



Briefing Note

Enhanced Programming and Results through Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MoRES)

I) What is MoRES?

The Monitoring Results for Equity Systems was developed in 2010 as part of UNICEF's refocus on equity to ensure that UNICEF is as effective as possible in the protection and promotion of children's rights. MoRES builds on the existing human rights based approach to programming and is intended to enhance and sharpen country programmes of cooperation for accelerated results for the most disadvantaged children.

In particular, MoRES is based on a determinant framework to identify barriers, bottlenecks and enabling factors which either constrain or advance the achievement of desired outcomes for disadvantaged children. MoRES emphasizes strengthening the capacity of government and partners to regularly monitor¹ intermediate outcomes (between outputs and higher level outcomes/impact) to enable more effective programme implementation and timely course corrections in plans and strategies at all levels.

Initial experience from the field indicates that MoRES is being applied differently in different contexts with its application varying from country to country and even within a country.

In high to medium natural disaster/conflict emergency-risk exposure, the application of MoRES can help to identify how and where emergencies interact with equity gaps and key determinants. In on-going **humanitarian situations**, MoRES is adapted to reflect the necessary higher frequency monitoring of a narrower scope of priority needs based on the Core Commitments to Children (CCCs) in Humanitarian Action.

MoRES Determinants Framework

I) Enabling Environment

- 1) Societal norms
- 2) Policy/legal framework
- 3) Budget/expenditure
- 4) Institutional management/coordination

II) Supply

- 5) Availability of essential commodities/inputs
- 6) Availability of adequately staffed services, facilities and information

III) Demand

- 7) Financial access
- 8) Social and cultural practices and beliefs
- 9) Continuity of use

IV) Quality

- 10) Quality of services and goods

II) MoRES within UNICEF's Programme Cycle

MoRES draws particular attention to the value of strengthening and increasing the frequency of outcome monitoring (known by UNICEF as 'level three') and introducing 'feedback loops' from outcome monitoring to update situation analyses, plans and actions on a more frequent basis.

¹ (emerging trend is every six months to a year)

UNICEF's basic programming cycle is described below, including how levels one, two and four have become more responsive to insights from MoRES.

1) **Level One: situation analysis, strategic planning and programme development**

This level is about strengthening situation analysis, strategic planning and programme development with an increased emphasis on identifying and addressing inequities that prevent disadvantaged children from accessing adequate services for their survival, growth and development.

Level one consists of:

- identifying key deprivations
- identifying groups among whom and areas where these deprivations persists
- identifying high impact interventions required to mitigate these deprivations
- identifying and analysing system wide bottlenecks and barriers to achieve desired outcomes
- prioritising programme responses to remove identified bottlenecks and barriers
- reflecting them in the programme results matrix

In countries with high to medium natural disaster/conflict emergency-risk exposure, the analysis should identify where and how emergency risk exposure interacts with equity gaps and key determinants. In actual humanitarian situations, inter agency needs assessment will help refine responses, both identifying challenges and focusing on the fastest changing determinants (typically supply and management and coordination).

2) **Level Two: monitoring agency specific programme implementation**

This level focuses on agency specific contribution (s) to the overall removal of bottlenecks and barriers through monitoring of agency specific inputs and activities. Supplementary analysis will be needed to understand the contribution and leveraging of agency inputs in relation to partner resources for the achievement of overall results.

3) **Level Three: periodic decentralized/disaggregated monitoring of intermediate outcomes**

This level is about periodic decentralized/disaggregated monitoring to assess progress (or lack thereof) in reducing bottlenecks and barriers in achieving results for disadvantaged children. Level three is the crucial link between routine monitoring of inputs and outputs as a part of development programmes, and monitoring of high level outcomes/impact every three to five years (at present there is a lack of synchronicity between these two processes and the former does not provide sufficient and timely information to explain why the latter is not achieved).

Guided by and building upon the exercise conducted in 'level one', monitoring at this level consists of:

- determining what childhood deprivation (s) and which affected groups to monitor (at local levels)
- selecting priority interventions to monitor
- defining indicators and information sources building on and strengthening existing systems and using innovative technology
- regularly identifying and analysing bottlenecks and barriers at local levels (keeping in mind that bottlenecks and barriers are relative and at any given point in time represent the most constraining factor (s) in achieving desired outcomes)

- based on the results and analyses, identifying and implementing corrective actions for programme management as well as adjusting policies, strategies and plans.

In humanitarian situations, MoRES level three monitoring is adapted to include more frequent and appropriate systematic, qualitative field monitoring based on the CCCs.

4) **Level Four: monitoring final outcomes and impact**

This level is about rigorous monitoring of final outcomes and impact, for example, through the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys, Demographic Health Surveys and other tools to track overall progress towards development goals. In the context of MoRES, monitoring at this level plays an essential role in validating results from 'level three' monitoring and progress towards reducing childhood deprivations. In humanitarian situations, 'level four' monitoring is at a higher frequency and may include real time evaluations or outcome and impact surveys following a response. The further elaboration of 'level four' analysis will link to the processes of evaluations and research.

III) **Key Considerations for the Application of MoRES**

MoRES has been applied in over thirty countries thus far. Initial experience gathered from these countries highlight the critical importance of and the need for broad partnership, innovation and flexibility in the application of MoRES.

Flexibility – There cannot be a one size fits all rule for the application of MoRES. Entry points for rolling out MoRES have been variable and have often depended on timing of key national, sectoral, agency specific and other relevant processes, allowing for sufficient flexibility and tailoring to different country contexts and different technical programs. In Togo, for example, 'level three' monitoring was introduced in the context of the national health sector development process whereas in Nepal, the timing of MoRES was opportune with regards to the finalization of UNICEF's country programme action plan.

Partnership - MoRES is about achieving results for children and requires joint collaboration from a wide range of partners - National Governments, UN Country Teams and other multilateral actors, bilateral agencies, and civil society organizations - at all levels for long-term sustainability. In Nicaragua, for example, the National Government is taking a leading role in the implementation of 'level three' monitoring. While Government leadership and buy-in are crucial, meaningful engagement of key partners (each with their own comparative advantage) is equally important. Even though investment in partner buy-in and engagement may be high during the initial phases, sustainability and going to scale will not be possible without partners.

Innovation - MoRES lends itself to the use of innovative new technology not only for monitoring but also for improved information flow and for the facilitation of corrective actions at all levels. In Nigeria, for example, decentralized monitoring has been implemented using a mobile phone based platform called Rapid SMS to identify birth registration disparities among various centres in real time and facilitate prompt action and response.