

**The United Nations Children's Fund  
(UNICEF): Review of Development  
Effectiveness, 2012-2015**

# Review Background

- The report present the results of the second review of effectiveness of developmental and humanitarian programming supported by UNICEF.
- The methodology used for both reviews (2012 and 2016) were developed by the OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation.
- The present review is based on the content of evaluation reports published by UNICEF between January 2012 and December 2015.

# Purpose

This report responds to two simple questions:

- ✓ how effective is UNICEF?
- ✓ And how do we know?

The review also seeks to:

- **Inform development effectiveness decisions** on issues such as relevance, efficiency, effectiveness of UNICEF.
- Generate a body of credible information on a common set of criteria that provide insight into the development effectiveness of UNICEF.
- Inform decision's on issues such as results-based management (RBM) systems.

# Approach and Methodology

- The Review was conducted through a systematic synthesis of information from a selected sample of evaluations published by UNICEF from 2012 to 2015.
- 66 evaluation reports were identified for systematic analysis, rating and coding of evaluation findings during the Review.
- Each evaluation report was reviewed to assess the findings it reported against the following six key development effectiveness criteria:
  - ✓ Relevance of the Intervention
  - ✓ The Achievement of Humanitarian and Development Objectives
  - ✓ Cross Cutting Themes (Promoting Gender Equality and Equity)
  - ✓ Sustainability of Results and Benefits
  - ✓ Efficiency
  - ✓ Using Evaluation and Monitoring to Improve Effectiveness.

# Findings and Conclusions

## Objectives Achievement

- The Review finds that UNICEF-supported programmes evaluated from 2012 to 2015 have generally been successful in attaining their stated objectives.
- The Review also noted that UNICEF has been successful in its upstream work in support of policy and strategy development.
- Some programmes were not successful in reaching their stated objectives because of weak programme design, especially due to the absence of well-designed and clear theories of change.

# Findings and Conclusions

## Relevance

- UNICEF programming remains highly relevant and that UNICEF-supported projects and programmes align well with national development priorities.
- The Review identifies potential for improvements in the relevance of UNICEF programming through greater engagement with key stakeholders and through better needs assessment.

# Findings and Conclusions

## Promoting Gender Equality

- UNICEF's published evaluations were much more likely to address issues of gender equality in the period under review.
- The review finds that UNICEF-supported programmes fail to adequately address gender equality.
- The most common reason given in evaluation reports is the absence of a gender perspective and/or the non-application of gender analysis during programme design and delivery.

# Findings and Conclusions

## Equity

- UNICEF evaluations published from 2012 to 2015 provide a strong indication that the evaluation function has responded appropriately to the re-focus on equity which began in 2010.
- Results on UNICEF programme effectiveness in improving equity are strongly positive. It has become clear from the Review, that future efforts to effectively address equity requires UNICEF and its partners to clearly identify the disadvantaged as a target group and to identify the barriers which impede their access to services.

# Findings and Conclusions

## Sustainability

- UNICEF has improved the level of attention paid to issues of sustainability.
- *However*, sustainability in terms of benefits flowing after programme completion remains a major challenge to most of the programmes. The Review points directly to the necessity for projects and programmes to plan for financial and programme sustainability.

## Efficiency

- The majority of UNICEF programmes have been efficient in controlling costs and using resources to achieve objectives on time.
- However, the Review points to the need for continuous attention to the cost- and resource-efficiency of UNICEF-supported programmes. They also highlight the need to strengthen systems and processes for monitoring programme costs and results in order to manage for efficiency.

# Findings and Conclusions

## Monitoring and Results-Based Management for Improved Effectiveness

- UNICEF has made substantial efforts to improve and strengthen monitoring systems and the use of results-based management (RBM) methods since 2012, this has not resulted in recognizable improvements.
- This indicates that effectively strengthening monitoring and RBM systems remains a serious challenge for UNICEF.
- Strengthening results monitoring, reporting and management at UNICEF requires a range of measures including capacity development for UNICEF staff and for implementing partners, as well as establishment of meaningful programme targets and monitoring systems. The mandate of the recently established Field Results Group responds directly to these challenges.

# Findings and Conclusions

## Evaluation for Improved Effectiveness

- The review noted continuing improvements in UNICEF's use of evaluation as a function which can contribute to increasing the effectiveness of supported programmes.
- However, there remains a need to ensure wider coverage and a systematic approach to setting priorities for programmes and projects to be evaluated so that the most relevant programmes are the subject of regular high quality evaluations.

# Findings and Conclusions

## Innovation

- UNICEF has made progress in fostering a commitment to innovation, including a willingness to experiment with different models of programme support and service delivery and to use emerging technologies in innovative ways.
- However, there are also indications that the emphasis on innovation can be strengthened by developing a clear definition of innovative programming and focusing greater attention to programming innovations during the design of programmes and services. There is also scope for greater emphasis on documentation and taking proven innovations to scale.

# Recommendations

1. Strengthen the capacity of UNICEF and its partners in order to improve programme designs based on a strong theory of change.
2. More consistently apply gender analysis methods and incorporate a gender perspective into programme design and during all programming stages.
3. More clearly define and identify target groups of disadvantaged women and children in all UNICEF supported programmes and clarify the disproportional benefits the programme will bring to the target group.
4. More consistently and effectively address programme and financial sustainability in the design of country programmes and strategies.
5. Continue, and even increase efforts to improve the efficiency of UNICEF supported programmes.

# Recommendations

6. Improve the selection of programmes for evaluation at UNICEF in order to ensure higher levels of programme coverage and introduce more systematic decision making on priorities.
7. Continue and intensify efforts to strengthen results monitoring, reporting and management systems.
8. Develop and promote a more specific definition of innovation in UNICEF programming, one which encompasses programmatic as well as technology-based innovation.

Questions?