

# Evaluation of UNICEF's Upstream Work in Basic Education & Gender Equality 2003-2012

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MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

JANUARY 2015

## Summary:

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Welcome the findings of this evaluation - relevant for many areas of UNICEF's work.

Upstream work has the potential to leverage greater and more sustainable results, including for the most marginalized children.

UNICEF's capacity to integrate upstream and downstream work is a comparative advantage.

Agree that there is more that can be done to build on progress to date which will support the implementation of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.

This includes:

- Developing how we monitor upstream work and evaluate its impact;
- Considering how we manage pooled funds, and make better use of government systems;
- Building and supporting high level technical leadership skills and capacity.

# Management response - Overview

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## **Overall response:**

- The evaluation confirms that UNICEF can and does play a critical role at global, regional and national levels in upstream work, and that this complements and adds value to the organization's downstream work on the ground. Further work is required to improve skill sets, financial instruments and ability to monitor results from upstream work.

## **Planned use of evaluation:**

- The evaluation will be used to steer ongoing efforts to integrate upstream and downstream work to support action in countries, and to strengthen systems for monitoring the scale and impact of upstream work in the education sector and beyond, enabling UNICEF to take evidence-based decisions on the allocation of resources to this work.

## RECOMMENDATION 1:

Develop an organization-wide framework for defining, targeting, measuring and reporting on the results of upstream work.

### **Partially accepted**

- Management believes its Strategic Plan (SP) provides the appropriate framework for supporting the achievement of upstream results. UNICEF has developed a toolkit as part of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) rollout which provides a framework for defining, targeting, measuring and reporting on activities related to enhancing the enabling environment to support the achievement of results.

### **Actions Planned:**

1. Include resources on defining, targeting, achieving, measuring and reporting on upstream results in several SP-related tools and products. (By June 2015)

## RECOMMENDATION 2:

Ensure that the Generic Intervention Codes in the new coding system comprehensively and clearly denote and are linked to upstream work.

 **Accepted**

### Actions Planned:

1. Provide quality assurance over the application of Generic Intervention Codes to the implementation of upstream work at all levels of UNICEF. (Quarterly)
2. On the basis of monitoring reports make adjustments to UNICEF's program coding systems to reflect the dimensions of the upstream work. (By 1st Quarter 2016)

## RECOMMENDATION 3:

Develop mechanisms to manage pooled or third-party funds in ways that are more aid-effective, including the use of country systems.

### Partially accepted

- UNICEF agrees to explore options for greater use of partner country's existing financial systems rather than imposing parallel systems that may entail additional transaction costs. This work will begin with an independent review of experience in managing pooled funds. The results of the review will be used to draft guidance on managing pooled funds, including a risk management tool.

### Actions Planned:

1. Conduct an independent review. (By Q2, 2015)
2. Development of guidance note/policy on managing pooled funds. (By Q4, 2015)

## RECOMMENDATION 4:

Consider requesting a global formative evaluation of capacity building/system strengthening work so as to build its understanding of what works when and where.

 **Accepted**

### Actions Planned:

1. Education will be included as a focus area in a planned evaluation in 2015 of Support for National Capacity Development. (By Q1, 2016)

## RECOMMENDATION 5:

Expand efforts to build country education team capacity for upstream work. This has implications at the global, regional and country levels.

 **Accepted**

### Actions Planned:

1. Revise generic Job Description for Country Office Education Chiefs to have a central focus on upstream work. (Completed Aug 2014)
2. Brief Regional Representatives and Deputy Representatives on the value and importance of ensuring that key posts do not fall vacant at the same time, and ensuring that posts are open to national staff. (Ongoing)
3. Continue to offer learning opportunities for key staff on upstream work in education. (Ongoing)
4. Disseminate Education Sector Analysis Guidelines. (Completed Sept 2014)
5. Continue to enhance existing Education Teams site and its use as a resource for knowledge uptake and capacity development. (Ongoing)
6. Brief Country Representatives and Education Chiefs on the importance of budgeting time and money explicitly to upstream work, and to strengthen cross-sectoral linkages. (Ongoing)

## RECOMMENDATION 6:

UNICEF Education should continue to seek the right balance between upstream and downstream work: country offices and education teams should target and link upstream and downstream work appropriately, depending on their circumstances.

 **Accepted**

### Actions Planned:

1. Both upstream and downstream work are included in UNICEF's Strategic Plan. (Completed June 2014)
2. Guidance to Regional Offices and Country Offices to allocate appropriate resources to both upstream and downstream work. (Ongoing)