Country Note for the Pacific Programme 2003-2007 was discussed. The Executive Board recommended undertaking an evaluation of the previous Programme. It was expected that the evaluation would better inform the Country Programme Recommendation (CPR) to be presented during the Session in September 2002.

Given that the outcome of the evaluation was to feed into the preparation of the CPR in May 2002, the essential part of the exercise had to be conducted in a *fast-track* manner during March and April 2002. UNICEF's Evaluation Office in New York coordinated the evaluation with support from a Steering Committee composed of representatives of AusAID, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community and UNICEF's East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO).

The evaluation was meant to be useful not only for the design of the new Programme, i.e. when drafting the CPR and the new Master Plan of Operations, but also during its implementation and future reviews.

The objectives of the evaluation of the Pacific Islands Country Programme were six fold:

1. to assess the role and relevance of the Programme of Cooperation as to the situation of children and women in the Pacific Islands;
2. to assess the realisation of the Country Programme objectives as spelled out in the Master Plan of Operations against the background of World Summit for Children (WSC) and National Plans of Action (NPA) goals;
3. to assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact of supported projects and programmes and analyse to what extent activities and results are sustainable and /or replicable;

4. to assess the comparative advantage and complementarities with the programmes of other partners, governments and agencies;
5. to assess the rationale for the new programme process; and
6. to assess the risks and level of support for the current and proposed programmes.

Given the short timeframe for this evaluation and the constraints existing for transport and communication, the exercise could not make extensive use of participatory methods that would have enhanced learning for all partners involved in the Pacific Programme. In general, the evaluation used a variety of information that could be verified with reference to several sources:

- An extensive desk review of all relevant documents related to programming, reporting, monitoring and evaluation
- A series of interviews with governmental and non-governmental partners as well as with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, The Forum Secretariat, UN organisations and representatives of donor countries and organisations;
- A survey among programme staff of the UNICEF Office in Suva and in the field;
- Field visits to UNICEF supported projects in Vanuatu;
- A review of key documents and interviews with major resource persons concerning economic and social development indicators on PIC with special reference to the situation of children and women;
- A review of key documents and interviews with major resource persons concerning national and regional policies and strategies to address development challenges;
- A review of all available documents concerning the proposed Pacific Programme (2003-2007).
- Meetings with representatives from PIC, Australia and New Zealand accredited to the United Nations in New York to discuss scope and methodology as well as preliminary findings of the evaluation.

A participatory workshop was scheduled to take place to discuss evaluation issues with representatives of Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu as well as with donor representatives. For logistical reasons, it was planned to organise the workshop back-to-back with an UNDAF meeting. However, the UNDAF meeting was eventually cancelled and the participatory evaluation workshop could therefore not be held either.

MAURITIUS 2002

The evaluation of Mauritius Programme of Cooperation 1996-2000 took place during the first half of a transitional Country Programme of a three-year- period (2001-2003), which was approved by the Executive Board in September 2000, with a Regular Resource allocation of US\$ 1,500,000. The transitional character of the Country Programme was in line with the 1997 UNICEF Executive Board Decision to gradually phase out Regular Resource allocations for countries having reached a combined threshold of US\$ 2,895 GNP per capita and U5MR [Under 5 Mortality Rate] of less than 30 per 1,000 live births. Since Mauritius complied with these criteria, the traditional type of co-operation with allocation of Regular Resources was scheduled to progressively come to an end and modalities of a modified UNICEF presence in Mauritius were under consideration.

The Country Programme was revised after a Mid-Term Review (MTR) in 1998. The revision sought to learn lessons from programme implementation and to reformulate the programme in line with the concept of Human Rights-Based Programming.

The accountability objectives of the evaluation of the Mauritius Country Programme of Cooperation 1996-2000 were fourfold:

- To assess the role and relevance of the Country Programme as to the situation of children and women in Mauritius
- To assess the realisation of the Country Programme objectives as spelled out in the Master Plan of Operations [MPO] (June 1995) and the Revised MPO (December 1998) against the background of World Summit for Children (WSC) and National Plan for Action (NPA) goals
- To assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact of supported projects and programmes and analyse to what extent activities and results were sustainable and / or replicable.
- To assess the approach to prepare for the transition process.

The evaluation yielded lessons learned that guided the modification of UNICEF presence in Mauritius resulting from the withdrawal of Regular Resources at the end of the transition cycle 2001-2003. Henceforth, UNICEF would contribute to empowerment of national partners, support strategic decision-making and contribute to rights-based and results-based management at the country level.

The evaluation also contributed to the development of lessons learned useful for UNICEF to formulate policies and strategies related to transition processes. It thus also contributed to UNICEF's overall strategic governance.

The terms of reference for the evaluation were drafted by UNICEF and finalised after consultation with national partners. An independent team of international and national consultants conducted the evaluation, with the support of the Evaluation Office in UNICEF Headquarters and the Mauritius Country Office. The Regional Office for Eastern and Southern Africa (ESARO) in Nairobi and the Area Office in Antananarivo were consulted.

The evaluation used a variety of methods such as desk reviews of relevant documentation, interviews of key informants, as well as field visits. The evaluation team also met with the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) composed of representatives of the government ministries that were involved in the Country Programme. The evaluation was an inter-active learning process involving the organisation of a participatory workshop with key stakeholders.