Harnessing Knowledge to Achieve Results for Children

’Informal’ dialogue with UNICEF Executive Board members  Nov 30th 2011

Gordon Alexander, Director Office of Research
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2 Goals

• Apply available knowledge to accelerate and improve results for children over the coming 2-3 years - focus on achieving the MDGs with equity

• Establish a UNICEF-wide capacity to stay on top of evolving knowledge
A changing world

Strategic Orientation:
- Evidence Base
- Country Focus
- Linkages Across Units

GLOBAL

Generating Evidence

Utilizing for better results

Identifying Gaps & Setting Evaluation/Research Priorities

Brokering & Convening

Assessing & Synthesizing

Sharing & Dissemination

LOCAL

TRANSITION

(Demographic, epidemiological, political, urbanisation, etc.)
New knowledge sources and destinations....
A unique comparative advantage

- Access to local and global knowledge
- Ability to gather evidence and apply knowledge
- Convening and ‘brokering power’
- Ability to focus on the whole child
- High credibility and legitimacy
3 Strategic Priorities

• Build the evidence base for results for children
• Put countries at the centre of knowledge gathering and use
• Strengthen linkages between knowledge functions, topics and levels of the organizations
Strengthening the evidence base for results

• Modeling cost-effectiveness
• Greater focus on ‘systems’
• Better understanding of root causes of inequity
• Drawing on the ‘life-course’ framework
Putting countries at the centre as a primary source and main end-users of knowledge

- Common monitoring framework – the ‘cup’
- Scaling up effective interventions (backed by implementation research)
- Strengthening research at country level
- An ‘observatory’ of trends in the situation of children
Strengthening linkages between knowledge functions, themes and levels of the organization

- A ‘strategic agenda for knowledge and research’
- Closer ties between Research and Evaluation
- Linkages between Programme, Policy, Research and Advocacy
Making it happen: structures, processes and actions

Organizational Actions:
- Setting priorities
- New Office of Research
- Shifting Incentives
- Business Models
- Ensuring Resources
Setting priorities

• Global Management & Regional Management Team meetings
• A ‘cross divisional’ ideas group
• High-level Research Advisory Panel
• Focal points in ROs and COs
The new Office of Research – as catalyst and standard setter

- Small group – sharp focus on priorities and leverage
- IRC continues as a ‘laboratory of ideas’, carrying out high quality ‘strategic’ research on children
- New quality assurance standards for research COs/ROs /HQs
But also a hub and centre of diffusion for the latest ideas and evidence

• Bridge new developments in policy and research in industrialised countries, LDCs and MICs
• A ‘one–stop-shop’ for consolidated evidence relevant to children
• Dedicated OoR site for web-based media and portals
• Analytical work and convening role to shape the future of UNICEF beyond 2015
OoR’s Structure

‘IRC’

Director of Research

Associate Director
Strategic Research

- Economic & Social Policy
- Child Protection/Child Rights
- Operations

Associate Director
Applied Research
Knowledge Management

- Planning
- Knowledge Management
- Capacity Building
- Communications
Lastly, a bridge between research policy and practice
Changing the paradigm. Recognizing research as central to the backbone of the country-level programming.
Resourcing while recognising competing demands….

- An indicative target of expenditure for research
- Exploring an ‘Innovation Fund’ for programming and research
- Annual meeting with donors and National Committees to share insights into research on children
Next steps

• Further dialogue to get ownership from all stakeholders

• A Plan of Action with targets, resources and timelines.

• Inputs into preparation of new MTSP