

# Annual Report on the evaluation function 2014

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;
- measures being taken to strengthen the evaluation function within UNICEF, with an emphasis on the regional level

# 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 2014.

# Governance of the evaluation function

In 2014:

- For the first time, the Annual Report on the evaluation function was accompanied by a management perspective
- Executive Board endorsed the Plan for Global Thematic Evaluations 2014-2017
- Standard Operating Procedures were introduced to expedite preparation of management responses to global thematic evaluations
- UN Joint Inspection Unit reviewed the UNICEF evaluation function as part of a review of evaluation functions across UN entities

# JIU report on evaluation in the UN system

- ! The review assessed 28 UN entities. It concluded that the evaluation function needs to be strengthened across all UN agencies, especially regarding the use of evaluation evidence.
  
- ✓ Nevertheless, UNICEF was found to have a mature and high-performing evaluation function that is well-supported at decentralized levels:
  - UNICEF rated in Cluster 1: i.e. most of the expected systems and policies required for an effective central evaluation function are in place and well institutionalized
  - UNICEF also found to have pertinent standards and systems for decentralized evaluation
  - UNICEF one of only three agencies actively supporting national evaluation capacity development

# Evaluation coherence within the UN system

1. **Independent System Wide Evaluation (ISWE)**, mandated by the QCPR: UNICEF actively supported the ISWE initiative and preparations for two pilot evaluations
2. **First ever UNGA Resolution on evaluation**, inviting UN entities “to support, upon request, efforts to further strengthen the capacity of Member States for evaluation”
3. **United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)** stepped up advocacy and outreach. UNICEF led a well-received peer review of the WFP evaluation function
4. **Joint evaluations completed:**
  - Joint evaluation of joint gender programming
  - Inter-agency evaluation of the UN response to Typhoon Haiyan

# UNICEF support for global level collaboration

UNICEF participation in global evaluation networks:  
EvalPartners, ALNAP:

- EvalPartners: launched 2015 International Year of Evaluation: a year of evaluation activities around the globe
- ALNAP: joint development of an e-learning programme on evaluation of humanitarian action



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

# Improvements in performance measurement

- Expansion of the evaluation reports database to include research reports: now the Evaluation and Research Database
- Real time monitoring of evaluation system performance indicators now possible through VISION
- Piloting of software platform for planning and tracking all studies, research work and evaluations (PRIME)
- Introduction of costed evaluation plans linked to new Country Plan Documents

# 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 7: Corporate-level evaluations

# Indicator 1: coverage

- In 2013, UNICEF office completed and submitted 96 evaluation reports
- 75% of countries have completed at least one evaluation report in the past 3 years

## Indicator 2: Topical distribution

Topic	Baseline 2010 percentage	2012 percentage	2013 percentage
<b>Sector specific (by key results area of MTSP)</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>59</b>
Child survival and development	25	14	31
Education and gender	15	13	11
Child protection	15	8	11
HIV/AIDS	10	5	3
Policy advocacy and partnerships	1	1	1
<b>Programmes covering several sectors</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>28</b>
Cross-cutting themes	–	10	10
Organizational performance	–	6	3

## Indicator 3: Types of evaluations conducted

	2009	2012	2013
<b>By programmatic results level examined*</b>			
Output-level evaluations	33	18	8
Outcome-level evaluations	24	30	65
Impact-level evaluations	43	52	27
<b>By managerial intent*</b>			
Formative-level evaluations	45	24	29
Summative-level evaluations	55	76	71

## Indicator 4: Quality of UNICEF evaluations

	2009	2012	2013
<b>Quality rating</b>			
Confident to act (good or excellent)	36	62	69
Almost confident to act (almost satisfactory)	34	30	29
Poor	30	8	2

Corporate emphases: issues specifically examined within the overall ratings	Percentage of reports attaining a 'good' or 'excellent' rating		
	2010	2012	2013
Appropriate incorporation of human rights, gender and equity concerns	18	44	47
Engagement of all stakeholders in ways suited to their capacities and interests	40	48	42
Ethical issues and safeguards described	10	32	38

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

### Submission of management responses to the Global Tracking System:

- 2009 (baseline): 10%
- 2012: 90%
- 2013: 92%

### Implementation of management response commitments:

- 2010 (baseline): 62%
- 2012: 79%
- 2013: 80%

## Indicator 6: Corporate spending on evaluation

By end December 2014, **\$18.7 million** was spent or committed to be spent on evaluation, within a corporate programme budget of \$4.1 billion

Corporate spending on evaluation as a percentage of programme expenditure was therefore **0.5%**.

This represents a 50% increase over comparable figures for the years 2017-2010, but falls below the **1% target** set out in the revised evaluation policy

## Indicator 7: Corporate-level evaluations

Plan status	2012-2013		2014-2015	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Scheduled	14	–	12	-
Completed	7	50	0	0
Under implementation	1	7	6	50
Pending	0	0	5	42
Rescheduled	6	43	0	0
Cancelled	1	7	1	8

# Corporate evaluations completed in 2014

Evaluations completed in 2014:

- a) Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys;
- b) Formative evaluation of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES), including seven country case studies;
- c) Cluster lead agency role in humanitarian action
- d) Child protection in emergencies, including four country case studies;
- e) Community approaches to total sanitation;
- f) Emergency preparedness systems;
- g) Upstream work in the education sector, including four country case studies.

# Corporate Evaluations: Additional activities

- Real-time evaluation of the UNICEF response to Typhoon Haiyan
- Joint evaluation of the UN response to Typhoon Haiyan
- An evaluation synthesis paper on nutrition, presented to the Executive Board in September
- Preparatory activities evaluation of the UNICEF response to the crisis in Syria and in the Central African Republic
- Preparatory activities for joint interagency evaluations of the UN response to the emergencies in the Central African Republic and South Sudan
- Implementation of evaluations on preventing violence against children, education and peacebuilding, and an evaluability assessment of the Strategic Plan.

# Utilization of evaluation evidence

Several reports indicate the need to further improve use of evaluation evidence.

Some key constraints include:

- a) Weaknesses in formulating recommendations
- b) Lack of stakeholder engagement
- c) Communication gaps in preparing for effective management response and uptake
- d) Overload: linked to successive emergencies, multiple stakeholders and competing agendas, and changes in administration

Most of these issues can be addressed by UNICEF on the basis of concerted analysis and action.

# Conclusion

On the basis of the JIU assessment and internal indications, the evaluation function in UNICEF is operating well at each level and continues to improve year on year.

The Executive Board's sustained attention to evaluation has been a contributing factor, and UNICEF has responded to Board direction.

However, there remains room for improvement in terms of meeting UNICEF's own requirements, notably in the area of gender equality, in using and responding to evaluations and in meeting the expenditure target on evaluation. Action is in hand to address these issues and further improvement can be expected.

But just as UNICEF works jointly with many partners, so too collaboration in evaluation is needed to address the challenges emerging in the world beyond 2015.

## Draft decision

The Executive Board may wish to take note of the annual report and request UNICEF to further strengthen its evaluation system and use of evaluation results.



**Thank you for your attention!**