

Evaluation Office  
UNICEF  
Annual Report 2015

February, 2016

## Executive Summary

The year 2015 was a busy year for the Evaluation Office (EO). In addition to the on-going initiatives, the humanitarian portfolio needed to be addressed as a priority, in view of UNICEF's engagement in several major emergencies. Considerable progress was made in implementing of the plan for global thematic evaluations at corporate level, although several of these were delayed or cancelled.

As shown in the summary table (see next page), the Evaluation Office was engaged in more than a dozen evaluations during the course of the year which is significantly above the past year's annual plans. Key achievements included the completion of the first ever Evaluation of UNICEF's Strategies and Programme Performance in Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Children, the Evaluation of Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme, the Evaluability Assessment of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, and work on several major evaluations in the humanitarian portfolio notably on emergencies in the Syrian Arab Republic and sub-Region, in South Sudan and in the Central African Republic (CAR).

The Evaluation Office prepared and presented the Annual Report on the Evaluation Function to the Executive Board which was complemented by a management response. The Evaluation Office also presented four evaluation reports to the Board three of which were completed in the 2014: the Real-time Evaluation of the UNICEF Response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, the Evaluation of UNICEF Upstream Work in Education and Gender, the Formative Evaluation of the Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) and an evaluation synthesis about cash transfer as a social protection intervention. Each presentation was followed by a management response and rich discussion and recommendations by members of the Executive Board.

The Evaluation Office continued to play a selective but significant role in various initiatives related to national evaluation capacity development in line with the UN Resolution A/RES/69/237 *Building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at the country level* (December 2014). A noteworthy contribution was Evaluation Office support to the Government of the Philippines in formulating the national evaluation policy. The declaration of 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation provided an added impetus to collaborate with EvalPartners and regional and national associations on both advocacy and capacity building initiatives. Under the EvalPartners umbrella, the Evaluation Office is supporting three network initiatives namely EvalSDGs; EvalGender+ and the Parliamentarians' Forum. In November 2015, Evaluation Office Director was appointed as co-Chair of EvalPartners.

The Evaluation Office was involved in several interagency evaluations (covering both development and humanitarian fields). These included the WFP-led Joint Evaluation of the Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger (REACH) initiative and Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluations of the UN response to emergencies in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. Significant support was given to the Independent System-wide Evaluation initiative, including assistance in undertaking two pilot evaluations.

With respect to systemic strengthening of UNICEF's evaluation function, key initiatives included strengthening the functionality and ease of use of the evaluation and research database; external assessment of the global evaluation reports oversight system (GEROS); and improvements in the performance dashboard for evaluation. In addition, the Evaluation Office continued to report on evaluation related indicators within the system-wide action plan on gender equality adopted by the UN in 2012.

Despite good progress toward the Annual Work Plan (AWP) results and targets, there were shortcomings including the delayed implementation and cancellation of several evaluations and slow progress in developing an action plan in support of the evaluation policy. A key lesson for the future is to consider more realistic plans and also deal systematically with staff capacity issues.

## Evaluation Office Strategies and Targets: Results and analysis

The Office Management Plan (OMP) for the Evaluation Office (Evaluation Office) consists of two outcome areas, namely:

- Global Evidence and Global Evaluation Governance (Outcome 100)
- Global Evaluation Management (Outcome 200).

The annual report for 2015 analyses progress against each output within the two outcome areas and also provides lessons learned.

### Outcome 100: Global Evidence and Global Evaluation Governance

#### Output 101: Independent Global-level evaluations

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*The increased availability of credible, reliable and useful global evaluation evidence enables stakeholders to make well-informed decisions on the strategies required and the changes needed to reach the goals to which the organization is committed.*

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This output area is the core of the Evaluation Office’s work-plan both in terms of staff time as well as budget allocations. Several major evaluations were completed as planned and the work on the humanitarian evaluation portfolio expanded greatly. Several major evaluations, however, were delayed or cancelled as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Performance with respect to key activities planned under Output 101, 2015

<b>PLANNED PRODUCTS</b>	<b>Status at end 2015</b>
<b>PROGRAMMATIC PORTFOLIO</b>	
Evaluation of UNICEF’s Work Preventing and Responding to Violence against Children (VAC)	<b>COMPLETED</b>
Evaluation of Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA)	<b>COMPLETED</b>
Cash Transfer as a Social Protection Intervention: Evidence from UNICEF Evaluations 2010 – 2014	<b>COMPLETED</b>
Joint Evaluation of Renewed Efforts against Child Hunger (REACH)	<b>COMPLETED</b>
Meta-Analysis of Evaluations of UNICEF-Supported WASH Programmes	<b>TBC Q1, 2016</b>
Evaluation of Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) Approach	<b>TBC Q1, 2016</b>
Meta-Synthesis of Evaluations about HIV/AIDS	<b>ON-GOING</b>
Developmental Evaluation (DE) of the PBEA	<b>ON-GOING</b>
Evaluation of UNICEF Capacity and Action in the Area of C4D	<b>ON-GOING</b>
Evaluation of UNICEF’s Response to the Ebola Crisis	<b>DELAYED IMPLEMENTATION</b>
Evaluation about UNICEF’s Work to Prevent Stunting	<b>DELAYED IMPLEMENTATION</b>
Evaluation of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission and Paediatric HIV Engagement	<b>POSTPONED UNTIL 2016</b>
UNICEF’s Approach to Strengthening National Health Systems	<b>POSTPONED UNTIL 2016</b>
Methodological study on evaluating innovation	<b>POSTPONED UNTIL 2016</b>
Methodological study on policy evaluation	<b>POSTPONED UNTIL 2016</b>
<b>HUMANITARIAN PORTFOLIO</b>	
Evaluation of UNICEF response to crisis in Syrian Arab Republic and Sub Region	<b>NEARING COMPLETION</b>
Evaluation of UNICEF’s Response to the Crisis in Central African Republic	<b>NEARING COMPLETION</b>
Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation of South Sudan	<b>NEARING COMPLETION</b>
Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation of Central African Republic	<b>NEARING COMPLETION</b>
<b>INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS PORTFOLIO</b>	
Evaluability Assessment of UNICEF’s Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017	<b>COMPLETED</b>

Evaluation of UNICEF's Policy and Advocacy	CANCELLED
Evaluation of UNICEF's Partnerships	CANCELLED

## Main results achieved in 2015 in relation to the Annual Work Plan (AWP) targets and indicators

The Evaluation Office completed or saw major progress in implementing the following evaluations in 2015:

- **Evaluation of UNICEF's work on Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Children**

This evaluation assessed the extent to which UNICEF's performance over the period of 2010-2014 was effective in terms of systems strengthening, social norms change, use of data and knowledge management, as well as in terms of advocacy and leadership. This evaluation, which is to be presented to the Executive Board in June 2016, is intended to inform UNICEF's work and the wider agenda on action to end violence against children in the coming decades.

- **Evaluation of Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (2012-15)**

This evaluation found that PBEA achieved substantial results in the five intended outcome areas. Nevertheless, it was concluded that UNICEF needs to articulate a clearer vision for the organization's role and contribution to peacebuilding in conflict-affected and fragile contexts, and integrate this vision into corporate strategies, country programme strategies as well as in key messages from UNICEF leadership.

- **Evaluation of UNICEF-supported Early Learning Development Standards (ELDS) Approach**

This evaluation examined whether ELDS and other approaches that programme countries adopted in setting standards for learning in the early years increased children's readiness to transition into school life and to participate meaningfully, and how far national capacities for providing high quality early learning programmes were strengthened. This evaluation is scheduled to be completed in the first quarter of 2016.

Additionally, the Evaluation Office completed one evaluation synthesis exercise and nearly completed a second; completed an evaluability assessment; and played a major role in a joint evaluation. Specifically:

- **Cash Transfer as a Social Protection Intervention: Evidence from UNICEF Evaluations**

This meta-evaluation was presented to the Executive Board in September 2015, accompanied by a management response. It elicited much interest and feedback from the members of the Executive Board.

- **Meta-Analysis of Evaluations of UNICEF-Supported WASH Programmes**

This meta-analysis (nearing completion at the end of 2015) sought to answer the following questions: what was the performance of UNICEF-supported WASH programmes, what may have affected performance, and what are the lessons learned? The findings will be used to improve knowledge on the performance of UNICEF WASH programming in order to inform UNICEF's future global WASH strategy and to improve the quality of programming in the field.

- **Evaluability Assessment of UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017**

This assessment provided UNICEF management with an independent analysis of whether the plan is robust and coherent, and the degree to which results can be measured, monitored and evaluated. It will inform the Mid Term Review process of the Strategic Plan and UNICEF's next strategic plan as well as future evaluations.

- **Joint Evaluation of Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger (REACH) Initiative**

The Evaluation Office played a major role in the management and technical guidance for this joint evaluation which was a collaborative effort among WFP (lead coordinating agency), FAO, WHO and UNICEF. The formative evaluation examined the effectiveness as well as sustainability of the REACH initiative and provided options for going forward.

The following four evaluations saw significant progress in 2015 and are expected to be completed by mid- 2016:

- **Evaluation of the UNICEF response to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and Sub Region.** This multi-country evaluation covered the period from 2012 to 2015. It is a major evaluation covering key countries involved in responding to the Syria emergency, documenting UNICEF's response in addressing the needs of communities caught up in the conflict as well as assisting displaced and refugee populations.
- **Evaluation of UNICEF's Response to the Crisis in Central African Republic.** The evaluation looks at the period from July 2013 to September 2014, documenting and analyzing UNICEF's response in addressing this conflict-driven emergency..
- **IAHE of UN Humanitarian Response to the Emergency in South Sudan.** This evaluation covered the period from January 2014 to April 2015. It provides documentation and analysis of the UN's response to this conflict-driven emergency.
- **IAHE of the UN Humanitarian Response to the Emergency in the Central African Republic** covering the period from December 2013 until July 2015. It assesses the UN's response to this major emergency.

In 2015, work began on additional evaluation projects which will continue into 2016. These include **Evaluation of UNICEF Capacity and Action in the Area of Communication for Development (C4D); Developmental Evaluation (DE) of the PBEA; and a Meta-Synthesis of Evaluations about HIV/AIDS.**

Two evaluations planned for 2015 were delayed. **Evaluation of UNICEF's Work to Prevent Stunting** was delayed to allow time for a detailed scoping exercise, and is going ahead in 2016. The **Evaluation of UNICEF's Response to the Ebola Crisis** had a delayed start but the inception phase was completed by the end of 2015.

In addition to undertaking independent evaluations, the Evaluation Office also provided support to other UNICEF evaluations and several other activities. These include the following:

- **Evaluation of UNICEF's response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey;**
- **M&E support to the WASH section in selected ROs and COs;**
- **Stocktaking Assessment of the Early Childhood Development Kit;**
- **Support to the "Syrian Evaluation Portal for Coordinated Accountability and Lessons Learning" (CALL) initiative.**

**The Evaluation of Humanitarian Capacity Development Initiative** was launched in 2015. It aims to address the lack of evaluations of level 1 and level 2 emergencies by developing the capacity of selected country offices, through training and intensive support, to commission and manage humanitarian evaluations.

### **Analysis: Gaps and constraints**

A key issue in 2015, as explained above, is the delayed implementation of a number of evaluations which was caused partly to a backlog and overloading. Despite significant activity under output 101, two evaluations and studies were postponed until 2016 pending the recruitment of a senior health specialist to manage these evaluations. These are **Evaluation of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission and Paediatric HIV Engagement** and the **Evaluation of UNICEF's Approach to Strengthening National Health Systems.** Two methodological projects namely **Methodological Study on Evaluating Innovation** and **Methodological Paper on Policy Evaluation** were also postponed partly due to staff capacity issues and the need to prioritize the urgent additional work required for the humanitarian portfolio.

Two evaluations were cancelled due to their infeasibility. The **Evaluation of UNICEF's Policy and Advocacy** was cancelled after a mapping and scoping exercise revealed a highly differentiated multi-actor environment, complex context and UNICEF's lack of clarity around policy and advocacy concepts, processes and results. It was concluded that it would not be possible at this time to provide credible evidence on a global level of UNICEF's

work in this area. The **Evaluation of the UNICEF's Partnership Strategy** was superseded by other Evaluation Office priorities.

## Lessons learned

Key *Lessons learned* from Output 101 are as follows:

- A self-analysis of Evaluation Office performance against OMP/AWP indicates weak prioritization and planning, sometimes giving attention to less important activities at the cost of neglecting core commitments.
- Prolonged recruitment processes also led to delays in implementation of evaluations. External consultants did not always perform to expectations. The Evaluation Office recognizes the need to consider these issues in work-planning and address them systematically during 2016-17.
- Several evaluations have shown that UNICEF is weak in its ability to generate and analyze data on efficiency, especially related to cost. Similarly, evaluation reports demonstrate weaknesses in addressing gender equality. The Evaluation Office will explore options to address these issues in the evaluations planned for 2016.

## Output 102 - National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD)

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*Measurably grow Southern partner national evaluation capacity through global inter-agency support to NECD strategies reaching public, private, and Civil Society Organisation (CSO)/voluntary institutions.*

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The Evaluation Office provided significant support to national evaluation capacity development (NECD) in 2015, in line with the [General Assembly Resolution on NECD \(Resolution 69/237\)](#) passed at the end of 2014. 2015 was declared the [International Year of Evaluation \(EvalYear\)](#) by UN Agencies, development partners, Civil Society Organizations, Governments, Private Foundations, Parliamentarians and other stakeholders. Support from the Evaluation Office as well as other offices across UNICEF was mainly provided under this umbrella.

## Main results achieved in 2015 in relation to AWP targets and indicators

### United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)

The Evaluation Office played an important role in mainstreaming NECD in the work of UNEG. The 2015 UNEG Evaluation Practice Exchange (EPE) included a well-attended session on NECD. In 2015, the Evaluation Office Director was appointed Vice-Chair of UNEG with responsibility for partnership activities, including activities on NECD.

### EvalPartners, EvalSDGs, and Other Networks

In 2015, the Evaluation Office continued to support [EvalPartners](#), a global movement aimed at reinforcing capacities of national, regional and global CSOs to influence policy makers. In November, at the EvalPartners Global Forum in Kathmandu, the Evaluation Office Director was appointed one of the EvalPartners co-chairs, representing UNEG within the broader EvalPartners network. Following a global consultation process, EvalPartners agreed on a [Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020](#), providing a coherent platform for global and local action on evaluation, including strengthening national evaluation capacity.

Under the EvalPartners umbrella, the Evaluation Office helped to launch the [EVALSDGs Network](#) which brings together policy makers, UN organizations as well as civil society organizations. EVALSDGs advocates for the evaluation of the SDGs at the national level, including the need to further strengthen national evaluation capacity. Another network under the EvalPartners umbrella is [EvalYouth](#) which aims to build the capacities of young

evaluators. The Evaluation Office is also supporting two other networking initiatives launched during the EvalPartners Global Forum: [EvalGender+](#), aimed at building knowledge and capacities around evaluation of gender equality, and the [Global Parliamentary Forum on Development Evaluation](#) (GPFE). The Parliamentarians' Forum is advocating for the adoption of evaluation policies and the strengthening of national evaluations systems.

### **Contribution to the creation of favorable national environments for evaluation**

As well as supporting the Parliamentarians' Forum, in 2015 the Evaluation Office also contributed directly to the creation of national evaluation policies or frameworks at the country level in a number of countries, notably in the Philippines, which recently released its national evaluation policy.

### **Analysis: gaps and constraints and lessons**

Guidance on NECD was developed by the Evaluation Office several years ago and an update of the guidance was planned for 2015. Given capacity constraints, this work was postponed to 2016.

In September 2015, global leaders agreed to advance global goals under Agenda 2030. A key feature of the new agenda is the emphasis on national ownership of development processes. In many countries, this implies the development of stronger national evaluation systems, along the lines set out in the General Assembly Resolution on National Evaluation Capacity Development. A key conclusion is that the Evaluation Office, building on foundations laid in 2015, has a significant role to play in coordinating efforts by UNICEF, UNEG, EvalPartners and others in addressing these challenges and opportunities.

### **Outcome 200: Global Evaluation Management**

The outcomes expected here concern recognition of the identity and policy direction of the evaluation function within UNICEF and with global partners through leadership actions at the global level, and strengthening regional and country office level capacities to deliver better quality evaluations in support of national and corporate strategic goals.

#### **Output 201: Evaluation Leadership**

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*The Evaluation Office exercises leadership in evaluation by mobilizing common or harmonized efforts within UNICEF and the global development community to measurably increase the use of high quality evaluation results to support organization learning, accountability and performance improvement.*

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In the evaluation leadership results area, the main targets are concerned with maintaining an effective interface with the UNICEF Executive Board, the internal Global Evaluation Committee and other governance bodies including the Standing Committee on Research; work on evaluation policy and planning; and management of interagency relations. Overall achievement was satisfactory, although further work is required against some targets.

### **Main results achieved in 2015 in relation to AWP targets and indicators**

#### **Executive Board**

In 2015, the Evaluation Office prepared and presented to the Executive Board the annual report on the evaluation function for 2014, which was complemented by a Management Perspective. The Board responded with a formal Decision which was largely positive and called for UNICEF to further strengthen the function.

The Evaluation Office also presented four evaluation reports to the Executive Board:

- Real-time evaluation of the UNICEF response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines;
- Evaluation of UNICEF upstream work in education and gender 2003-2012;
- The Formative Evaluation of the Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES) approach;
- An evaluation synthesis: Cash transfer as a social protection intervention: evidence from UNICEF evaluations, 2010-2014.

These were each accompanied by a management response and elicited substantive feedback from the Board members.

### **The Global Evaluation Committee (GEC)**

The GEC was consulted in June 2015. The Evaluation Office presented proposals on the process and content around a) strengthening the evaluation function, and b) the revision of the plan for global thematic evaluations, which was followed by a consultative process across the organization which informed preparation of an updated plan for global thematic evaluations for the years 2016-2017.

### **Policy Work**

The Evaluation Office engaged in various meetings with colleagues across UNICEF to promote understanding and action around the Revised Evaluation Policy (2013). A 2 page summary was prepared and widely distributed. The Evaluation Office also supported the Office of Research in the development of a UNICEF Research Policy that takes account of evaluation arrangements at UNICEF.

### **Interagency relations and governance**

Partnerships with other agencies and networks play an important role in harmonizing evaluation efforts and in building capacity by developing agreed global standards, methods and agendas. Key initiatives here include work with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), support for the Independent System Wide Evaluation (ISWE) initiative and collaboration with the Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) Group.

- **UNEG:** As noted in the section on Output 102, the UNEG is a professional network composed of the evaluation units of organizations across the UN system which has, for the past decade, served as the key vehicle for harmonization of evaluation work across the UN development system. UNICEF has supported UNEG's work in various areas. The Director of the Evaluation Office was appointed UNEG Vice Chair (Partnerships) in March 2015.

UNEG has increasingly engaged in advocacy for evaluation issues and in 2015 it supported the global International Year of Evaluation initiative by hosting the UNEG Evaluation Week in New York. This included a high level meeting at which the keynote address was presented by the UN Secretary General. The Evaluation Week also included the successful UNEG Evaluation Practice Exchange held at UNICEF House and co-hosted by UNICEF and the Global Environment Fund.

- **ISWE:** The Independent System Wide Evaluation initiative was established under the 2012 QCPR Resolution. It was recognized that, apart from ad hoc arrangements to conduct UN system-wide evaluations from time to time, there was no regular mechanism for identifying and conducting such evaluations. ISWE is therefore an important attempt to meet this need and address the significant gap in oversight and accountability arrangements across the UN. In this pilot phase, the initiative is guided by an Interim Coordination Mechanism of which UNEG is a member. The UNICEF Evaluation Office has made significant financial and technical contributions, notably in serving on the Evaluation Management Groups established to conduct two independent system-wide evaluations:
  - **a Meta-Evaluation and Synthesis of UNDAF evaluation**, approaching completion at the end of 2015; and
  - **an Evaluation of the Contribution of the United Nations Development System to Strengthening National Capacities for Statistical Analysis and Data Collection to Support the**

## **Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Other Internationally-Agreed Development Goals**, for which the inception phase was completed by the end of 2015.

- **IASC:** Established under the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC), the Inter-agency Humanitarian Evaluation (IAHE) Group has, over several years, conducted a number of evaluations of humanitarian action. Coordinated by OCHA, the group brings together the relevant UN agencies as well as the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance in Humanitarian Action (ALNAP) and other NGOs. While the group is coordinated by OCHA, UNICEF has provided financial and technical contributions and maintains a key leadership role. In 2015, as noted above, joint interagency humanitarian evaluations undertaken by the IAHE group included evaluation of the UN response to the emergencies in South Sudan and in the Central African Republic.

The IAHE group also manages the **Syria Co-ordinated Accountability and Lesson Learning (CALL) initiative** which has tasked the Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) with maintaining an internet portal housing evaluations of the Syria crisis; and, in 2015, published an updated report providing a common context analysis of the Syria crisis which is intended to inform evaluation efforts in this area.

### **Other initiatives**

As noted in the section on Output 102 above, the Evaluation Office has continued to support EvalPartners through 2015. EvalPartners is a global network which brings together UN agencies and national, regional and global CSOs and CSO networks, as well as a number of bilateral development agencies. In November, at the EvalPartners Global Forum in Kathmandu, the Evaluation Office Director was appointed to be one of the EvalPartners co-chairs, representing UNEG within the broader EvalPartners network. The other co-chair is the President of the International Organisation for Cooperation in Evaluation (IOCE). Following a global consultation process, Evalpartners agreed a Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020, which set out a common agenda for strengthening institutional and individual capacities in evaluation as well as creating an enabling environment for evaluation at global regional and national levels.

### **Management activities**

Other management activities undertaken in 2015 included analysis and follow up of the results for the Evaluation Office of the Global Staff Survey (see Annex 2); and arranging a team retreat in mid-year to serve team building and induction objectives. The Evaluation Office coordinated the annual network meeting (see below under output 202) and maintained regular coordination discussions with regional evaluation chiefs.

### **Analysis: Gaps and constraints**

Recognizing the need to strengthen aspects of the UNICEF evaluation function to better implement the Revised Evaluation Policy, initial work to prepare a global evaluation plan was started. However, this requires further development. The development of a funding strategy was postponed.

The Evaluation Office has recurrently noted that one specific area constraining its effectiveness is the procurement arrangements in UNICEF, which are not well adapted to the requirements of a specialized function supplied by a small and fragmented market. Problems relating to procurement issues recurred in 2015 and initial consultations with Supply Division pointed to the need for market analysis and outreach.

### **Lessons learned**

Three key lessons emerge around the leadership activities conducted in 2015. First, the Executive Board was especially interested in and appreciative of the evaluation synthesis report on the cash transfer modality. The implication is that stakeholders will welcome further synthesis work on issues of current interest.

Second, several problematic issues around the performance of the Evaluation Office and the evaluation function more widely need to be addressed through better to analysis, planning and scheduling of activities. The lesson emerging is that this requires increased management attention and coordination in future.

Third, the demand for UNICEF leadership in activities across agencies and with other global partners is very high but can lead to a heavy transactional burden. Constraints on available staff time and resources mean that careful prioritization will be required to transform engagement in joint activities into results with significant development impact.

## Output 202: Systemic Strengthening of UNICEF's Evaluation Function

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*Key stakeholders at the decentralized and global levels better meet their evaluation accountabilities and fulfill the Evaluation Policy objective of robust and useful evaluation practice across all levels and units of the Organizations.*

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Strengthening of UNICEF's evaluation function, especially at decentralized levels, is a key role of the Evaluation Office through which it influences and supports the coverage, quality and use of evaluations. In addition, the Evaluation Office promotes collaboration across various parts of the organization for improving learning and accountability through an effective evaluation function.

### Main results achieved in 2015 in relation to AWP targets and indicators

The Evaluation Office manages and maintains a set of systems which help UNICEF to manage the evaluation function. These include the global Evaluation and Research Database (ERDB), a searchable repository of evaluation reports from across UNICEF; the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS), a core system providing assessments of evaluation quality and feedback to those managing evaluations across UNICEF; the Global Management Response Tracking System, which compiles and records the progress of management responses to evaluation recommendations; annual assessment of UNICEF compliance with the evaluation requirements of the System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) on gender equality and the empowerment of women; and a dashboard setting out indicators of evaluation performance.

A range of actions to strengthen these systems was under way in 2015:

- Evaluation Office undertook work to strengthen the functionality and ease of use of the Global Evaluation and Research Database (ERDB).
- The Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS) was the subject an external assessment which aimed at generating evidence to further improve the system. The assessment, commissioned by the Evaluation Office, shows that the GEROS is highly relevant, useful and effective, while being economical and sustainable. However, a range of improvements are required to realize the full potential of the system to support high quality evaluation processes. Recommendations from the assessment provide an agenda for action and system improvement in 2016.
- The Global Management Response Tracking System is also under review. With a view to validating and strengthening arrangements for management responses to evaluation recommendations, the Evaluation Office commissioned a review which is due to report in 2016.
- The Evaluation Office continued to report on evaluation aspects of the System-Wide Action Plan (SWAP) on gender equality and the empowerment of women adopted by the UN in 2012. For

evaluations from across UNICEF completed in 2014, the Evaluation Office assessed UNICEF's compliance with system-wide gender mainstreaming standards and found a mixed results.

- Improvements were made to the performance dashboard for evaluation. This now provides close to real-time information, offering UNICEF management and staff the opportunity to identify and address performance gaps more swiftly. Further, the preliminary dashboard data on evaluation quality for evaluation completed in 2015 was released immediately after the year ended. This was the first time this has been achieved and was possible due to the commitment made in 2015 to rate the quality of evaluation reports and provide feedback in real time. All 82 evaluations concluded in 2014 were quality assessed in 2015 by the GEROS system and feedback provided to the respective offices. Based on the quality assessment of the evaluation reports, the annual global meta-evaluation was produced. This highlighted continuing improvement in the overall quality of evaluations but noted a number of areas for attention.

Knowledge management and communications remained a key focus of activity in 2015 and the Evaluation Office continued to produce a range of knowledge products including several Evaluation Briefs on recent evaluations; a Policy Brief summarizing the Evaluation Policy was produced in English, French and Spanish; and the monthly EvalNews newsletter was shortened and made thematic in response to feedback from users. Other publications, blogs, and videos on relevant topics were used to facilitate knowledge sharing and use of evaluation results. The Evaluation Community of Practice was migrated to more modern and user friendly platforms (i.e. Yammer and SharePoint). The Intranet and Internet websites benefited from periodic updates. These efforts were guided in part by a Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey (SSS) which provided useful feedback to improve Evaluation Office products and services.

Methodological development and technical guidance also continued. The Evaluation Office developed a dedicated chapter on evaluation for the updated Programme Policy and Procedure Manual. Work on developing an updated position on intellectual property (IP) was also greatly advanced but the Legal Office has yet to approve the draft document. The lack of modern IP clauses is a known disincentive for universities and other potential bidders for evaluation services.

The Evaluation Office and the Division of Data Research and Policy (DRP) organized the successful 2015 DREAM (Data, Research, Evaluation, Analytics and Monitoring) meeting, held in New York Headquarters in July. About 90 UNICEF staff attended, from Regional and Country Offices and headquarters divisions. Key action points were agreed upon, including the need to prepare the following: a brief on the Evaluation Policy; a Global Action Plan to support implementation of the Evaluation Policy at all levels; an accountabilities framework about roles and responsibilities in evaluation; guidance on the policy target on 1% budget for evaluation; review of the KPI on evaluation coverage; guidance and hands-on training on evaluation management and on cost-effectiveness analysis; review of the management response format. The meeting was highly rated by participants and a short report was produced by the Evaluation Office.

### [Analysis: Gaps and constraints](#)

Preparation of a comprehensive global evaluation action plan to support the implementation of the revised evaluation policy could not be completed in 2015. It remains a priority for 2016.

In the Plan for Global Thematic Evaluations presented to the Board in February 2014, the Evaluation Office made commitments to develop methodological guidance for evaluation of areas of growing programmatic interest. One such topic is innovation. Efforts were made to link to USAID work on the same theme. Despite a lengthy dialogue, there was no final agreement on collaboration. The Evaluation Office will need to consider alternative steps to address this issue.

A study on methods for policy evaluation was planned but could not be implemented, given other demands. It has been postponed until 2016.

## Lessons learned

Recognizing the importance of reviewing, from time to time, the systems it uses and the products and services it offers, the Evaluation Office initiated several reviews in 2015. As expected, these are generating useful lessons and insights. For example, finding that a significant number of UNICEF staff are not fully aware of the GEROS, the Evaluation Office will need to develop a strategy to raise awareness of GEROS and disseminate its products more effectively at different levels of the organization.

## Annex I. List of evaluations completed

<b>Title</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Sequence Number (Year /Seq. no)</b>	<b>Type of Report</b>	<b>Posted in Evaluation &amp; Research Database</b>	<b>Themes, keywords</b>	<b>Management Response Status (end 2015)</b>	<b>Evaluation Manager</b>
UNICEF's Work Preventing and Responding to Violence against Children (VAC)	2015	2015/001	Evaluation	Yes	Child Violence	In-progress	<b>Krishna Belbase</b> Tina Tordjman-Nebe
Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA)	2015	2015/003	Evaluation	Yes	Education, Peacebuilding programming	Completed	<b>Kathleen Letshabo</b>
Cash Transfer as a Social Protection Intervention: Evidence from UNICEF Evaluations 2010 – 2014	2015	2015/004	Evaluation Synthesis	Yes	Meta-Synthesis	Completed	<b>Samuel Bickel</b> Tina Tordjman-Nebe
Joint Evaluation of Renewed Efforts against Child Hunger (REACH) led by WFP Evaluation Office	2015	2015/006	Evaluation (Joint)	Yes	REACH (Child Hunger)	In progress	<b>Krishna Belbase</b>
Evaluability Assessment of UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2014 – 2017	2015	2015/007	Evaluation	Yes	Institutional Effectiveness	Completed	<b>Mathew Varghese</b> Laura Olsen Laurence Reichel