Evaluation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan

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Informal briefing – 19 June 2020
Item 8 - Evaluation of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan
Reference document: E/ICEF/2020/14
Background: Gender Action Plan (GAP)


GAP guides integration of gender equality into UNICEF policies, programmes and operations.

Adapts twin-track approach:
- Gender equality mainstreaming, architecture and corporate system.
- Integrate gender equality in targeted programme areas.
GAP Evaluation: Objectives

1. First corporate gender evaluation in over 10 years.

Evidence-based approach:
- 500+ documents
- 360+ interviews conducted
- 32 programme countries
- Comprehensive internal processes
- Highly consultative

Examine the quality, implementation and results of GAPs.

Improve accountability, generate evidence to strengthen gender equality in programmes and operations.

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1. GAP as a corporate strategy
   - Well aligned to relevant normative frameworks.
   - Adopts a programme delivery approach.
   - However, lacks elements of a robust corporate instrument - lacking aspiration, clear concepts, or higher level strategies.

2. Partnership
   - UNICEF is an active global partner and private partnerships are growing.
   - At country level, UNICEF could take more proactive role where greater and stronger capacity is present.

3. Performance monitoring and accountability
   - No clear responsibilities among managers and non-gender staff.
   - Methodological issues with tagging and gender equality marker.
Finding: Architecture and capacity building

4. Architecture and capacity building

• Significant efforts and resources allocated to building the gender architecture.
• However, capacity development is limited and leadership approach has not promoted mainstreaming at scale.

Number of UNICEF Gender Dedicated Staff 2014-2018

Source: GAP Annual Reporting 2014-2019
GAP Evaluation: Findings

5. Resources

- Programme expenditure: approaching target was 14.1 per cent out of 15 per cent.
- Non-core resources: largely dedicated to specific targeted initiatives particularly child marriage and secondary education for adolescent girls.
- Non-core resources: do not provide UNICEF with flexible financing for mainstreaming.

6. Programming

- Evidence was observed on progress within GAP targeted priorities, and use of innovative approaches.
- There was no consistent evidence on gender transformative mainstreaming and integrated programming.
- No consistent evidence on mainstreaming in humanitarian action, despite representing more than half of UNICEF corporate spending annually.
Conclusions

Organizational framework

The GAP provided gender architecture, resources for targeted priorities. However, it did not provide adequate accountabilities as a policy does or timebound actions as in a plan.

Pragmatic approach

The GAP approach spoke to the UNICEF operating model, increasing the focus on targeted priorities, but with limited integration of gender equality into the core programmatic work, including humanitarian response.

Programme progress

Innovative approaches have significantly evolved. However, mainstreaming efforts have been uneven.

Show stronger coordination capacity

In countries where UNICEF has stronger capacity, the organization should work more closely within UNCTs to support national partners. UNICEF should show stronger coordination capacity at a country level in the context of its role within UNCTs.
Recommendations

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Prepare a revised corporate policy architecture 2022–2025

Revise the gender policy in line with UNICEF status (world’s children agency), Beijing Declaration and SDGs - including defined accountabilities, a robust results framework, a strategy for execution, etc.

Support gender policy’s phased institutional strengthening process

Support comprehensive implementation of policy, with clear links to institutional change - architecture, partnerships,

Improve gender equality integration in HQ and multisectoral programming

Integrate gender transformative initiatives into core programming areas, including humanitarian action, capacity strengthening of external partners, etc.

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Embed gender equality into country/regional planning and programming

Require integration of gender into country/regional programme documents and inter-agency system priorities.

‘Bring gender home’: build gender capacities from a values-based perspective

Undertake broad-based training across all corners of the organization (equality awareness and technical competence).

Ensure leadership and embed accountabilities for ownership

Articulate accountability and recognition systems for gender equality results and improve Performance Management.

Reposition the corporate gender unit for greater influence and oversight

Gender oversight function, directly reporting to programmes and management functions through matrix arrangements.

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Gender mainstreaming critical as evaluation plans are being adapted: Multidimensionality of crisis

Examples:
South Asia region pursuing gender review of COVID-19 response.