

# Annual Report on the evaluation function 2015

Evaluation Office UNICEF

Presentation to informal briefing for the  
UNICEF Executive Board

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# Overview

This report presents information on the following:

- evaluation efforts at the global level, especially inter-agency activities within the United Nations system;
- the performance of the evaluation function within UNICEF itself, as measured against a set of 6 key indicators;
- observations on the human and financial resources allocated to evaluation;
- how evaluations heighten UNICEF's influence in decision-making, learning, and policy advocacy

# Purpose

Evaluation at UNICEF promotes organizational learning, accountability and transparency, with a view to strengthening performance and delivering better outcomes for children.

The purpose of this report is to describe the status and performance of UNICEF's evaluation function in 2015.

# Governance of the evaluation function

In 2015:

- The Evaluation Office presented to the Executive Board four evaluation reports, each accompanied by a management response
- The Plan for Global Thematic Evaluations 2014-2017 was revised through stakeholder consultation, and accepted at the 2/16 Board
- Steady improvement in evaluation quality was noted by the external Audit Advisory Committee

# Evaluation coherence within the UN system

UNICEF supported evaluation coherence through:

1. Support to national governments to develop evaluation policies and frameworks - as encouraged through the first ever UNGA Resolution on evaluation (2014).
2. United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Evaluation Week – when the Secretary-General affirmed his commitment to evaluation in support of the SDG agenda.
3. Support to establishment of UNEG Humanitarian Evaluation Interest Group.
4. Joint evaluations completed:
  - REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition)
  - Inter-agency evaluations of responses to the conflicts in South Sudan and in the Central African Republic

# UNICEF support for global level collaboration

UNICEF participation in global evaluation networks:

- EvalPartners:
  - Launched International Year of Evaluation 2015: a year of evaluation activities around the globe culminating in a global EvalPartners Forum in Nepal that approved a Global Evaluation Agenda 2016-2020.
  - Supported the launch of new evaluation networks including EvalSDGs, EvalGender+, EvalYouth, and EvalIndigenous
  - Supported the launch of an evaluation e-learning course in Arabic
- ALNAP:
  - Global implementation of a joint e-learning programme on evaluation of humanitarian action, matched by a dedicated effort within UNICEF on the same theme



## **UNICEF evaluation function: performance and results**

# External reviews of evaluation function performance management systems

## The Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS)

- Relevance was confirmed
- Impacts are seen in evaluation quality and corporate adoption.
- Cost-efficiency was ranked high.
- Improvements were proposed in the rating tools, guidance, inclusiveness of studies and reviews, and dissemination.

## The Management Response System (MR)

- Supports planning, decision-taking, accountability and transparency.
- Improvements are needed in capturing all actions, supporting learning goals, and offering evidence of actions taken.

# The evaluation function in UNICEF: performance and results

- Indicator 1: Coverage of evaluations completed
- Indicator 2: Topical distribution
- Indicator 3: Types of evaluations conducted
- Indicator 4: Quality of evaluation reports
- Indicator 5: Use of evaluation, including management responses
- Indicator 6: Evaluation expenditure

# Indicator 1: Evaluation coverage

- In 2014, UNICEF offices completed and submitted 80 evaluation reports. This was an all time low value. The total submitted had never been less than 100 in any prior year.
- The number submitted in 2015 rose to 91.
- 76% of countries have completed at least one evaluation report in the 3 year period 2013-2015, leaving 24% (32 countries) without evaluation coverage.

## Indicator 2: Topical distribution trends from 2010

- Sector specific evaluations are 2/3 of total, about the same percentage as the 2010 baseline
- Remaining 1/3 are distributed across the following:
  - multi-sector evaluations (16%),
  - cross-cutting themes such as gender (9%) and
  - organizational performance or other themes (9%)
- Variations by sector occur year by year. 2014 saw a very high percentage of Education evaluations (32%) and a continuation of very low Child Protection (6%) and HIV-AIDS coverage (4%).
- Health/Nutrition/WASH is constant across years at about 25%

## Indicator 3: Types of evaluations conducted

- The number of output level evaluations continues at a low level (15%). This is good, as evaluations should focus on the higher stages of the results chain.
- Impact level (18%) and outcome level (68%) combined are at desired high levels. Output level evaluations have been decreasing recently, perhaps as a result of the emphasis on level 3 of the MORES approach.
- A steady 3/4 of the evaluations look at summative (end) effects. Formative evaluations have declined since 2010, perhaps being supplanted by improved review moments and better field monitoring.

## Indicator 4a: Quality of UNICEF evaluations

Independent external quality rating	2009	2012	2014
	%	%	%
Confident to act (good or excellent)	36	62	74
Almost confident to act (almost satisfactory)	34	30	23
Poor	30	8	3

Improved quality is being sustained; recent reviews have identified opportunities for further improvement.

## Indicator 4b: Quality of UNICEF evaluations

Corporate emphases: issues specifically examined within the overall ratings	Percentage of reports attaining a 'good' or 'excellent' rating		
	2010	2012	2014
Appropriate incorporation of human rights, gender and equity concerns	18	44	60
Engagement of all stakeholders in ways suited to their capacities and interests	40	48	66
Ethical issues and safeguards described	10	32	49

Performance in areas of recent weakness is improving – but still has further to go.

## Indicator 5: Use of evaluation, including management responses

Submission of management responses to the Global Tracking System:

- 2009 (baseline): 10%
- 2012: 90%
- 2014: 81%

Management response commitments “completed or ongoing”:

- 2010-2013 mean: 86% after 2 years
- 2014: 79% after 1 year

Actual completion rate (i.e. excluding “ongoing”) after 2 years averages 55%. This represents weak performance.

## Indicator 6: Corporate spending on evaluation

By end December 2015, **\$29.2 million** was spent or committed to be spent on evaluation, within a corporate programme budget of \$4.5 billion

Corporate spending on evaluation as a percentage of programme expenditure was therefore **0.65%**.

This represents a 100% increase over baseline figures for the years 2007-2010.

UNICEF is advancing toward the **1% target** set out in the revised evaluation policy - but is not there yet.

# The evaluation function in UNICEF: human resources

- There are 279 posts at all levels with Evaluation in the job title.
- At level 3 or higher, there are 184 posts with Evaluation in the job title. This is a historic high. The number has more than doubled since 2008.
- 106 offices (80%) have a post with Evaluation in the job title
- Offices in crisis-affected countries are big investors in additional capacity
- 74% of posts are evaluation only or with 1 extra function
- Gender balance 50%-50% among international professionals
- More sectoral specialists have been hired in the HQ Evaluation Office

## Human Resources in Evaluation: some causes for concern

- 20% of offices lack dedicated posts
- 26% of posts combine evaluation with 2 other functions
- Recent time use surveys in 2 regions reveal Evaluation duties comprise just 10% of M&E officers time.



**Achieving influence through the use of evaluations**

# Achieving influence through the use of evaluations

Evaluation results are of limited value unless they are accepted and understood by UNICEF partners and beneficiaries, are based on quality evaluation work accompanied by intelligent recommendations, and lead to a management response that is acted upon in a comprehensive and timely way.

The Executive Board has asked for increased attention to these matters.

The challenge is to measure and monitor such influence on a comprehensive and consistent basis. Further work is required to look at the role and influence of evaluation, especially in the changing development context under Agenda 2030.

But there is some clear evidence of influence and uptake...

# Exemplary use of evaluations: 2014-2015

Influence	Example
UNICEF programming	Enhancing focus on climate change (Bangladesh)
Partner programming	Education, Judiciary, Policy convergence to support child protection needs (India)
Changing policies/ strategies	Adolescent programming, joint with UNRWA (Palestinian refugees)
Scaling-up	Institutionalizing bi-lingual education (Vietnam)
Highlighting equity	Mapping of stakeholder 'champions' raised visibility of the equity agenda in government on behalf of adolescents, girls, children with disabilities, migrants, stateless children (Malaysia)

# Looking Ahead

1. UN system and global level evaluation partners will see greater collaboration.
2. The completed and pending reviews of the evaluation function will lead to a renewed vision and contribution within the design of the next UNICEF Strategic Plan. The SDG agenda provides a clear but challenging horizon.
3. Further performance improvement is needed against the KPIs for Coverage, Quality of selected emphases (human rights/gender/equity, participation, ethics); and Management Response completion;
4. The staff members performing evaluation work need support to enhance their skills and adequate time to devote to evaluation tasks.
5. Solutions will be sought to bolster offices with insufficient staff capacity.
6. Offices will be guided on means to achieve greater influence through the use of evaluations they have commissioned.



**Thank you for your attention!**