TOWARDS IMPROVED EMERGENCY RESPONSES

SYNTHESIS REPORT


Evaluation Office

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For further information, please contact:
Evaluation Office
United Nations Children's Fund
Three United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017
evalhelp@unicef.org

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Preface

Around the world, more than half a billion children live in countries affected by conflict and disasters. In too many parts of the world, children and young people have been caught up in emergencies that have put their lives and well-being at risk and, all too often, have taken those young lives. Children and their families have been swept from their homes, exposed to hunger and disease and left without the facilities and infrastructure needed to support their health and decent conditions of life. Conflicts have wiped away the gains made through decades of development effort and blocked the path towards future prosperity for millions of children, young people and their communities.

UNICEF plays a major role in the efforts of the international community to address humanitarian emergencies, working at all levels and with a wide range of partners. UNICEF expenditure on humanitarian assistance now exceeds $3 billion, constituting nearly half of the organization’s total expenditure. In recent years, UNICEF has worked hard to improve the support and services it provides to the children and communities affected by emergencies. These efforts intensified in 2010, when two major humanitarian disasters occurred: the extensive flooding in Pakistan, and the devastating earthquake in Haiti. These huge disasters served as a wake-up call for UNICEF, the United Nations and the wider humanitarian community, and prompted a major reconsideration of the approach to large-scale humanitarian relief. This led to the formulation of the global Transformative Agenda, which aims to strengthen leadership, accountability and coordination. Meanwhile, UNICEF took forward internal efforts to strengthen its capacity and approach through an initiative for Strengthening Humanitarian Action.

Evaluations have contributed to these efforts to improve and strengthen the response to emergencies. Evaluations have helped UNICEF to learn lessons and improve its capacity to respond quickly and effectively to emergencies. The present report presents a synthesis of findings from 30 UNICEF evaluations, drawing out lessons and conclusions intended to support further improvements in the organization’s approach and performance at a time when the world faces immense humanitarian challenges.

The report tells an encouraging story of progress and improvement. UNICEF is shown to have learned from experience and adapted its approach to become faster and more effective, while contributing to the wider reforms of the humanitarian system mentioned above. Important results have been achieved for children through work in key sectors and across many locations. However, several areas of weakness remain and the report draws conclusions and makes recommendations on key issues found to require attention.

This Synthesis Report draws on evaluations that were produced by UNICEF from 2010 to 2016. It begins with a description of UNICEF’s arrangements for humanitarian action, and their evolution since 2010. It then describes how evaluations have assessed humanitarian action, and presents the main findings from the synthesis work, including strengths and weaknesses, as well as factors that have supported or constrained performance. Finally, the report provides conclusions and lessons drawn from the evidence, followed by recommendations for the future. It follows up a similar synthesis exercise undertaken in 2013, which covered the period from 2008 to 2012, and it documents progress achieved since then.1

This Synthesis Report presents, in an annex, a synthesis of the large body of relevant reviews and other material generated over the same period. While these were not undertaken as formal evaluations, these programme reviews, lessons learned exercises and after-action reviews provide valuable insights and lessons.

On behalf of the Evaluation Office, I would like to thank Dr Julia Betts and Volker Hülis, who prepared the Synthesis Report and a summary report. The synthesis benefitted from the guidance of an advisory group, which was significantly involved throughout the process, including in the review of the analytical framework and of several drafts of the report. Chaired by Koorosh Raffii, Senior Evaluation Specialist in the Evaluation Office, this advisory group brought together UNICEF colleagues from several offices and included Kate Alley, Hamish Young, Cecilia Sanchez-Bodas, Stephen Arnaud, Genevieve Boutin, Iain Murray, Mads Oyen, Edward Addai and Inoussa Kabore. I would also like to thank my colleagues in the Evaluation Office who managed this work, namely Koorosh Raffii, Jane Mwangi and Laura Olsen.

It is our hope that this Synthesis Report will contribute to further improvements in UNICEF’s life-saving work in emergencies around the globe and, in particular, help efforts to enable children and young people to not only survive disaster and conflict but to recover and build happy and productive lives in better times.

Colin Kirk
Director, Evaluation Office
UNICEF

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## Contents

**Preface** .................................. i  
**Acronyms** ................................. iii  
**Executive summary** .................. iv  
   Recommendations ........................ v  
**Introduction** ............................. vi  
   1.1 Rationale and objectives ......... 1  
   1.2 Structure ........................... 1  
**UNICEF’s arrangements for humanitarian action**  2  
   2.1 The global humanitarian architecture .... 3  
   2.2 UNICEF humanitarian reform ........ 3  
**Evaluations of UNICEF’s humanitarian action: evidence base and methodology**  6  
   3.1 Evaluation coverage of UNICEF’s humanitarian action .................. 7  
   3.2 The evidence base for the Synthesis ...... 9  
   3.3 How the Synthesis was conducted (methodology) .................. 12  
   3.4 Density of evidence ................. 12  
   3.5 Limitations .......................... 13  
**Findings: UNICEF’s humanitarian action, 2010-2016** ........... 14  
   4.1 How relevant/appropriate were UNICEF’s interventions? ............ 15  
   4.2 Alignment with key principles and commitments .................. 18  
   4.3 How effective were UNICEF’s interventions? ..................... 19  
   4.4 How efficient were UNICEF’s interventions? .................... 21  
   4.5 How connected were UNICEF’s interventions? .................... 23  
   4.6 How coherent was UNICEF’s humanitarian action with the actions of other partners?  
      How well did partnerships work? ........ 26  
   4.7 How well did UNICEF integrate cross-cutting issues: equity, protection and AAP? ........ 29  
**Institutional factors affecting UNICEF’s humanitarian action** ............ 32  
   5.1 Preparedness .......................... 33  
   5.2 Regional-country office coordination ........ 34  
   5.3 Staffing and human resources .......... 34  
   5.4 Supply and logistics ................. 35  
   5.5 Results measuring and reporting ....... 36  
   5.6 Communications and advocacy ........ 37  
**Learning from humanitarian action** ............. 38  
   6.1 What learning has been generated? ... 39  
   6.2 What changes has learning created? ....... 40  
**Conclusions and lessons** .............. 42  
   7.1 Conclusions .......................... 43  
   7.2 Lessons ............................. 44  
**Recommendations** ........................ 46  
**Appendices** ............................. 50  
    Annex 1: Terms of Reference .......... 51  
    Annex 2: Methodology ................. 61  
    Annex 3: Bibliography .................. 66  
    Annex 4: Learning from Humanitarian Action  
       - A synthesis of non-evaluative UNICEF documents on humanitarian action  
       2010 to 2016 .......................... 67
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronyms</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAP</td>
<td>Accountability to Affected Populations</td>
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<td>C4D</td>
<td>Communication for Development</td>
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<td>CCC</td>
<td>Core Commitments for Children</td>
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<td>CEAP</td>
<td>Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure</td>
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<td>CEE/CIS</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
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<td>EAP</td>
<td>East Asia and the Pacific</td>
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<td>ESAR</td>
<td>Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
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<td>GEROS</td>
<td>Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System</td>
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<td>HPM</td>
<td>Humanitarian Performance Monitoring</td>
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<td>IAHE</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations</td>
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<td>IASC</td>
<td>Inter-Agency Standing Committee</td>
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<td>IHP</td>
<td>International Humanitarian Principles</td>
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<td>LAC</td>
<td>Latin America and Caribbean</td>
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<td>MENA</td>
<td>Middle East and North Africa</td>
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<td>MIRA</td>
<td>Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessments</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-governmental Organization</td>
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<td>OCHA</td>
<td>United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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<td>PBEA</td>
<td>Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy</td>
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<td>PCA</td>
<td>Programme Cooperation Agreements</td>
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<td>RRMP</td>
<td>Rapid Response to Movements of Population</td>
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<td>SA</td>
<td>South Asia</td>
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<td>SHA</td>
<td>Strengthening Humanitarian Action</td>
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<td>SMART</td>
<td>Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions</td>
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<td>SSOP</td>
<td>Simplified Standard Operations Procedures</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children's Fund</td>
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<td>WASH</td>
<td>Water, Sanitation and Hygiene</td>
</tr>
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<td>WCAR</td>
<td>West and Central Africa</td>
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Executive summary

Concurrent complex and protracted emergencies have made increasing numbers of children vulnerable. It is estimated that by 2018, half of the world’s poor will live in fragile situations.\(^2\) Faced with rapidly increasing needs, UNICEF’s humanitarian expenditure grew from just over $900 million in 2012 to $2.1 billion in 2015.\(^3\) This increase has intensified calls to support learning from, and accountability of, its humanitarian action and prompted UNICEF’s Evaluation Office to undertake this synthesis.

This report, which updates a similar exercise conducted in 2013, brings together the findings of 30 evaluations of humanitarian action published between 2010 and 2016. It asks three questions: how has UNICEF’s humanitarian action from 2010 to 2015 performed, and how has it improved over time? What factors have supported or constrained improvement? What can be learned, and what improvements made for the future?

**EVALUATION COVERAGE**

Between 2010 and 2016,\(^4\) UNICEF published 76 evaluations or evaluative documents that covered humanitarian action – from preparedness through response and recovery.\(^5\) The Synthesis found these evaluations covered diverse geographical regions, a range of emergency types and key sectors. However, the bulk of what are classified as Level 1 emergencies remains largely unevaluated and there were gaps in systematic evaluation coverage of the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) and the International Humanitarian Principles.

**EVIDENCE BASE AND METHODS**

From the 76 documents mentioned above, 30 evaluations of humanitarian action were carefully chosen based on set criteria and subsequently subjected to systematic review. The review applied an analytical framework to ensure consistent extraction of key findings.

**RELEVANCE**

Despite gaps in needs assessment, the majority of evaluations found UNICEF’s programme responses to be broadly aligned with humanitarian needs. However, there was evidence of opportunity-based rather than needs-based programming in emergencies. Programme strategies and designs were found to be appropriate in just under half of the evaluations that assessed country- or regional-level responses – though UNICEF showed willingness and ability to adapt, where necessary. UNICEF’s alignment with national priorities has been strong, where conditions permit.

**ALIGNMENT WITH HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS**

Only a third of the evaluations assessed UNICEF’s alignment with the CCCs. The majority reported difficulties in applying the CCCs systematically in different emergency types. The very few evaluations that looked at alignment with the International Humanitarian Principles raised dilemmas linked to the trade-offs needed to balance alignment with the priorities of governments or national authorities whilst meeting the needs of affected populations.

**EFFECTIVENESS**

Overall, the evaluations showed important results for children facing conflict and crisis. UNICEF’s objectives and output and outcome targets for the interventions were met or exceeded in half of the evaluations, with the remaining half achieving moderate or mixed performance. A key achievement of UNICEF’s humanitarian assistance has been the successful strengthening of national and local systems for emergency preparedness and response.

**EFFICIENCY**

The timeliness of UNICEF’s humanitarian action has benefited in recent years from Simplified Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) for Level 2 and 3 emergencies. These have enabled rapid deployment of staff, swift procurement and shortened administrative procedures, and have benefited UNICEF’s responses to sudden-onset emergencies. However, the timeliness of UNICEF responses has been mixed. Despite data limitations about cost-effectiveness, the majority of evaluations reported

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\(^3\) Source: UNICEF internal expenditure data.

\(^4\) The evaluation count of all reports published on www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/ was taken in November 2016. In addition, it includes the evaluation of the response to the Ebola emergency in West Africa in 2014/15, which at the time of writing was about to be published.

\(^5\) Of these 76 reports, 17 were inter-agency evaluations and three were commissioned by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
that the efficiency measures implemented by UNICEF delivered cost savings, or that the costs incurred were justified in the context.

CONNECTEDNESS
Evaluations found that UNICEF is still working to build clear links between humanitarian and development responses. UNICEF’s planning for transition and resilience has, at times, suffered external constraints, including a lack of external funding for such activities. Integrated programming across sectors remains a clear area of weakness in UNICEF humanitarian action over time; the UNICEF structure of distinct programme sections, mirroring the sectoral division of the CCCs, does not facilitate cross-sectoral links.

COHERENCE
Evaluations reported strong external coherence of UNICEF’s humanitarian action with joint response plans. Despite weaknesses in United Nations coordination mechanisms, almost all evaluations found UNICEF’s humanitarian action to be coherent with the actions of other partners working in the context and praised its cluster leadership, although there was a mixed record of operational coordination with partner United Nations agencies. Efforts to develop and maintain strong partnerships with key central government actors were noted as being particularly strong.

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES
The Synthesis found that equity approaches have not been consistently implemented in UNICEF’s humanitarian action. Less than half of the evaluations found equity concerns satisfactorily integrated into responses. There were clear gaps or weaknesses in UNICEF’s implementation of Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) commitments, although there was also evidence of gradual improvement in some areas. The evidence base on protection was limited.

RECOMMENDATIONS
1. More stringent requirements to evaluate
UNICEF has gathered a considerable body of evidence on its humanitarian action (76 evaluations since 2010). Its Evaluation Policy states that evaluations of humanitarian action will ‘usually be undertaken’. Yet despite a set of corporate triggers, coverage remains unsystematic and patchy – particularly of Level 1 emergencies.

2. Centralize needs in design
Evaluations found that UNICEF’s humanitarian action was often insufficiently grounded in needs assessments, even where these were feasible. Programme designs require clearer links to needs.

3. Build a culture of confidence in procedures
Given its highly decentralized nature, guidance and procedures issued ‘from the centre’ are only ever as influential as UNICEF’s country management and staff habits permit them to be. New protocols and procedures, such as the Level 2 and 3 SSOPs, need to be accompanied by capacity development and training to build a ‘risk-willing’ approach.

4. Intensify the approach to risk-informed programming within the localization agenda
UNICEF’s decentralized structure means that it benefits from a vast cadre of national staff and partners, which provide it with a core capability to prepare for humanitarian action from a localized viewpoint. Under Grand Bargain commitments, preparedness and risk identification should be approached from this perspective.

5. Revisit the CCCs
The CCCs in their current formulation do not reflect the changing nature of humanitarian crises, and promote siloed rather than integrated responses.

6. Accountability with flexibility
Performance monitoring of humanitarian action is a consistent challenge, yet the evaluations analysed here found considerable scope to improve UNICEF’s monitoring of its own performance in emergencies, in line with recent internal efforts to strengthen Humanitarian Performance Monitoring.6

7. Link programme integration to recovery
A more explicit and defined strategic overview within UNICEF’s humanitarian action is needed, which is firmly geared to resilience and transition goals. This should be linked to the revisited CCCs.

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6 A full review of the HPM approach in 2016, included in the synthesis of non-evaluative work, found similarly that HPM is often seen as being too rigid, often separate from existing monitoring and evaluation systems at the country level, and not always offering appropriate indicators. Its recommendations are presently being actioned by UNICEF.
Introduction
1.1 RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

The period 2010-2017 has seen unprecedented change in the humanitarian landscape. The advent of several concurrent major emergencies, along with their increasing complexity and protracted nature, has left vastly increased numbers of children in need of humanitarian assistance. From 66 million per year in the 1990s, in 2016, an estimated 535 million children – nearly a quarter of the world’s children – lived in countries affected by armed conflict, violence, disaster and chronic crises. By 2018, it is estimated that half the world’s poor will live in fragile situations.

At the same time, the global humanitarian system has undergone significant shifts. The international response to the 2010 Haiti earthquake exposed some serious fault lines, with the response criticized for being late, slow and uncoordinated. Post-Haiti, the Transformative Agenda, initiated in 2011, sought stronger leadership, greater coordination and increased accountability for humanitarian action. The World Humanitarian Summit of 2016 brought actors together around common dilemmas, culminating in the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing and other key agreements.

UNICEF, as a leading humanitarian actor and arguably the ‘face of the United Nations’ in many humanitarian crises, has played a critical role in global humanitarian reforms. Concurrently, its own engagement in humanitarian response has grown rapidly. Its expenditure on humanitarian activities – across the spectrum of preparedness, response and building resilience – increased from just over $900 million in 2012 to $2.1 billion in 2015.

This report synthesizes the findings of 30 evaluations of UNICEF’s humanitarian action. They range from 2010, when UNICEF underwent the formative experience of the Haiti earthquake, through to 2016, when its response to the Ebola regional health and Central African Republic crises were evaluated. This Synthesis asks three questions:

- How has UNICEF’s humanitarian action from 2010 to 2015 performed, and how has it improved over time?
- What factors have supported or constrained improvement?
- What can be learned, and what improvements made for the future?

The Synthesis builds on and updates a similar exercise conducted in 2013. Its overarching aims are to support accountability, contribute to learning, and help UNICEF realize its humanitarian objectives for the vulnerable children it serves.

1.2 STRUCTURE

This report begins with a description of UNICEF’s arrangements for humanitarian action, and their evolution since 2010 (Section 2). It then describes how evaluations have assessed humanitarian action, and the specific evidence base for this Synthesis (Section 3). Section 4 presents the main findings, including strengths and weaknesses, and Section 5 lists factors that have supported or constrained performance. Section 6 assesses UNICEF’s own learning to improve humanitarian action. Section 7 presents the conclusions and lessons arising from this analysis and finally, Section 8 offers some recommendations for the future.

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9 Grünewald, F. and A. Binder, Inter-agency real-time evaluation in Haiti: 3 months after the earthquake, 2010.
UNICEF’s arrangements for humanitarian action
2.1 THE GLOBAL HUMANITARIAN ARCHITECTURE

Although reforms to the humanitarian system began in 2005, the year 2010 was a watershed for the humanitarian community. Emergency responses to crises in Haiti and Pakistan overwhelmed existing systems and exposed critical flaws and gaps in the coordination of such complex and large emergencies. This collective experience triggered the Transformative Agenda, an initiative led by the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) to improve humanitarian response in future emergencies.

The Transformative Agenda created major changes in the way humanitarian responses are implemented, organized and arranged. It led to the 2013 endorsement of the Transformative Agenda Protocols by IASC Principals,11 which clarified common principles, processes and approaches, and emphasized stronger humanitarian leadership. In 2014, the Core Humanitarian Standard12 was adopted by many humanitarian organizations, including UNICEF.

Accountability, already a key topic of the Transformative Agenda, gained momentum with the release in 2012 of a highly critical internal review of the United Nations' shortcomings in relation to the protection of civilians in Sri Lanka.13 This led to the Human Rights Up Front agenda, strengthening the principle of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) across the humanitarian system.

The trajectory of reform continued with the World Humanitarian Summit, held in Istanbul in June 2016. It addressed topics including humanitarian financing, bridging the humanitarian-development divide, strengthening local ownership of the response, and AAP. The Summit outcomes included the Grand Bargain on flexible and appropriate funding.

Yet even as reforms take hold, the humanitarian system has faced challenges on a new and unprecedented scale. The Ebola epidemic in West Africa in 2014 saw systems unprepared for a region-wide health emergency, resulting in unclear coordination and sometimes non-coherent response structures. The Syria regional crisis—a highly complex, conflict-related crisis, with significant geopolitical implications and wide-ranging protection dimensions, taking place in middle income contexts—has tested the humanitarian community to its limits.

2.2 UNICEF HUMANITARIAN REFORM

UNICEF’s own corporate reform process has mirrored surrounding systemic reforms. In 2010 it revised its Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in Humanitarian Action,14 which form the central programmatic framework for its humanitarian action:

*The Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in Humanitarian Action are a global framework for UNICEF and its partners. Based on international human rights, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and international humanitarian law, they define operational commitments for UNICEF-led humanitarian action. They can be applied in acute and protracted humanitarian situations, and their sector-specific programme commitments define minimum achievements to be realised for all children affected by an emergency. The CCCs are designed to support wider inter-agency cluster coordination.*

Following a highly critical evaluation of its response to the Haiti emergency,15 also in 2010, UNICEF enacted some immediate internal reforms. These included:

- The reinstatement of the fast-track recruitment process for emergencies, the absence of which had severely constrained scaling up in Haiti.16

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11 <www.deliveraidbetter.org/pages/protocols/transformative-agenda-protocols>
12 The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out Nine Commitments that organizations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. This single core standard has been devised to clarify the responsibilities of aid workers, make the implementation of humanitarian standards simpler and easier, and contribute to better humanitarian responses. <https://corehumanitarianstandard.org>
• The institution of new structures for emergency response, with the overall framework provided by the Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure (CEAP), introduced in March 2011\textsuperscript{17} and including Simplified Standard Operations Procedures (SSOPs) for Level 3 emergencies.\textsuperscript{18} Their release coincided with the launch of the corresponding IASC definition of a Humanitarian System-wide Activation or Level 3 Activation,\textsuperscript{19} which included evaluation as part of the programme cycle.

• The introduction of Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) indicators, to enable systematic corporate measurement of emergency responses.

In 2011, the Horn of Africa drought became the first stress test for the new systems. UNICEF applied the CEAP procedure, HPM and its reinstated fast-track recruitment process. In early 2013, crises occurred in the Sahel and Pakistan, which fell under the threshold for Level 3 criteria, but which required a scaled-up response beyond country office capacity. UNICEF subsequently introduced SSOPs for Level 2 responses.\textsuperscript{20}

From 2013 to late 2014, the Strengthening Humanitarian Action (SHA) initiative saw UNICEF continuing to build its toolkit for emergency response. Resulting corporate procedures included revised Level 3 SSOPs, as well as revised guidance on cluster coordination, preparedness and engagement with the children and armed conflict agenda. Emergency human resource systems were formalized, and humanitarian leadership training strengthened.

Since the SHA initiative in 2014, UNICEF has faced a series of testing-grounds for its strengthened procedures. These include outbreaks of conflict in the Central African Republic and South Sudan in 2013; the immense damage caused by Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in the same year; the advance of insurgents in Iraq in the summer of 2014; and the complex and protracted Syria emergency, which has continued since 2011. Throughout these different events, much experience has been gained and much learning generated – not least through UNICEF and others’ evaluations of humanitarian action.

\textsuperscript{17} CF/EXD/2011-001 of 21 March 2011.
\textsuperscript{18} CF/EXD/2012-001 of 1 March 2012.
\textsuperscript{19} PR/1204/4078/7 of 13 April 2012.
\textsuperscript{20} CF/EXD/2013-003 of 24 January 2013.
Figure 1: Summary timeline of humanitarian events and system evolution

UNICEF

- Fast-track recruitment process re-established
- Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure established
- L3 SSOPs introduced
- UNICEF self-assessment on AAP
- L2 SSOPs introduced
- Humanitarian Performance Monitoring introduced
- Meeting on Innovations and Humanitarian Action
- Meetings on Complex and High Threat Environments and Resilience
- Revised L2 and L3 SSOPs “Martigny III”
- ED briefs board on SHA, key changes decided
- Final SHA presentation to the Board
- Emergency HR system strengthened
- Cluster Coordination Guidance issued
- L3 SSOPs revised
- Preparedness Guidance issued

International Community

- IASC adopts the Transformative Agenda
- SG interal review on United Nations actions in Sri Lanka
- IASC Principals establish the Transformative Agenda Protocols
- Common Humanitarian Standard (CHS) officially launched
- World Humanitarian Summit
Evaluations of UNICEF’s humanitarian action: evidence base and methodology
3.1 EVALUATION COVERAGE OF UNICEF’S HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Evaluation is not the only tool applied by UNICEF to assess its humanitarian action. A wide range of reviews, internal lessons learned exercises and research reports provide valuable insights and lessons. Inter-agency processes such as Operational Peer Reviews for Level 3 emergencies also provide an external view. However, with its dual emphasis on accountability and learning, reflected in UNICEF’s Evaluation Policy of 2013, and the international standards for evaluation applied, evaluation can offer an especially rigorous evidence base.

UNICEF applies diverse ‘triggers’ to evaluate its humanitarian action. The 2013 Evaluation Policy requests evaluation coverage when responding to major humanitarian emergencies and/or when expenditure reaches $10 million per programme outcome result component.21 Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plans list planned evaluations at the decentralized level. Level 3 SSOPs also integrate evaluation as part of the programme cycle. Finally, Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations, which until recently were automatically triggered for each Level 3 emergency, provide a system-wide overview.22

The 2013 Synthesis of Evaluations of Humanitarian Action noted that UNICEF conducts a wide range of evaluative exercises of its humanitarian work. This picture still applies in 2017. UNICEF-commissioned evaluations assessed a significant proportion of its humanitarian spending. Between 2010 and 2016,23 UNICEF published 623 evaluations or evaluative documents. Of these, 76 covered humanitarian action – from preparedness through response and recovery.24 Humanitarian evaluations covered a significant proportion of the largest emergency interventions: in the period from January 2012 to December 2015 more than half – 53 per cent ($1.57 billion) of UNICEF’s total humanitarian expenditure on Level 2 and Level 3 responses ($3 billion) was assessed by 12 large evaluations. In addition to evaluating UNICEF’s response to specific emergencies, UNICEF’s evaluations also addressed system-wide issues such as human resources and the supply system for emergency response, or evaluated global humanitarian programmes and UNICEF’s humanitarian leadership.

Geographically, the 76 evaluations were undertaken across all the seven regions in which UNICEF implemented humanitarian action. They addressed six of the seven sectors in the UNICEF strategic plan 2014-2017,25 with just over half covering multi-sector humanitarian responses. The most evaluated emergencies were linked to natural disasters, followed by those linked to conflict. A substantial proportion of humanitarian evaluations also covered global approaches or emergency-related systems. Likely due to the triggering mechanisms described above, all of UNICEF’s Level 3 responses and most Level 2 responses since 2012 have been evaluated either by an inter-agency or a UNICEF-specific study.26

21 <www.uneval.org/document/detail/78>
22 The automatic trigger for a Level 3 evaluation was removed as part of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle revision in July 2016.
23 The evaluation count of all reports, published on <www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/>, was taken in November 2016. In addition, it includes the evaluation of the response to the Ebola emergency in West Africa in 2014/15, which at the time of writing was about to be published.
24 Of these 76 reports, 17 were inter-agency evaluations and three were commissioned by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
25 Excluding HIV/AIDS in emergencies, for which no evaluation was available.
26 An Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Iraq response was planned, but has been suspended. Emergencies in the Nigeria region and in Yemen have been evaluated recently, but the reports were not released in time to be included in this synthesis. The Level 2 response to the storms in the Pacific Islands has not been formally evaluated.
Figure 2 below illustrates the evaluative picture of UNICEF’s humanitarian actions between 2010 and 2016.

**Gaps in coverage:** Despite the generally broad coverage of humanitarian action by evaluations, a key gap identified in the 2013 Synthesis Report remains. Namely, most humanitarian evaluations in the reviewed period were commissioned at the central level, rather than by country or regional offices. Specifically:

a. of the 76 evaluations that addressed wider humanitarian issues in the period, only 20 were initiated by UNICEF country offices;

b. of the remaining 56, 24 were commissioned by headquarters, 23 were inter-agency or joint evaluations, and 8 were commissioned by regional offices; and

c. one evaluation was commissioned by a donor.

This picture perpetuates the concern, raised in the 2013 Synthesis, that the bulk of humanitarian action taking place below the Level 2 and Level 3 classifications remains unevaluated. Clearly, despite the corporate triggers available, UNICEF’s highly decentralized nature places much reliance for evaluating humanitarian action on country or regional office willingness and ability. This can be restricted, for example, due to funding limitations.

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**Figure 2: Characteristics of humanitarian evaluations 2010-2016 (76 evaluations total)**

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**Features of the emergency**

- Linked to Conflict: 25
- Natural Disaster: 20
- Epidemic: 15
- Food Security Crisis: 14
- Evaluation of systems/approaches: 2

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27 Note: CEE/CIS – Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States; EAP – East Asia and the Pacific; ESAR – Eastern and Southern Africa Region; LAC – Latin America and Caribbean; MENA – Middle East and North Africa; SA – South Asia; WCAR – West and Central Africa Region

28 Reflects the prominent features of the crisis as described in evaluations. Evaluations of systems/approaches may include global evaluations of humanitarian response systems or corporate approaches.
In terms of sector coverage, most sectors have been well covered, with education being the most prominent in standalone sector-specific evaluations, while health is mostly well covered in multi-sector evaluations. The only ‘pure’ health emergency in the covered period was the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which was addressed by a standalone evaluation.

The main evaluative gaps are:

a. **CCCs:** Only 10 evaluations in the sample for this Synthesis (see section 3.2 below) address the CCCs, reflecting the findings of the 2013 Synthesis.

b. **International Humanitarian Principles (IHPs):**\(^29\)
   The evaluations in the sample do not analyse adherence to the IHPs. This gap is not unique to UNICEF: a study by the United Nations Evaluation Group on the subject found similar omissions across United Nations agency evaluations.\(^30\)

**Duplication and overlap:** Moreover, and linked to unsystematic coverage, above, duplication and overlap exists. Evaluations of the same crisis, in the same place, have been commissioned but lack interconnection. For example, of four evaluations of UNICEF’s response to the Syria regional crisis, at least two occurred in the same country (Jordan) and evaluated two sectors with common connections (education and child protection). Both were conducted in the same year (2015). Neither references the other, nor makes explicit linkages to closely related sister sectors. UNICEF could gain substantial added value by linking up such exercises.

**Joint commissioning:** The 2013 Synthesis found that jointly commissioned evaluations constituted the majority of the humanitarian evaluations assessed for the period. However, only three in this sample were conducted jointly with other United Nations agencies, or were jointly commissioned by government.\(^31\) Yet partnerships for evaluation are a key element of UNICEF’s 2013 Evaluation Policy.\(^32\)

### 3.2 THE EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE SYNTHESIS

The evidence base for this Synthesis exercise was distilled from the wider pool of 76 evaluations. The selection of evaluations for the final Synthesis was a systematic process, which took place through the following steps:

- First, only documents with a strong evaluative approach (i.e. assessing at least three of the key evaluation criteria of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, appropriateness, coverage, coherence and connectedness) were included. This excluded, for example, reviews, research reports and other material such as lessons learned documents.

- Second, to ensure the quality of the evidence applied for the Synthesis, only reports receiving at least a ‘satisfactory’ rating in the UNICEF quality assurance mechanism for evaluations\(^33\) were included.

- Third, for Level 3 emergencies, Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations (IAHEs) have effectively replaced agency-specific evaluations. However, the structured approach adopted by IAHEs allows little room for organization-specific analysis. IAHEs were therefore excluded from the direct evidence base but were included to help triangulate findings.

- A further form of triangulation was the UNICEF-prepared report, *Learning from Humanitarian Action: a synthesis of non-evaluative documents on UNICEF’s humanitarian action from 2010-2016.* This document was used to supplement the evidence identified in this Synthesis Report.

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\(^{29}\) The four International Humanitarian Principles are humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.


\(^{31}\) These were the evaluations of the Rapid Response to Population Movement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (jointly commissioned by UNICEF, OCHA, DFID and NGOs); of the emergency preparedness for the influx of refugees into Rwanda (with UNHCR); and of the psychosocial support programmes implemented after the Van-Eric earthquake in Turkey (with the Ministry of Family and Social Policies). See paragraph 28 on the role of Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations.


\(^{33}\) The UNICEF Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS), details can be found at <www.unicef.org/evaluation/index_GEROS.html>
This filtering brought the number of evaluations reviewed for this Synthesis to 30. The selected evaluations cover all major emergencies to which UNICEF has responded since 2010, excluding the Horn of Africa and South Sudan, which were addressed through inter-agency evaluations. The sample also includes evaluations of corporate initiatives aimed at improving humanitarian responses. A full bibliography is available at Annex 3, but summarized in Table 1 below.

The consolidated evidence base for the Synthesis covers all seven UNICEF regions and all sectors of its activity except for HIV/AIDS. Figure 3 summarizes its characteristics.

### Table 1: Evaluations synthesized

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region/Country</th>
<th>Emergency Level</th>
<th>Year of Report</th>
<th>Evaluation subject</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Yemen</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Real-time evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Sa’ada conflict in Northern Yemen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Global</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Progress evaluation of UNICEF’s Education in Emergencies and Post Crisis Transition Programme (EEPCT)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 CEE/CIS</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Evaluation of the UNICEF DIPECHO Programme supporting disaster risk reduction amongst vulnerable communities and institutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Haiti</td>
<td>3 2011</td>
<td>Independent review of UNICEF’s response to the January 2010 earthquake in Haiti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Sahel (WCAR)</td>
<td>2 2012</td>
<td>Real-time independent assessment of UNICEF’s response to the Sahel food and nutrition crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Pakistan</td>
<td>2 2013</td>
<td>Rural Sanitation in Flood Affected Areas Phase III Evaluation Report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Liberia</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Final evaluation of multi-sectoral interventions to address the humanitarian and recovery needs of Ivorian refugees and Liberian host community members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 DRC</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>External evaluation of the Rapid Response to Movements of Population (RRMP) programme in the Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Somalia</td>
<td>3 2013</td>
<td>Final evaluation of the unconditional cash and voucher response to the 2011-12 crisis in Southern and Central Somalia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Global</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Review of the fast-track recruitment process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Mali</td>
<td>2 2013</td>
<td>Real-time evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Mali crisis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Sahel (WCAR)</td>
<td>2 2013</td>
<td>Evaluation de la Reponse de l’UNICEF a la crise alimentaire et nutritionnelle au Sahel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Global</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies (CpiE)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Global</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Evaluation of UNICEF’s Cluster Lead Agency Role in Humanitarian Action (CLARE)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 Global</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Evaluation of UNICEF’s emergency preparedness systems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 Somalia</td>
<td>3 2014</td>
<td>Evaluation of the regional supply hub mechanism as a strategy for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) emergencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Rwanda</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>End of project evaluation for emergency preparedness for the influx of refugees into Rwanda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Philippines</td>
<td>3 2014</td>
<td>Real-time evaluation of UNICEF’s humanitarian response to Typhoon Haiyan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 Haiti</td>
<td>3 2015</td>
<td>Evaluation du Projet d’Appui au Programme National de Lutte contre le Choléra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Philippines</td>
<td>3 2015</td>
<td>Evaluation of the UNICEF-supported child-friendly spaces set up after Typhoon Haiyan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Jordan</td>
<td>3 2015</td>
<td>Evaluation of the emergency education response for Syrian refugee children and host communities in Jordan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Independent evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Evaluation of psychosocial support programmes implemented after the Van-Ércis earthquake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Evaluation of UNICEF Supply Division’s emergency supply response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Syria Region</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Evaluation of UNICEF’s humanitarian response to the Syria crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Global</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Evaluation of UNICEF’s Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Evaluation of UNICEF’s response and recovery efforts following the Gorkha earthquake in Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>WCAR</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Evaluation of the UNICEF response to the Ebola outbreak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Characteristics of Synthesis of humanitarian evaluations

Regional distribution of evaluations:
- Global: 8
- MENA: 4
- WCAR: 7
- ESAR: 3
- CEE/CIS: 3
- SA: 2
- LAC: 1
- EAP: 2

Sectors addressed by evaluations:
- Health: 1
- HR: 1
- Social Inclusion: 1
- Nutrition: 2
- WASH: 3
- Education: 4
- Child Protection: 4
- Multiple: 13

Features of the emergency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linked to Conflict</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Disaster</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of systems / approaches</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition Crisis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epidemic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 HOW THE SYNTHESIS WAS CONDUCTED (METHODOLOGY)

The Synthesis exercise followed a systematic approach. To arrive at its findings, it followed the steps outlined below (more detail available in Annex 2):

- An analytical framework was developed, geared to the main lines of enquiry for the Synthesis. This included the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and coordination plus other analytical fields of interest (see Annex 2). The analytical framework was agreed upon with the Reference Group.

- Although the quality of the evaluation reports had already been assessed through the UNICEF evaluation quality assurance system, the Synthesis team felt that this safeguard was not adequate to ensure the validity and reliability of all evidence. The team therefore applied a second-layer quality assessment for individual data pieces. Evidence was rated for validity and reliability on a scale of 1 (low) to 4 (high), with only reliable evidence – scoring at least 2 – included.34

- Evidence was then systematically extracted from evaluations against the fields of the analytical framework. This exercise generated the composite evidence base.

- Analysis was conducted of the density of evidence against the analytical fields (how many evaluations reported against the field); common themes arising from the analysis were identified and analysed, quantified by volume of evidence.

- The Synthesis Report was drafted and checked against the original evidence base for verification.

Throughout the process, the Evaluation Office and the Reference Group for the Synthesis provided a sounding board and comments on the themes emerging.

3.4 DENSITY OF EVIDENCE

The availability (density) of evidence against individual themes overall covered within evaluations is set out in Figure 4 below (weak: 1-9 evaluations out of 30; moderate: 10-19 evaluations out of 30; strong: 20 or more evaluations out of 30).

The density of evidence of the overall themes in Figure 4 refers to the distribution of the density of evidence for each individual component in the analytical field. For example, the density of the evidence for efficiency was made up for two components of efficiency (cost-effectiveness and timeliness). 14 evaluations assessed cost-effectiveness (moderate) and 22 evaluations assessed timeliness (strong), thus efficiency was determined to have moderate-strong density (see Chapter 4 for in-depth assessment).

Within these fields, specific areas of weak or limited evidence arose – for example, on coherence with the IHPs. These are signalled openly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Evidence density</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cutting issues</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment with key principles and commitments</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout the process, the Evaluation Office and the Reference Group for the Synthesis provided a sounding board and comments on the themes emerging.

34 See Annex 2 for further details of the methodology.
35 The density of evidence of the overall themes in Figure 4 refers to the distribution of the density of evidence for each individual component in the analytical field.
3.5 LIMITATIONS

The key limitation of this report is that – in common with all synthesis exercises – its validity is dependent on its component studies. The dual-layer evidence quality assessment mentioned above is the main safeguard here; it is considered to have sufficiently ensured the reliability of the evidence included.

The second limitation is that the reference period of 2010 to 2016 does not reflect corporate changes and current actions within UNICEF that have not yet been evaluated.

Finally, this Synthesis is not an evaluation in itself. It does not include primary sources of evidence; its content and findings reflect those of its component evaluations. It cannot, therefore, provide a comprehensive overview of the trajectory of UNICEF’s humanitarian action between 2010 and 2016. Nonetheless, the breadth and depth of its evidence base – 30 high-quality evaluations, conducted over a six-year period – enable it to offer illuminating and, it is hoped, interesting, insights into how UNICEF’s humanitarian action has evolved since the watershed moment of 2010.
Findings: UNICEF’s humanitarian action, 2010-2016
This section of the report comprises the main findings of the Synthesis. It brings together the evidence of the 30 evaluations to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, connectedness and coherence of UNICEF’s humanitarian action between 2010 and 2016. It also reports on:

- alignment with key normative commitments and principles – CCCs and IHPs; and
- cross-cutting issues of equity, protection and AAP.

Lessons and good practice are extracted where feasible.

4.1 HOW RELEVANT/APPROPRIATE WERE UNICEF’S INTERVENTIONS?

Overall findings: Relevance of UNICEF’s humanitarian action

Despite gaps in needs assessments, the majority of relevant evaluations – 18 of 30 – assessed UNICEF’s alignment with humanitarian needs positively. However, evaluations also found evidence of opportunity-based rather than needs-based programming in emergencies. Whilst some evaluations found a proactive and risk-willing approach to strategizing, just over half of the evaluations found weaknesses in the strategic framework applied, such as in the Central African Republic and the Syrian regional crisis.

Evaluations also found that some significant assumptions made in response planning were linked to weak needs assessments, though course correction was often swift in such cases. UNICEF’s alignment with national priorities has been strong where conditions permit.

Evidence base: moderate-strong

14/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s needs assessments underlying the designs of its humanitarian action.

27/30 evaluations assessed alignment with humanitarian needs/findings from joint assessments.

27/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s appropriateness of strategy and design, of which 23 were evaluations of country or regionally-based humanitarian action and 4 were evaluations of corporate action.

18/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s alignment with national priorities.

The Synthesis assessed the relevance/appropriateness of UNICEF interventions by asking:

- How well aligned was UNICEF’s humanitarian action with humanitarian needs/findings from needs assessments?
- How appropriate were its strategies and designs?
- How well aligned was humanitarian action with national priorities/policies (where appropriate)?

Needs assessment

Assessment of humanitarian need is a core element of the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, as well as of UNICEF’s own emergency procedures. It is enshrined in the CCCs. UNICEF encourages joint needs assessments where possible, through tools such as the Multi-Sector Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) and Humanitarian Needs Overview.

Conducting needs assessments for affected populations can be far from straightforward. Access and security can present major barriers, as in Syria for example. Inter-agency tools and processes have also encountered challenges in Level 3 emergencies.

However, needs assessments remain the foundation to ensure humanitarian responses target those in need.

The 2013 Synthesis found weaknesses in UNICEF’s needs assessments, with these either not taking place, being incomplete or merely general situation analyses. This 2017 Synthesis finds similar gaps. At the inter-agency level, there remain deficiencies in the swift implementation of MIRA (despite evidence of UNICEF’s advocacy within United Nations Country Teams for these), and in the consistency and scope of UNICEF’s own assessment processes.

Just four evaluations praise UNICEF’s prioritization of needs assessments within humanitarian action. Of these, two were of corporate initiatives, namely, UNICEF’s Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy programme, and the Rapid Response to Population Movements (RRPM) initiative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and two were of emergency responses, one to the cholera outbreak in Haiti during 2010-2015 and the second to the nutrition crisis in Somalia in 2011-2012. In some cases, UNICEF relied on a timely MIRA, such as in the response to the crisis in the Central African Republic during 2013-15, but in others it implemented its own multi-sector assessments, such as in the response to the Mali food crisis of 2012-13, and in its education and child protection responses for Syrian refugees in Jordan, evaluated in 2015.

However, 8 of 12 evaluations found gaps or limitations in needs assessments. For example, in Haiti in 2010, no systematic assessments were done for the first three months post-earthquake. In the response to the Nepal earthquake in 2015, UNICEF failed to convince the international community to implement a MIRA, but instead of conducting its own assessments, it relied on limited government data – as also in the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013-2014. Generic caseloads have also been used, for example in the response to the Nepal earthquake. Although in some cases based on Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys, these provide only a very broad picture of needs, as the evaluation of the Nepal response points out.

Finally – and a point also made in the previous 2013 Synthesis – consultation with affected populations has not always formed part of UNICEF’s needs assessments. Evaluations noted gaps in consultation within programming for the Sahel food crisis of 2010-2011; the response to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013-2014; and in the Central African Republic in 2013-2015.

Alignment with humanitarian needs
Despite these gaps, the majority of relevant evaluations – 18 of 27 – assessed UNICEF’s broad alignment with humanitarian needs positively. However, 9 of 27 evaluations identified opportunity-based rather than needs-based programming. This occurred in at least four major emergencies spanning 2010-2016: the Sahel crisis of 2010-2011; the Central African Republic in 2013-2015; some elements of the Typhoon Haiyan response in 2013; and the response to the Syria regional emergency in 2011-2015. For example:

- In the response to the Central African Republic crisis in 2013-2015, few needs assessments were conducted beyond accessible areas. Programme targeting was consequently focused on accessible populations in urban centres and on internally displaced person sites, a concern for equity considerations.
- In the Syria regional crisis, the initial lack of a clear overarching strategy across the six countries facing the crisis left country programmes to evolve based on opportunities, operating space and resources.

Three evaluations also found coverage gaps. In the North Yemen and Sahel crises of 2010-2011, needs that fell within UNICEF’s purview existed, but programme responses were lacking. During the Ebola outbreak in West and Central Africa in 2014-2015, UNICEF’s response neither promptly nor adequately addressed Ebola’s serious secondary humanitarian consequences in the protection, general health and education of children.

Strategic appropriateness
The appropriateness of UNICEF’s strategies for its humanitarian action was mixed during the 2010-2016 period. Just under half (9 of 23) of evaluations of UNICEF’s country- or regionally-based humanitarian action found appropriate strategies or designs and/or strategies that could adjust based on new information. Sometimes, these approaches embraced risk; for example:

- The calculated risk to apply a cash and vouchers response to the Horn of Africa drought in Somalia in 2011-2012 paid off – markets responded and people could buy the food they needed at reasonable prices.

• In Pakistan, in response to a large public hygiene crisis following floods in 2011, UNICEF chose a development-focused approach, geared to longer-term behaviour change, which addressed underlying vulnerabilities more sustainably than short-term relief.

In the 14 out of 23 evaluations that identified weaknesses, the main concern related to a limited or absent strategic framework at the outset. For example, in the Central African Republic, UNICEF’s approach (as for the wider United Nations response) was characterized as reactive/ad-hoc planning in emergency mode, rather than being based on a strategic vision including medium-to longer-term goals. Similarly, for the Syria crisis, no initial UNICEF strategy linked systematic situation analysis, needs and vulnerability assessments to the programme decisions made (the ‘why’).

More operationally, evaluations found that often, assumptions made in design were linked to weak needs assessments. For example, in the Typhoon Haiyan response in 2013, UNICEF’s approach to setting up child-friendly schools as the primary child protection response was not grounded in an assessment of local child protection needs. Instead, it was guided by a standardized approach and an assumption that such schools were unquestionably the most appropriate child protection response to an emergency.

However, where assumptions made at the design stage subsequently proved to be incorrect, UNICEF often reoriented swiftly to achieve relevance. For example, in the North Yemen crisis of 2010, as well as in Rwanda in 2012-2013, incorrect assumptions made at the outset were course-corrected quickly in response to the reality on the ground.

Alignment with national priorities
The majority of relevant evaluations – 12 of 18 – assessed UNICEF’s alignment with national priorities positively where conditions permitted. This was largely due to an explicit focus on alignment in design, as in the response to the Nepal earthquake and to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, where government data on damages guided response planning. In Turkey, strong national ownership of the humanitarian response ensured close alignment.

The six evaluations that identified weaknesses related these to two areas:

• delinkage from relevant national mechanisms or policies, such as from institutionally weak national systems for food security and nutrition during the Sahel crisis or, more recently, national priorities for health systems strengthening that were overwhelmed during the Ebola crisis; and

• insufficient consideration of local systems, as in the case of the Typhoon Haiyan response and in support of Syrian child refugees in Jordan, where child-friendly schools in both countries were in competition with local schools or early childhood care.

The evaluation of UNICEF’s emergency preparedness, conducted in 2013, found scope for more intensive partnerships with governments on preparedness issues.

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Box 1 Ebola – a proliferation of strategies

UNICEF’s response to the Ebola crisis was undermined by a proliferation of different strategies. In September 2014, the Humanitarian Action for Children and the Regional Response Strategy presented a prioritized, multipronged and multi-sector approach. In November 2014, the Programme Guidance Note emphasized a community-led response aimed exclusively at stopping transmission. Various other external strategies, programme-specific strategies and country-specific strategies remained in application. The absence of a single response plan created confusion at the country level.

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38 Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation, Central African Republic.
Overall findings: Alignment with key principles and commitments

The evidence base on alignment with the IHPs and the CCCs is weak. However, familiar challenges are raised in relation to adherence to the principles of independence and impartiality in complex operating environments, and the difficulties in applying the CCCs systematically in different emergency types.

Evidence base: weak-moderate

3/30 UNICEF evaluations reported explicitly and substantively on alignment with the IHPs.
10/30 evaluations assessed the alignment of UNICEF’s interventions with the CCCs.

**International Humanitarian Principles**

The IHPs of neutrality, impartiality, independence and humanity\(^{39}\) are the guiding framework for all humanitarian action. Rooted in humanitarian law, they apply to all humanitarian actors, including UNICEF. The challenges of upholding the principles of independence and impartiality in highly complex governance and operating contexts, such as in Syria, have recently come under scrutiny.\(^{40}\)

In common with wider United Nations evaluations,\(^{41}\) few UNICEF evaluations report in this area. The three that do raise now-familiar dilemmas\(^ {42}\) linked to the trade-offs needed to balance alignment with government or national authority priorities, whilst meeting the needs of affected populations. Evaluations of UNICEF’s responses in Nepal and Syria voice this concern, with government playing a strong role in shaping UNICEF’s operational scope. The evaluation of UNICEF’s role as Cluster Lead Agency in humanitarian action also makes the same point.

**Core Commitments to Children**

UNICEF’s CCCs provide a global framework for UNICEF and its partners. Also based on international humanitarian law and human rights frameworks, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child, they provide sector-specific programme commitments that define minimum achievements to be realized for all affected children.

The 2013 Synthesis signalled the low evaluative coverage of evaluations assessing progress against the CCCs. In 2017, this picture continues: just 10 of the 30 evaluations report on this. Three of these, namely, the response to the Nepal earthquake, the provision of psychosocial support for Syrian children in Jordan, and the Supply Division’s emergency response, found UNICEF’s humanitarian action to be well aligned with the CCCs. Six other evaluations found a mixed picture or gaps. All six argue for greater contextualization of the CCCs to the different emergency types UNICEF and other international actors currently face, including slow-onset crises; crises with strong protection dimensions, such as Syria; protracted emergencies; or public health emergencies such as Ebola.

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\(^{39}\) [https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM-humanitarianprinciples_eng_June12.pdf]

\(^{40}\) Darcy, J., Evaluation Synthesis and Gap Analysis.


\(^{42}\) See for example Darcy, J., Evaluation Synthesis and Gap Analysis.
4.3 HOW EFFECTIVE WERE UNICEF’S INTERVENTIONS?

Evidence base: moderate-strong

All 30 evaluations assessed the effectiveness of UNICEF’s humanitarian responses.
19/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s efforts to support national capacity building.
15/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s efforts to build capacity of sub-national partners.

The 2013 Synthesis found around half of UNICEF’s evaluations containing solid evidence of results. This 2017 exercise finds similarly, with UNICEF’s objectives and/or output and outcome targets for the intervention met or exceeded in half of the evaluations (15 of 30 evaluations), with the remaining 15 evaluations finding moderate or mixed performance.

Most evaluations report on output targets, applying HPM indicators, below. At the output level, 13 evaluated operations met or exceeded their intended output targets. For example:

- Under the RRPM mechanism in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2,515,000 internally displaced persons, returnees and host communities were assessed. Of the 129,227 vulnerable households that were identified as being in need of assistance, 93 per cent were supported
- In the response to the cholera outbreak in Haiti, UNICEF and its partners detected and treated over 45,000 cases. The national incidence for 2014 and 2015 was reduced from 0.25 per cent to 0.16 per cent.

Some evaluations found overall positive achievement against objectives, but with mixed performance at the output level within programmatic areas and/or over time:

- in the response to Typhoon Haiyan, whilst the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), education and health interventions performed well against their intended targets, nutrition and child protection initiatives struggled, in part due to over-estimation of caseloads;
- in the Nepal earthquake response, whilst overall targets were met, indicators relating to severe acute malnutrition and sanitation did not fully meet their targets, due to debatable models for estimating targets/the lack of their amendment as the intervention progressed.

Box 2 Challenges of alignment with the CCCs

- In the Central African Republic in 2013-15, the evaluation found that shifting to a CCC approach was not necessarily appropriate in a protracted, slow-onset crisis, which had both acute and chronic dimensions; the CCCs’ discrete phases of disaster preparedness, disaster response and early recovery were not fully adapted to this.
- In the Ebola emergency in West Africa, the evaluation found that UNICEF’s response objectives and activities were not well aligned with the CCCs, which were neither fully appropriate nor relevant to a public health emergency.
- The evaluation of the Syria regional crisis observed the need for greater contextualization of the CCCs for a middle-income context, protracted emergency, and a humanitarian crisis with a strong protection component.
- The evaluation of the Child Protection in Emergencies strategy points out that the CCCs are not fully aligned to the Child Protection Strategy and the Strategic Plan, and that addressing issues around justice for children in the CCCs is confined to the recovery phase.
Evaluations also recorded some significant outcome-level results arising either as a direct result of UNICEF’s interventions (attribution) or with UNICEF’s interventions playing a significant role (contribution). These include:

- the prevention of (further outbreaks of) disease, such as during the Typhoon Haiyan and the Somalia and Nepal emergencies;
- lack of outbreaks or reduced transmission of Ebola, and community behaviour changes;
- positive effects on household food security, reduced debt with traders and increased demand in local markets in Somalia through the use of cash transfers;
- the safe return of children to school in the Nepal earthquake response; and
- reunification of separated children in fast-onset humanitarian contexts under Child Protection in Emergencies contexts.

**Systems strengthening**

World Humanitarian Summit outcomes include a commitment to supporting national and local leadership and ownership of humanitarian assistance wherever possible. A notable result of UNICEF’s humanitarian action, identified in both the 2013 Synthesis exercise and this 2017 update, is its successful efforts to strengthen national and local systems for humanitarian action.

Ten evaluations found national-level capacity gains as a result of UNICEF interventions, and 12 found that UNICEF successfully built local-level capacities to deliver tangible improvements in emergency preparedness or response. Improvements arose from two main factors: embedding a strong systems-building approach from the start, for example in the Central African Republic or within the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy programme; and/or adopting active approaches to support national ownership of initiatives, as for example in Nepal and North Yemen.

Fifteen evaluations found that UNICEF’s intended results were not achieved. The reasons for this were often context- or intervention-specific, but common themes included:

- technical weaknesses in design, often linked to the assumptions in design described above (Section 4.1), which resulted in underachievement;
- coverage limitations, particularly for nutrition interventions, WASH and education, and/or lacking a clear sense of what the highest-priority needs were – linked to limited or weak needs assessments;
- over-ambitious targets, such as in Syria, particularly where programmes were dependent on implementing partner capacity;
- delivery of immediate results but limited longer-term effects, as in the child-friendly schools initiative in the Philippines; and
- the need for a more structured and less ad-hoc approach to working with government, including

**Box 3 Success in building national systems**

- In the Central African Republic, UNICEF prioritized government institutional capacity building, working with functioning parts of the State wherever possible and developing state capacities where international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were absent.
- Capacity development was a major focus of the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy programme and the area in which most results were generated. Partnerships also built UNICEF’s own capacity.
- During the recovery phase of the Ebola crisis, and despite limited funding, UNICEF worked to sustain community-based health care to strengthen preparedness through community health services. In Sierra Leone, UNICEF focused on inter-sector community engagement and data. In Liberia, UNICEF supported efforts to establish a permanent community-based system to facilitate trusted access and two-way communication.

on capacity-building, as in the Typhoon Haiyan response and the Syria regional crisis. The evaluation of the Typhoon Haiyan response points out that, particularly in the case of the Philippines, UNICEF can and should play a stronger role in supporting and guiding government in its preparedness measures for future emergencies.

4.4 HOW EFFICIENT WERE UNICEF’S INTERVENTIONS?

Overall findings on efficiency

The timeliness of UNICEF’s humanitarian action has benefited in recent years from SSOPs for Level 2 and 3 emergencies. These have enabled rapid deployment of staff, swift procurement and shortened administrative procedures, and have benefited UNICEF’s responses to sudden-onset emergencies, such as Typhoon Haiyan in 2015 and the Nepal earthquake of 2013. However, overall, findings regarding the timeliness of UNICEF’s responses have been mixed; responses to more complex or unfamiliar emergencies, such as the Ebola crisis, and the crises in the Central African Republic and Syria, were assessed as late overall. Despite data limitations, cost-effectiveness was positively assessed, with the majority of evaluations finding that efficiency measures implemented by UNICEF have delivered cost savings, or that costs incurred were justified in the context.

Evidence base: moderate-strong

22/30 evaluations assessed the timeliness of UNICEF’s humanitarian responses (or, in the case of corporate evaluations, initiatives that support the timeliness of responses).

14/30 evaluations assessed the cost-effectiveness of UNICEF’s humanitarian responses.

Timeliness
The UNICEF Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure (CEAP) and the Level 2 and Level 3 SSOPs are key tools for UNICEF to ensure a timely response. The revisions to the Level 3 SSOPs in 2015 strengthened their focus on the Early Warning–Early Action system for global monitoring of developing humanitarian needs. The revised SSOPs also further simplified regular procedures, such as for Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with partners, a key tool for UNICEF response in emergencies.

As for other aspects of humanitarian action, evaluations recorded external factors that have hindered the speed of the international – and UNICEF’s – response, particularly to sudden-onset crises. These include:

- late (inter)national declarations of non-sudden onset crises, such as in the Sahel food and nutrition crisis and the Syria conflict, and/or the late recognition of emergencies by other key international actors, such as in the case of Ebola; and

- underfunding and delays in donor funding/unavailability of pooled funding mechanisms, such as in the Somalia 2011-2012 emergency.

The 2013 Synthesis found mixed results with regard to the timeliness of UNICEF’s humanitarian responses. This 2017 Synthesis finds similarly. Just 7 of 22 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s overall timeliness positively, with examples including a rapid response to the Sahel regional crisis in 2011-2012, and to displacement in Mali in 2012, though the latter faced challenges converting the immediate response to results.

A key factor in the efficiency of immediate responses, particularly to sudden-onset crises, has been the application of the revised Level 2 and Level 3 SSOPs. Evaluations record a wide range of benefits to timeliness, including:

- rapid deployment of immediate response teams, such as in the Typhoon Haiyan response and in Mali;
• fast-tracking of the human resource and recruitment processes in the Sahel, Ebola, Mali, Typhoon Haiyan, Central African Republic and the Syria crises;
• swift procurement processes, also seen in the Sahel, Ebola, Mali, Typhoon Haiyan, Central African Republic and Syria crises; and
• fast-tracking of other administrative requirements in Nepal and the Central African Republic.

However, seven evaluations also report that the new SSOPs have not been universally deployed. This especially applies to PCAs, where country-level staff do not always feel confident in assuming financial accountability risks, which may backfire in the future. This resulted in delayed processing (two to five months) of agreements during the Typhoon Haiyan disaster, the Syria emergency, and the Central African Republic crisis.

Fifteen of 22 relevant evaluations found shortcomings in timeliness. These came under two main categories: a slow start-up, which then gained momentum, such as in Syria, the Central African Republic and for the Ebola crisis. These were all linked to lack of early recognition of the emerging crisis, shared by the international community as a whole. Conversely, evaluations of responses to the Sa’ada conflict in Northern Yemen in 2010, the Haiti earthquake in the same year, as well as to the Van-Ercis earthquake in 2011 and the Mali crisis of 2012 found a swift start-up, which then encountered delays once the immediate response was underway.

Delays within UNICEF’s control recorded by evaluations include: limited preparedness of country offices/missed opportunities for early containment, identified in the Syria, Central African Republic and Ebola crises; and delays in the provision of services, as occurred in the provision of psychosocial support to victims of the Van-Ercis earthquake in 2012, and support to Syrian refugees in Turkey.

Cost-effectiveness
The cost-effectiveness of humanitarian aid, in an era of increasing needs and limited resources, featured as a key topic at the World Humanitarian Summit.44 However, assessing cost-effectiveness in evaluations is often challenging, with expenditure often linked to management budget lines rather than to specific interventions, sectors or results.

Box 4 Inconsistent application of revised SSOPs
The evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Syria regional emergency found that Level 3 SSOPs were not applied consistently across all country offices; some used a ‘risk-averse’ approach, e.g. to contracting and procurement activities (to be ‘covered’ in case of any audit issue).

Box 5 The changing speed of the response
Following activation of the Level 2 response for the Nepal earthquake, UNICEF’s initial response was fast and described as ‘outstanding’, characterized by a significant initial field presence, and early mobilization of supplies, funds and partners. But subsequently, challenges in timeliness contributed to a slower response between October and February 2016. These challenges included late delivery of goods and activities, lack of experience with Level 2 procedures, and the low performance of partners.

Several evaluations point to efforts to report on cost-effectiveness that were stymied by data constraints. For the 14 evaluations that did conduct such assessments, the majority (10 of 14) found costs to be reasonable for the response. This was due largely to concerted efforts to produce efficiency gains, such as in Jordan, where such efforts reduced the cost of the psychosocial support per child by almost half. Some corporate initiatives have also used at-scale approaches, such as the Child Protection in Emergencies programmes, where some intervention types reached large numbers of beneficiaries at a relatively low cost per person.

The cost-effectiveness of cash transfers in emergencies has been subject to particular scrutiny. The two examples for which data is available (Nepal earthquake response and Somalia) both found positively (see Box 6 below).

**Box 6 UNICEF and cost-efficiency**
- In the Nepal earthquake response, it cost UNICEF’s Social Policy top-up cash transfer $0.6 million to disburse $12.4 million to 434,000 beneficiaries.
- In Somalia, on average 85 per cent of project budgets was transferred to beneficiaries, with a range of 80 to 90 per cent.

Weaknesses identified in the remaining four evaluations arose from specific localized factors, such as equipment/staffing cost inefficiencies in North Yemen; the use of expensive and ineffective sanitation solutions in responding to the cholera outbreak in Haiti; and disproportionately high transaction costs with implementing partners compared to results achieved during Typhoon Haiyan. Under difficult operating conditions, three evaluations that found higher than expected operating costs – in Haiti, Mali and Rwanda – assessed these as justifiable to meet needs.

### 4.5 HOW CONNECTED WERE UNICEF’S INTERVENTIONS?

**Overall findings on connectedness**

Links from humanitarian to development responses at the country level have regained emphasis within the international discourse following the World Humanitarian Summit. Evaluations found scope for improvement within UNICEF’s humanitarian action here, with the new Level 2 and 3 SSOPs supporting immediate response, but with links from emergency to development responses not always adequately built into responses. UNICEF’s planning for transition and resilience has at times suffered external constraints, including a lack of external funding for such activities; but overall, evaluations found the linkage of emergency action to recovery and resilience to be weak. Integrated programming across sectors also remains a clear area of weakness in UNICEF humanitarian action.

**Evidence base: moderate-strong**

10/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s links to other operations in the country (development or other programming).

20/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s links to transition or resilience strategies in the context (bridging the humanitarian-development divide).

14/30 evaluations assessed the integration of UNICEF’s programming in emergencies.

**Links to other operations in the country**

The World Humanitarian Summit committed to stronger efforts to bridge the humanitarian-development divide. This momentum builds on and is strongly linked to the related and already well-established discourse on resilience and early recovery.

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At the same time, under UNICEF’s Level 2 and 3 emergency procedures, in the event of a sudden-onset crisis, country programmes can be suspended to direct resources towards the most immediate needs. In all the sudden-onset emergencies assessed for this Synthesis Report, whether Level 2 or 3 crises (Typhoon Haiyan, and the earthquakes in Haiti and Nepal), UNICEF suspended its existing country programmes.

Of the 10 evaluations assessing links to other operations in the country, only the evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Sahel crisis in 2010 found these to be explicit. This was largely due to the nature of the crisis, which for some involved countries (Niger, Chad and Nigeria partially) represented an expansion of existing programmatic components (nutrition) – meaning that connectedness was assured.

Nine other evaluations found challenges. Prior to the new Level 2 and 3 SSOPs, the integration of emergency responses into development programmes in Yemen and Haiti caused difficulties. Country office staff lacked experience to adapt to a sudden crisis without clear protocols or procedures in place.

Evaluations of UNICEF’s response to the Central African Republic crisis, the initial arrangements in the Syria regional emergency and the response to Typhoon Haiyan all found that whilst new procedures have supported rapid responses (see Timeliness, above), emergency responses have not always been sufficiently linked to existing country (often development-oriented) programmes. In the shift to emergency response, country office staff roles have remained unclear at best and bypassed at worst, as staff is not always familiar with what the new procedures mean for existing country activity, and/or there is an unclear division of labour between emergency (surge) and country office staff. Programmatically, this has led to a lack of synergies between the country programme and the emergency response activities. As well as complicating coordination on the ground, this has left a difficult legacy for the country offices to follow post-emergency.

Conversely, the evaluation of the Nepal earthquake response found successful linkages built between the emergency and development responses (see Box 7 below).

The Ebola, Syria and Sahel crises also had regional dimensions, as did several centrally-managed programmes [the DIPECHO programme in Central Asia and South Caucasus and the Education in Emergencies and Post Crisis Transition (EEPCT) programme]. Interlinkages were found to be variable. In Syria, at the sub-regional level, UNICEF took on a key coordination role in sub-regional plans, approaches and key issues (e.g. cross-border activities) and messages. This optimized use of different organizations’ strengths and capacity, and also minimized duplication of efforts. Conversely, evaluations of the Sahel regional crisis, the DIPECHO Programme in Central Asia and South Caucasus and the EEPCT programme all found scope for improved regional interlinkages, particularly in terms of planning and information exchange.

Links to transition and resilience

Links to transition and efforts to build resilience have become a major feature of humanitarian discourse, featuring strongly at the World Humanitarian Summit.46

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**Box 7 Contrasting internal coordination**

**Typhoon Haiyan**

The evaluation of the response to Typhoon Haiyan found the creation of parallel structures within UNICEF (immediate response team, regional office, country office) leading to internal tensions and a sense of the country office being bypassed. The immediate response team model, while certainly effective in the short term, left challenges for the subsequent phases of the Haiyan programme.

**Nepal earthquake**

The Nepal earthquake response saw strong linkages between the emergency and development responses, through strong coordination mechanisms that fully included the Nepal Country Office. The evaluation found that these mechanisms functioned exceptionally well and facilitated joint decision-making and strong country office leadership.

Yet such interlinkages can be challenging to embed in operational practice. Evaluations identify a range of external factors that have hindered UNICEF’s planning for transition and resilience, including a lack of external funding for recovery efforts post-emergency, signalled in the Central African Republic and Ebola crises; the lack of ability to ‘flex’ donor funding streams from development to emergency and vice-versa, including in disaster-prone or volatile areas, as in the Central African Republic; and the lack of clear policy guidance on early recovery and transition within the CCCs, as the Nepal earthquake evaluation pointed out.

Overall, however, and in common with wider evaluations of collective United Nations humanitarian responses, evaluations found that the linkage of UNICEF’s emergency actions to recovery and resilience was weak. Four evaluations, stretching over the 2010-2015 time frame, noted successful efforts, whilst 17, ranging from the responses to the Sahel and Haiti emergencies in 2010 to the more recent responses to the Syria and Ebola crises, all found challenges.

Where UNICEF made successful links to recovery and resilience, key features included: building community structures for post-emergency resilience, as in the WASH response to floods in Pakistan in 2011; undertaking structural reorganization as part of post-crisis planning, as in Mali in 2013, to embed development links firmly into work plans; and embedding responses with development potential, such as child protection, into the regular country programme, such as in Turkey in response to the Syrian regional crisis.

Some clear lessons emerge from the 17 evaluations that found challenges or gaps in relation to transition. These include:

- The need for a clear transition plan and links from response to early recovery from the outset and across sectors, with the accompanying investment. The lack of this was noted in the responses to the Nepal earthquake, Typhoon Haiyan and Central African Republic crisis, and in the support to Ivorian refugees and host communities in Liberia.
- The importance of preparedness, and particularly the ability to ‘flex’ programming and capacities from development to emergency and vice-versa if emergency strikes, noted in the evaluations of the Sahel crisis, the Syria regional crisis and the Central African Republic responses.
- Where plans are present, the need for overall consistency; variations among sector plans were noted in UNICEF’s transition plans for the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey, in Liberia and in the response to Typhoon Haiyan.
- The need to seize opportunities to address social change; missed opportunities were seen in the Child Protection in Emergencies programmes and the Sahel crisis response, including to adopt a role for Communication for Development (C4D) in transition.
- The need to participate in national assessments and planning for recovery and reconstruction, as noted in the evaluation of the response to Typhoon Haiyan.
- The importance of moving from emergency to transition as soon as conditions permit, noted in the evaluation of UNICEF’s psychosocial support response for Syrian children in Jordan.
- The need to participate in national assessments and planning for recovery and reconstruction, as noted in the evaluation of the response to Typhoon Haiyan.
- The need for clarity over the process of exit from emergency procedures, and the related processes such as the withdrawal of the immediate response team, as in Typhoon Haiyan, and the regularization of staffing posts when crises become protracted, as in the Syria regional crisis. A formal cluster transition plan was implemented in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquake response.

Integration of humanitarian action

The UNICEF structure of distinct programme sections, mirroring the sectoral division of the CCCs, does not facilitate cross-sectoral links – which are also impeded by the wider cluster system’s comparatively siloed approach. Aware of this concern, in 2014 UNICEF conducted a study of programme integration in humanitarian action, which proposed means of improvement.

These weaknesses are strongly reflected in the evaluations analysed here. Of the 14 evaluations that assessed this area, just two found well-integrated responses, and three noted gradual improvements over time. Both well-integrated initiatives had emphasized

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47 On 22 December 2015, UNICEF issued an addendum to its Level 3 procedures, which defines a “consolidation phase” for protracted emergencies that is to follow an acute response phase. Whilst this addendum is not reflected in the evaluations under review here, it may affect transition processes in the future.


Towards Improved Emergency Responses

its importance during analysis and planning, whether by using conflict analysis, as in the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy programme, or through preparedness activities, as in the WASH response to the Pakistan floods of 2011.

The responses to Typhoon Haiyan, the Syria regional crisis and the Mali food crisis of 2012 all showed gradual integration over time, as country office staff responded to operational learning on the ground. Integration occurred mostly through programmatic entry points, such as linking WASH initiatives with health, or bringing together education and protection through child-friendly spaces (despite concerns about their supply-driven nature in the Philippines). Community care centres established during the response to the Ebola crisis combined C4D, health, protection, and nutrition into a package of services that was effective in reducing case numbers.

Weak integration mainly arose from the following gaps:

- **Insufficiently holistic needs assessments** to set the basis for a better-integrated response, identified in UNICEF’s response to the Sahel crisis of 2010-2011.
- **Lack of inter-section planning/preparedness**, including integrating actions with common objectives to avoid supply-driven responses, identified in 11 evaluations.
- **Lack of internal operational coordination**, also identified in 11 evaluations, sometimes despite strong planning within documentation.
- **Siloed approaches by sector from the regional office**, which has also influenced country office implementation.

4.6 HOW COHERENT WAS UNICEF’S HUMANITARIAN ACTION WITH THE ACTIONS OF OTHER PARTNERS? HOW WELL DID PARTNERSHIPS WORK?

Overall findings on the coherence of UNICEF’s humanitarian action

Evaluations found strong external coherence of UNICEF’s humanitarian action with joint response plans, praising its collaboration based on its comparative advantage and its willingness and ability to address gaps unfilled by other actors. Despite weaknesses in United Nations coordination mechanisms, almost all evaluations found UNICEF’s humanitarian action to be coherent with the actions of other partners working in the context and/or praised its cluster leadership, though the record of operational coordination with partner United Nations agencies was mixed.

Despite challenges in some operating environments, the evaluations generally praised UNICEF’s partnerships in humanitarian action, with UNICEF generally partnering with the ‘right’ actors to deliver results for children. Efforts to develop and maintain strong partnerships with key central government actors were particularly noted. The positive use of non-traditional partnerships, such as with faith-based groups and conflict mediation groups, was noted in at least three evaluations.

Evidence base: moderate-strong

13/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s coherence with joint response plans.
24/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s coherence with the actions of other partners operating in the context and/or its cluster leadership.
17/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s choice and selection of partners (rationales, inclusion/exclusion, balance of partners).
The cluster system for emergency coordination was established under the humanitarian reform process beginning in 2005. Its weaknesses in the 2010 Haiti earthquake response were a key factor in stimulating the Transformative Agenda reforms that followed. At the global and country levels, UNICEF is cluster (co)lead for the WASH, education and nutrition clusters, and leads the Area of Responsibility for child protection.

Coherence with joint response plans
Despite the inherent difficulties with Strategic Response plans, evaluations found UNICEF’s own strategic planning to be mostly coherent with them at the country level. UNICEF’s selection of its roles in joint responses based on its comparative advantage, such as in the Syrian regional crisis, is praised, as is its ability to fill gaps that others could not meet, such as in the Central African Republic.

Coherence and coordination with other partners
Much of UNICEF’s humanitarian action functions through partnerships, whether via horizontal relationships with United Nations agencies and partner governments, or in vertical implementing partnerships. UNICEF’s partnerships are both strategic and operational, reflecting its normative and operational mandate.

Choice and selection of partners
Several evaluations point to difficulties in the availability of well-capacitated partners in emergencies, particularly where conflict is occurring and/or capacities are low, such as in the Central African Republic and the Ebola crises. Conversely, during the Typhoon Haiyan response, the abundance of funding options meant that incentives for NGOs to enter into partnership with UNICEF were fewer than elsewhere.

Evaluations praise UNICEF for developing partnerships with the ‘right’ actors to deliver results. In Nepal, for example, UNICEF established permanent working relationships with government human rights-related institutions, which in turn allowed for ensuring longer-term approaches to addressing human rights. During the Typhoon Haiyan response in the Philippines, UNICEF signed memoranda of understanding with 40 Local Government Units in affected areas where it had not previously worked – providing a platform for locally-grounded and politically accountable recovery work.

Partnership working
The 2013 Synthesis found challenges in UNICEF’s partnership working, including low investment in partner coordination efforts outside of the cluster lead role. This picture continues in 2017. Despite strong partnerships being a critical dimension of its comparative advantage, 7 of 17 evaluations found room for improvement in the way UNICEF works with its partners.

Government/national authorities
The strongest area of partnership working is with national government or authorities. Efforts to develop and maintain strong partnerships with key central government actors are praised across evaluations. Although this has sometimes raised challenges of independence and impartiality, overall, UNICEF’s approach of working with, as well as through, government partners, has delivered successful results. In Turkey, for example, UNICEF applied its close working relationship with the Ministry of Education to help widen access for the education component of its response to previously inaccessible host communities. In Haiti, the early inclusion of government in the UNICEF clusters improved the quality of the response.

United Nations agencies
Even as reforms to the humanitarian system take hold, shortcomings in the wider United Nations coordination of emergency responses, including within the cluster system, have been widely documented. These shortcomings – also reflected in UNICEF’s own evaluations – make external coherence all the more challenging.

Cluster leadership
The evaluation of UNICEF’s Cluster Lead Agency role in humanitarian action found UNICEF’s leadership at the country level to be broadly effective, though roles at the regional and global levels were not always clear. Individual evaluations reflect these findings, with UNICEF found to have fulfilled its role for cluster/pillar coordination as far as feasible in the Typhoon Haiyan, Central African Republic and Mali crises, with its commitment to recruit long-term staff for coordination praised. Two evaluations found weaknesses: in the Ebola crisis, UNICEF lacked the relationships and technical skills to fulfil its lead coordination role.

50 The Synthesis of Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations points to their status as a fundraising document rather than a strategic roadmap, and the lack of buy-in from many agencies (Darcy, J., Evaluation Synthesis and Gap Analysis).

51 See, for example United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Evaluation of UNOCHA’s Response to the Syria Regional Crisis (2015); Darcy, J., Evaluation Synthesis and Gap Analysis.
and in the Philippines, coordination lost momentum, dissipating once the original coordinating teams left the country.

Beyond cluster coordination, evaluations document mixed experience in partnership working with United Nations agencies. At times this arose from a systemic lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities, highlighted for example in the initial phases of the Syria regional response. Other examples are context-specific, for example, communication gaps and overlaps with UNHCR among Child Protection in Emergency programmes in South Sudan.

Non-governmental organizations
The evaluations found that partnerships with NGOs were generally regarded as implementing partnerships. Comments mostly related to the activation of PCAs. The importance of standby partnerships as part of emergency preparedness is emphasized in the Nepal evaluation, which found no standby or contingency PCAs in place. Larger partners had their own fundraising channels and were thus not reliant on UNICEF for funding – they began to implement their own programmes. UNICEF consequently had to work with smaller and less experienced partners, increasing the complexity of partner management.

Non-traditional partnerships
Several evaluations have documented innovative and at times risk-willing engagement with non-traditional partners in the context, including peace committees, religious institutions and conflict mediation groups. The financial risk potentially incurred by working with partners inexperienced in UNICEF’s administrative requirements was considered a ‘worthwhile trade-off’ in the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy initiative – bringing access to arenas that UNICEF could not have otherwise hoped to enter. Collaboration with the private sector was commended in the evaluations of the RRMP in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the emergency cash transfer programme in Somalia.

Lessons regarding UNICEF’s partnerships documented by the evaluations include:

- The need for an explicit partnership strategy, rather than an ad-hoc approach, including how government or national authority capacity should be developed or maintained, noted in the evaluation of the Syria regional crisis.
- The need to recognize in contracting with large international organizations that they work through local implementing partners – as seen during the Typhoon Haiyan response – adding an additional administrative layer and incurring a degree of risk.
- A need to broaden the partnership base in the Pakistan WASH initiative, the Sahel crisis and during the Typhoon Haiyan response.

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4.7 HOW WELL DID UNICEF INTEGRATE CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES: EQUITY, PROTECTION AND AAP?

**Overall findings on equity and protection**

Equity, which came to the fore in UNICEF’s strategic planning in 2010, has not been consistently implemented in UNICEF’s humanitarian action. Less than half of the evaluations conducted after the renewed corporate attention to the issue in 2010 found equity concerns to be satisfactorily integrated into responses. The evidence base on protection is limited, but evaluations found inconsistent addressing of protection issues. There are clear gaps or weaknesses in UNICEF’s implementation of AAP commitments, though also evidence of gradual improvement in some areas.

**Evidence base: weak-strong**

20/30 evaluations assessed the integration of equity into UNICEF’s humanitarian action. (Three were conducted in 2010, prior to UNICEF’s corporate renewal of the equity agenda.)

6/30 evaluations comment on protection aspects of the response.

16/30 evaluations assessed UNICEF’s implementation of AAP commitments.

**Equity**

UNICEF’s renewed focus on equity in 2010 led to a strong emphasis on the issue in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017. It remains an overarching principle for UNICEF’s programming, whether development or humanitarian.

Applying an equity focus consistently is often shaped by the available operating space. Access and security constraints can limit insight into equity needs, as in Somalia and Syria. Sometimes national governments or other authorities determine this space. In Turkey during the Syria refugee crisis, for example, the government’s hesitancy to permit international agencies to engage outside refugee camps limited the scope to apply an equity lens. A lack of available disaggregated data, often related to inadequate needs assessments, has also constrained an equity focus, as for example in the Central African Republic and in the Typhoon Haiyan response.

**Box 8 Equity in the Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme**

The Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) programme, which works on access to conflict-sensitive education, benefited strongly from the high prioritization of equity within UNICEF education programmes. This created the space to add a component of conflict sensitivity or peacebuilding messaging to existing UNICEF programming. For example, in Pakistan, PBEA adapted existing alternative learning programme models and school enrolment campaigns to better target marginalized children and youth and integrate social cohesion into curricula.
The 2013 Synthesis found inconsistent attention to equity in UNICEF’s humanitarian action, linked to limited needs assessments. Although arising from a broader range of causes, this 2017 Synthesis finds similarly. Where equity was successfully integrated (found in 7 of 17 evaluations conducted after the renewed focus on the issue), this mainly arose from strong attention to it at the planning stage; for example, in efforts to prepare for and implement responses for refugee and host communities in Rwanda and Liberia in 2013 and/or in programme design.

Where equity was not satisfactorily addressed, this often stemmed from unsystematic approaches. For example, programme sections involved in the responses to Typhoon Haiyan and the Nepal earthquake took very variable approaches to targeting vulnerable children within their different interventions. These unsystematic approaches led to a range of specific equity gaps, identified when UNICEF’s response was evaluated as a whole. Gaps included gender in five responses, age in two and the disabled in six. Attention to specific vulnerable groups was missed in the responses to the Yemen, Syria and Central African Republic crises as well as in the regional Syria response, where the risks of targeting refugee populations only (i.e. nationality-based vs vulnerability-based targeting) are signalled.

Protection
Arising from humanitarian law, protection is a key element in humanitarian standards and the programme cycle. UNICEF has issued its own minimum standards for child protection in emergencies as part of the CCCs. However, it relies heavily on other partners to support a wider protective environment.

The evidence base on protection is limited, but where available, evaluations found inconsistent treatment of protection concerns. Positively, in the Central African Republic, UNICEF took a strongly proactive approach despite limited analysis of protection problems, conducting advocacy at multiple levels: with armed groups, government and ministries, public campaigns, the United Nations system and humanitarian partners, international opinion organizations and the United Nations Security Council.

Five evaluations found insufficient integration of protection concerns, including in the provision of emergency education responses for Syrian refugee children and host communities in Jordan and for Ebola orphans during the Ebola crisis. The evaluation of the Nepal earthquake response found vertical treatment of child protection as a sector, rather than adopting an integrated approach. In the response to the Syrian refugee crisis in Turkey, education and protection programmes ran parallel, and were disconnected even though they were conceived initially as a joint approach.

Accountability to Affected Populations
UNICEF applies the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Accountability to Affected Populations Operational Framework (2011) as its main set of standards. It is part of the IASC Task Team on Accountability to Affected Populations and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and has a range of tools and guidance (though not a corporate statement of expectations) on AAP implementation.

Evaluations found that, alongside other United Nations agencies (as Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations from the Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Philippines record), UNICEF has not systematically

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53 Internally displaced persons without identification, large households with several wives and large numbers of children in the response to the Yemen crisis in 2010 (6); camp and non-camp populations in Turkey as part of the Syria regional response (19); orphans, returnees, older children and youth needs of displaced communities in the bush, Peuhl nomads and the population in the north of the country in the Central African Republic (20).

54 See IASC Principals’ Statement on the centrality of protection in humanitarian action, December 2013.

55 <www.unicef.org/protection/57929_62178.html>

integrated AAP concerns into its humanitarian action. Of the 16 evaluations that occurred after the IASC Operational Framework came into force, only 5 found UNICEF to have fully or gradually implemented AAP commitments whilst 11 found gaps or weaknesses.

The systematic application of a human rights-centred approach facilitated the implementation of AAP commitments, for example in preparing for refugee influxes into Rwanda. In responding to the Nepal earthquake and the Ebola crisis, UNICEF also successfully reoriented designs to include and address AAP commitments.

Lessons identified on AAP include:

- The need to seize opportunities for consultation/involvement of beneficiaries whenever the potential to do so exists.
- The need to take feedback mechanisms 'beyond the quantitative', from 'if assistance was delivered (numbers)' to quality or outcomes.
- The need to use existing local accountability mechanisms (such as community elders) as third parties to hold local authorities to account.

### Box 9 Improving approaches to AAP

The evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Nepal earthquake found little awareness on AAP and only sporadic presence of AAP tools at the design stage. But during implementation, AAP became integral to some programmes, notably education. For example, UNICEF established a Communicating with Children working group, which channelled information on the perceptions and opinions of the affected population to the humanitarian system as a whole.
5

Institutional factors affecting UNICEF’s humanitarian action
UNICEF’s systems for humanitarian action have evolved considerably since 2010, as Section 2 above illustrates. This Synthesis has also identified a range of institutional factors recorded in evaluations, which have supported or constrained the success of UNICEF’s humanitarian action over time. These are summarized in Table 2 below.

5.1 PREPAREDNESS

Preparedness is a corporate commitment under the CCCs. The 2013 evaluation of UNICEF’s Emergency Preparedness Systems recommended the integration of preparedness into UNICEF programming, to enhance national and UNICEF capacity for a timely and effective response when needed. UNICEF consequently issued a new ‘Procedure on Preparedness for Emergency Response’ on 29 December 2016, which firmly links preparedness to programming, as well as to risk management and national capacity building.

Excluding the main preparedness evaluation, 10 evaluations comment (explicitly or implicitly) on preparedness issues. Three found UNICEF to be well prepared to engage in humanitarian action: in the Sahel, in Nepal and under the Child Protection in Emergencies programme.

Where preparedness was assessed as insufficient (7 of 10 evaluations), lessons include:

- the need for current and regularly updated preparedness plans that are concrete and tangible in nature;
- the need for plans that are scaleable to a major emergency;
- the need to address softer elements, such as working agreements with government departments at the national, provincial and local levels;
- the need for emergency clauses in existing PCAs; and
- the need for dedicated staff in UNICEF’s programme sections responsible for emergency preparedness and response.

Table 2: Factors affecting humanitarian evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTOR</th>
<th>Supported</th>
<th>Constrained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency preparedness</td>
<td>Has supported responses where present, as in Nepal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional-country coordination</td>
<td>Level 2 and Level 3 procedures have supported timely immediate responses, including support from the regional office</td>
<td>Different interpretations of SSOPs at the country level have at times impeded efficiency and effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management/staffing/human resource including surge mechanisms</td>
<td>Has been supported by Level 2 and Level 3 procedures, which have enabled, for example, regional surge rosters</td>
<td>Commonly reported as a major constraint, with staffing gaps prominent in several emergency responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply and logistics</td>
<td>Has supported efficiency and effectiveness of responses</td>
<td>Weak or inconsistent end-use monitoring identified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance measurement of humanitarian action</td>
<td>Has supported the consistency of performance measurement across different response types</td>
<td>There is a need for increased context specificity, particularly in the varying types of emergency UNICEF now faces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications and advocacy</td>
<td>Has played a key role both in raising awareness and funding for the crisis, and has also made a substantive contribution in, for example, the Ebola crisis</td>
<td>Lacking staff capacity at times</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 REGIONAL-COUNTRY OFFICE COORDINATION

Eight evaluations praise the role of the regional office in supporting the internal coordination of humanitarian action. Specific contributions included:

- **joint fundraising**, such as during the Sahel and Ebola crises, and under the EEPCT initiative;
- **procurement** of initial supplies during the Sahel crisis;
- **surge assistance** during the Sahel, Nepal and Typhoon Haiyan crises, and under the EEPCT initiative;
- **communications/advocacy support** in the Sahel and Typhoon Haiyan crises, and under EEPCT;
- **technical assistance and support**, also in the Sahel and Typhoon Haiyan crises, and under PBEA and the EEPCT initiatives;
- **support to conduct research and/or share lessons** under the PBEA and EEPCT initiatives; and
- **acting as an interface** between the country office and Headquarters during the Typhoon Haiyan and Mali responses and as an interface with the donor for the DIPECHO programme.

The sub-regional Syria Hub also provided a significant boost to UNICEF’s emergency response capacity in the initial stages of the crisis (see Box 11 below).

Where challenges arose, these stemmed mostly from unclear roles and responsibilities of regional offices under Level 2 or Level 3 procedures. The evaluation of UNICEF’s role as a Cluster Lead Agency also signals the unclear role of regional offices and regional emergency advisers in the cluster system.

5.3 STAFFING AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Given the volume of major emergencies currently, UNICEF, in common with other major humanitarian actors, struggles to resource its humanitarian responses with sufficiently experienced staff.

Seventeen of the 30 evaluations, as well as non-evaluative material, comment on management/staffing/human resources including surge mechanisms, as a factor influencing successful humanitarian response. All note challenges, particularly in sourcing staff with the relevant language skills, experience and seniority.

Positively, evaluations found that using its Level 2 or 3 SSOPs, UNICEF has often swiftly mobilized surge human resources – noted in evaluations of the Sahel, Nepal and Typhoon Haiyan disasters, as well as in the Central African Republic. A 2012 review of the fast-track recruitment process developed for emergency deployments found the mechanism to be effective in getting the right people with the right skills on the ground at the right time, despite early concerns about the quality of personnel recruited.

Box 11  The role of the sub-regional Syria Hub

The Syria Hub assumed a key role in the sub-regional response with regard to planning, information management, reporting and resource mobilization, as well as in supporting country offices, specifically in 2013–2014. The establishment of the Syria Hub ensured the availability of additional staff and specific expertise, experience and resources. This was of great value as the standing capacity of the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office (MENARO) was limited.

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58 In the later stages of the Syria emergency, duplication was encountered, with both the sub-regional hub and country sections having specialized staff in place, with the result that the hub was eventually restructured.
UNICEF has also developed and applied innovative ways of addressing human resource needs in emergencies, as illustrated in the Central African Republic and during the Ebola response (see Box 12 below).

**Box 12 Innovations in human resourcing**

- During the Ebola crisis, and following reported delays in the deployment of emergency staff during the initial phase, UNICEF opened recruitment to national staff and a lien procedure was introduced to safeguard posts.
- In the Central African Republic, the understaffed country office immediately mobilized staff following the Level 3 declaration by activating a combined Africa-wide surge capacity mechanism as well as the online e-Recruitment system; by drawing on an emergency response mechanism under the global clusters and bringing in consultants, retirees and UNICEF standby partners from NGOs and governments; and by making valuable use of the deployed Emergency Human Resources specialist to coordinate recruitment. Additionally, following the rapid mobilization of personnel under the Level 3 crisis, UNICEF prepared a large Programme and Budget Review submission aimed at regularizing staff in place when it appeared that the crisis would be an extended one.

Nevertheless, speedy and sustainable staffing of emergency operations remains challenging. Weaknesses that fall under UNICEF’s control include:

- reliance on temporary posts or short-term deployments, limiting institutional memory in Rwanda, Yemen, Turkey and Jordan, which brought discontinuity of external relations, including with government, and high transaction costs;
- identification of human resources needs on a piecemeal basis during the Syria regional crisis, instead of through a comprehensive assessment of the human resources capacity gaps of the affected offices;
- a focus on increasing programme staff, at the cost of support staff in finance, administration and human resources in Mali;
- absence of an operational Regional Rapid Response Mechanism in Syria; and
- insufficient use of national staff expertise in the Typhoon Haiyan response and in the Central African Republic.

### 5.4 SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS

Eight evaluations comment on UNICEF’s supply and logistics capacity in supporting humanitarian response. All eight found it to have positively affected the timeliness of the response: in Mali, Nepal, Somalia (WASH), Haiti and the Central African Republic, as well as during the Ebola crisis, supplies were properly planned, pre-positioned and mobilized in time according to response plans.

End-user monitoring of supply deliveries, nominally a requirement in UNICEF humanitarian response, was assessed in only 5 of the 30 evaluations. With the exception of the Syria regional response, where the evaluation found that some end-user monitoring was conducted, the remaining evaluations point to substantial deficits in practising this accountability measure. For the 2012 nutrition response in Mali, the evaluation specifically raised the concern of Ready to Use Therapeutic Food supplies being diverted and sold in local markets, although it did not provide evidence of this taking place.

**Box 13 Supply and logistics**

During the Ebola crisis, supply and logistics systems were rapidly mobilized. Adequate supplies were delivered in a timely manner and ‘stock outs’ were largely avoided. By mid-2015, UNICEF had delivered more than 8,000 metric tonnes of supplies, the largest single supply operation in its history. Learning exercises have attributed success to a proactive policy of ‘no regrets’ or ‘not doing nothing’, which facilitated rapid decision-making, procurement and supply of essential items, improved knowledge of emergency health and WASH products, and rapid funding. The Supply Division deployed senior staff to the region to identify supply needs in August 2014, earlier than other programmes, and facilitated real-time innovation in the development of personal protective equipment, community care centres and family hygiene kits.
5.5 RESULTS MEASURING AND REPORTING

The Haiti evaluation of 2011 found that monitoring/reporting systems were ‘unrealistic, impractical and did not track results adequately’. Subsequently, UNICEF launched the HPM system in 2011, first used in the 2011 Horn of Africa response. It establishes a set of common indicators linked to CCC commitments, effectively harmonizing progress reporting across different emergencies. It has since evolved, moving away from measuring input to a more output and outcome-focused set of indicators.

The 2013 Synthesis found significant weaknesses in UNICEF’s monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian action. This 2017 exercise finds similarly. Of 24 relevant evaluations, just four assessed UNICF’s work positively, whilst 20 found challenges.

Praise for rigorous monitoring and evaluation mainly related to systems benefiting from significant investment (see Box 14 below).

Evaluations signalled a particular challenge with HPM’s standard indicators. They argue for greater adaptability to context, to better reflect the varying emergency situations that the world now faces. Examples include:

- the Nepal earthquake evaluation found that HPM was useful at the global level but rigid and unable to adapt to the country context and sector-specific indicators;
- evaluations of the Central African Republic response and UNICEF’s Cluster Lead Agency role in humanitarian action both found that HPM was interpreted as ‘administrative’ and did not capture qualitative progress, such as the quality of personnel, capacities and tools used, or the success of implementation; and
- the 2016 evaluation of UNICEF’s response to the Ebola crisis found that HPM as a system was not suited to a health emergency.

Challenges in the performance monitoring systems and processes were also signalled, including:

- incomplete or unrealistic systems in RRMP in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Sahel and for the Pakistan WASH and the EEPCT initiatives;
- potentially sound systems, but inconsistent implementation of them in Rwanda, Yemen, the Sahel, Jordan, in the Turkey earthquake response, for the Pakistan WASH initiative, as well as under the Emergency Preparedness initiative and the Ebola crisis;
- overly centralized HPM systems in Manila during the Typhoon Haiyan emergency;
- the use of parallel systems across programme sections or countries in Nepal and Syria, for the Typhoon Haiyan response, and under the PBEA initiative;
- weaknesses in systems devolved to implementing partners in child-friendly schools developed as part of the Typhoon Haiyan response, and in WASH in Pakistan; and
- challenges with third party monitoring systems in Nepal.

Recorded effects include: accountability shortcomings; inability to report on performance; and inability to make a clear, data-driven case for support.

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**Box 14 Investing in monitoring and evaluation**

The Somalia cash transfers initiative invested nearly USD2 million in rigorous monitoring of the cash transfers, including joint monitoring with standardized tools, and employing an external organization for technical oversight, analysis and reporting, and independent third party monitoring. The approach proved effective for understanding key aspects such as beneficiary profiles, the relative efficiency of the distribution process, and importantly, the changing food security status of recipient households.
5.6 COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY

Overall, 14 evaluations praise the communications and advocacy aspects of UNICEF’s response – for example in the Sahel crisis, where social media was used for advocacy, and in the Syria regional crisis, where advocacy efforts have been undertaken on a range of dimensions to help realize child rights. During the Ebola crisis, communication methods (specifically C4D) proved to be a major strength, despite staffing shortages.

Overall, the integration of communications methodologies, both as a substantive area of programming and for advocacy purposes, appears to be an expanding area, particularly drawing on UNICEF’s regular country programme component of C4D.

Box 15 Use of communication in emergencies

The evaluation of the Ebola response found that UNICEF contributed to stopping transmission through an innovative community-based response, which evolved over time, particularly improving once medical anthropologists and social scientists were engaged in shaping the messaging.
Learning from humanitarian action
The Haiti evaluation of 2011 made some trenchant criticisms of UNICEF in terms of its lack of organizational learning. It pointed to an ‘institutional reluctance to undertake the radical changes necessary if UNICEF is serious about developing itself as a leading humanitarian player globally.’

Recommendations from the Haiti evaluation contributed to major changes in UNICEF’s arrangements in humanitarian action, described in Section 2 above. The subsequent SHA initiative further progressed these changes.

This Synthesis does not evaluate the effectiveness of the SHA exercise. However, evidence from the evaluations analysed here sheds light on how UNICEF generates learning about its humanitarian action, and subsequently whether and how it applies this to organizational change.

6.1 WHAT LEARNING HAS BEEN GENERATED?

In line with findings from the 2013 Synthesis, the composite evidence base of evaluations provides a picture of an organization that generates a considerable volume of learning within its humanitarian action (see Box 16).

However, several evaluations also found weaknesses in UNICEF’s efforts to learn from experience. The evaluation of the Ebola crisis response in 2016, for example, points out that whilst a range of lesson-learning efforts were undertaken, these could not sufficiently inform future emergency responses. Some aspects of the response were missed, and learning exercises remained unfinished and at times disjointed.

Box 16 Approaches to learning

As part of the Typhoon Haiyan response, UNICEF undertook several internal reflection exercises, including the ‘Lessons from UNICEF’s Response to Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) – November 2013 to February 2014’, which sets out several practical lessons regarding staff well-being. It also produced ‘Programmatic Lessons for Typhoon Haiyan Response’ and ‘Relevant Lessons Learned from Past UNICEF Responses to Major Emergencies’ (November 2013), which included lessons from the Haiti earthquake and Indian Ocean Tsunami responses, and reference to external sources.
6.2 WHAT CHANGES HAS LEARNING CREATED?

Converting learning into organizational change involves more than the production of learning. Learning needs to be in the form of, or converted into broadly applicable products, which in turn need to be actioned by management and/or permeate organizational culture to create changes in practice.

The Haiti evaluation of 2011 provides a powerful example of learning – in the form of an evaluation – contributing to significant organizational change; but 10 other evaluations also found evidence of organizational change as a result of learning produced. These include:

- In Yemen in 2010, and later in Syria, as learning was gathered during the response, more strategic approaches were adopted. In Yemen, UNICEF adopted a more partner-focused approach. In Syria, UNICEF shifted its role from being reactive to become more proactive.
- During the Ebola crisis, following a guidance note on the agency’s proposed role in future public health emergencies, the UNICEF Executive Director launched the Health Emergency Preparedness Initiative to strengthen UNICEF’s capacity to support multi-sector health emergency responses. In 2016, an initiative to implement a set of key activities through a technical working group was started.

However, evaluations also found two examples where the logic chain from learning production through to organizational change broke down. Specifically, the evaluation of UNICEF’s role as a Cluster Lead Agency found a lack of knowledge management systemsimpeding the absorption of learning produced. Learning on the child-friendly schools initiative during the Typhoon Haiyan response was not used to improve programming.

Management responses are another way of assessing how learning has influenced organizational change. These were available for 29 of the 30 evaluations covered by this Synthesis. Of the 294 recommendations made, UNICEF offices agreed or partially agreed to 263 recommendations, with only 36 either disagreed with or not commented upon. A total of 507 actions were initiated as a result of evaluation recommendations.

Whether ‘actions implemented’, as recorded on an internal system, have led to substantive changes in practice is not feasible to discern from management systems. However, the evaluations do provide some insight into organizational change in response to evaluative evidence:

- the seminal Haiti report of 2010, in combination with other factors, led to a wide-ranging review of UNICEF’s humanitarian action;
- the recommendations of the 2013 evaluation of UNICEF emergency preparedness systems led to the launch of a new set of preparedness procedures; and
- the key recommendation of the evaluation of the fast-track recruitment system led to permanent institutional structures for emergency response recruitment.

59 The only evaluation report without a management response was the 2012 review of the fast-track recruitment process.
Overall, some significant examples exist of UNICEF’s learning shaping improvements to organizational systems for humanitarian action. However, overall, the production and absorption of learning to improve humanitarian action in UNICEF is currently unsystematic – being dependent, as in many decentralized organizations, on individual units. This speaks to a wider absence of formal corporate knowledge management systems.

Figure 5: Management responses to evaluations

- Total recommendations: 294
- Recommendations agreed: 183
- Recommendations partially agreed: 80
- Recommendations disagreed: 25
- Recommendations with no comment: 11
- Intended actions: 507
Conclusions and lessons
7.1 CONCLUSIONS

Overall, this 2017 Synthesis of 30 evaluations of humanitarian action reflects an organization that has evolved considerably since the difficult learning experience of Haiti in 2010. New procedures have been implemented, new ways of working developed, and learning generated and shared. Reforms to the wider humanitarian system – in which UNICEF has played a prominent role – are reflected in improvements to corporate and operational practice.

In line with its fundamental ethos of ground-based action for children in emergencies, evaluations found UNICEF’s humanitarian responses to be mostly relevant and aligned with humanitarian needs. Programming also aligns strongly where feasible with national responses, priorities and plans.

The evaluations found that UNICEF takes its humanitarian citizenship seriously, participating in joint responses to emergencies, and prioritizing partnerships – though its connections with government or national authorities are stronger than those with its partner United Nations agencies. UNICEF has also pragmatically embraced new relationships, such as with faith-based and religious groups, where this promises tangible humanitarian gains.

Overall, the evaluations documented here show some important results for children facing conflict and crisis. UNICEF has contributed to reduced transmission of disease; helped prevent hunger and under-nutrition; and provided clean water and education to many vulnerable children. It has protected children in high-threat environments and built the capacity of local and national actors in humanitarian situations.

Yet some consistent weaknesses in UNICEF’s humanitarian action remain. Many of these were also reflected in the 2013 Synthesis Report. Specific areas identified by the evaluations as needing improvement are as follows:

- **Needs assessments for affected populations** – even under accessible conditions – are sometimes incomplete or too general. Consequently, opportunity-based, rather than needs-based programming, persists.
- **Strategies and programme designs are sometimes weak**, leading to a reactive rather than a proactive approach – linked to factors including limited preparedness, weak strategic frameworks (short term vs medium term) and/or weak needs assessments.
- **AAP commitments have not been fully embraced or addressed**, including embracing the Core Humanitarian Standard and broader commitments towards coordinated approaches for people-centred humanitarian action.
- The revised Level 2 and 3 operating procedures, whilst they have supported timely responses to sudden-onset crises, have failed to clarify synergies between the ongoing development efforts of the country programme and the emergency response activities. This has left country teams at best uncertain of their role and at worst, disenfranchised.
- **Internal coherence remains limited**, with a highly sector-based approach impeding effectiveness and constraining results on the ground.
UNICEF has shown itself to be a conscientious adherent to the IHPs. However, the evaluations also reflect the challenges and tensions faced by international actors working in complex governance environments, whilst trying to ensure impartiality and independence. A more explicit position and rationale in specific operating contexts would benefit UNICEF here. Similarly, both the CCCs and the HPM indicators highlight the need for corporate-level frameworks to be adaptable to reflect specificities of context.

Evaluations found that UNICEF is still working to build clear links from humanitarian to development responses. The application of the Level 2 and Level 3 SSOPs has had a major effect in supporting timely responses. Their implications for the existing country programme, and the progression to phase-out or robust transition planning, however, is still a work in progress.

Evaluations found evidence of a more risk-willing approach, an openness to innovation, and a willingness to experiment. However, new procedures available to short-cut administrative burdens are not always applied and used by responsible staff. A culture of confidence in their operational application still needs to be built.

Finally, in its practical humanitarian action, UNICEF has not consistently adopted a proactive approach. Issues such as preparedness, transition planning and AAP have not always kept pace with global shifts. Whilst strategically, UNICEF leads much of the humanitarian debate in its areas of expertise, playing leading roles in the cluster system and other global fora, evaluations reflect a picture of an organization evolving in response to, rather than ahead of, global change.

7.2 LESSONS

Key lessons from this Synthesis exercise are as follows:

**Needs assessments are the foundation of effective humanitarian action**

Understanding needs is not just a fundamental part of humanitarian action but the bedrock on which effectiveness and efficiency relies. Circumstances may constrain access, and inter-agency processes may not deliver all that they intend. Nonetheless, humanitarian responses must be firmly grounded in an understanding of the needs they aim to address. Engaging with affected populations is a precondition of addressing equity concerns; it cannot be shortcut, or bypassed.

**There is no substitute for strategy**

Several of the experiences analysed here show reactive, rather than proactive responses; a tendency to plan piecemeal and in silos; and a lack of coherence across countries in a regional response. Yet UNICEF has the capacity and the learning available to enable it to plan more strategically. Not doing so is a missed opportunity for effectiveness. Preparedness should form the framework for strategic planning.

**Focus on the future**

By definition, much humanitarian action is responsive and reactive in nature. Many of UNICEF’s changed procedures and protocols have emerged as a response to a particular experience. These have undoubtedly done good, and their benefits are tangibly reflected in the humanitarian action analysed here. Yet all have encountered challenges in their later application. Documenting and learning from experience is important; but equally important is the kind of future focus and horizon-scanning that enables systems and protocols to be developed, which will help identify and manage future risks.
Learning needs direction

Whilst much learning can be generated and some even applied, the systematic application of documented experience into changed corporate procedures is challenging. Transforming learning from the ‘here and now’ into corporate shifts requires systemic change and staff being fully on board – which can only permeate the organization by directive action from the top.

Systems-building is a process

Despite the major effort that has been dedicated to improving systems for emergency response – reflected in the Level 2 and Level 3 SSOPs – the evidence examined here shows the limited authority and traction of such systems when unaccompanied by a culture of confidence in their use. ‘Changing the system’ requires much more than amending a document. A cultural shift is needed, which can only be built over time.
Recommendations
The challenges to UNICEF’s humanitarian action, highlighted in the evaluations synthesized here, have been sharply illuminated by the volume and complexity of emergencies it has faced in recent years. Based on the findings and conclusions above, the question for UNICEF’s leadership and senior management is the extent to which the organization is adequately future-proofed.

The volume of resources being channelled to humanitarian assistance is becoming increasingly large. At the same time, the ‘case for aid’ has rarely been more difficult for governments to make. As a leading humanitarian actor, and so often the ‘face’ of the United Nations in emergencies, the responsibility of UNICEF to demonstrate strong and committed humanitarian citizenship is great. The recommendations below aim to support this process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. More stringent requirements to evaluate
UNICEF has gathered a considerable body of evidence on its humanitarian action (76 evaluations since 2010). Its Evaluation Policy states that evaluations of humanitarian action will ‘usually be undertaken’. Yet despite a set of corporate triggers, coverage remains unsystematic and patchy – particularly of Level 1 emergencies.

   a. **Action 1.1** UNICEF should consider setting more explicit triggers for its evaluation of humanitarian action. These should be explicitly defined by the Office of Emergency Programmes in discussion with the Evaluation Office. Potential dimensions could include: a) spend (e.g. implementing the commitment in the present Evaluation Policy that an evaluation will usually be undertaken for a programme outcome results area of over $10 million); b) duration of crisis (e.g. a two-year response); c) strategic importance for the regional office; and d) potential for wider lesson-learning for the organization.

2. Centralize needs in design
Evaluations found that UNICEF’s humanitarian action was often insufficiently grounded in needs assessments, even where these were feasible. Programme designs require clearer links to needs.

   a. **Action 2.1** UNICEF’s programme designs for humanitarian responses should be required to clearly map the intended pathways from needs to intended results; justify the choices made to test assumptions; and avoid supply-driven responses, placing people (and their evolving needs) firmly at the centre. This should be a fundamental part of programme guidance.

   b. **Action 2.2** Performance monitoring strategies and plans for humanitarian action should clearly focus performance assessment on recording progress in responding to identified needs, and to measuring adaptation as needs change.

   c. **Action 2.3** UNICEF should advocate, under the Grand Bargain process, for the humanitarian system to conduct lesson-learning on the experience of implementing needs assessments, including the challenges of the MIRA approach, and the scope to invest in more detailed/granular needs assessments.

   d. **Action 2.4** Under World Humanitarian Summit outcomes, AAP requires a more proactive, consistent and strategic approach. Meeting its commitments should be a fundamental requirement for all UNICEF’s humanitarian action – not an added bonus.

3. Build a culture of confidence in procedures
Given its highly decentralized nature, guidance and procedures issued ‘from the centre’ are only ever as influential as UNICEF’s country management and staff habits permit them to be. New protocols and procedures, such as the Level 2 and 3 SSOPs, need to be accompanied by capacity development and training to build a ‘risk-willing’ approach.
a. **Action 3.1** UNICEF should conduct training and awareness-raising of staff and partners on the importance of applying Level 2 and Level 3 SSOPs during humanitarian emergencies, and particularly commitments to speedy PCA processing. Concurrently, management should explicitly confirm the requirement for their implementation as part of corporate procedures for humanitarian action. Where relevant, all evaluations should assess whether these SSOPs have been implemented as required.

b. **Action 3.2** UNICEF should build awareness among its partners of its commitments to swift PCA processing under its Level 2 and 3 SSOPs. At the same time, it should clarify to partners the mechanisms by which they can hold UNICEF to account should these commitments not be met.

4. **Intensify the approach to risk-informed programming within the localization agenda**

   UNICEF’s decentralized structure means that it benefits from a vast cadre of national staff and partners, which provide it with a core capability to prepare for humanitarian action from a localized viewpoint. Under Grand Bargain commitments, preparedness and risk identification should be approached from this perspective. Specific actions include:

   a. **Action 4.1** Planning: All relevant Country Programme Documents should explicitly integrate an analysis of political, fragility, climate and other potential risks, and assess the potential for reversion to emergency conditions. This implies accompanying the analysis with operational integration for the ability to flex if conditions require, as part of risk-informed programming.

   b. **Action 4.2** Local capacity building: UNICEF should build a cadre of ‘first responders’ among partners at the country level, so that country programmes can flex from development to emergency action as conditions merit.

   c. **Action 4.3** Adaptive capacity: UNICEF should ensure that all PCAs include the scope for adaptation to emergency response, as part of preparedness.

5. **Revisit the CCCs**

   The CCCs in their current formulation do not reflect the changing nature of humanitarian crises, and promote siloed rather than integrated responses. They should be revisited.

   a. **Action 5.1** The CCCs could either be revised to reflect the new challenges of humanitarian crises, such as migration and health emergencies, whilst promoting multi-sector responses; or updated to include an addendum, which lists new challenges, sets integrated programming objectives, and supplies an accompanying monitoring framework.

6. **Accountability with flexibility**

   Performance monitoring of humanitarian action is a consistent challenge, yet the evaluations analysed here found considerable scope to improve UNICEF’s monitoring of its own performance in emergencies, in line with recent internal efforts to strengthen HPM.60

   a. **Action 6.1** UNICEF should accelerate efforts to further integrate HPM with country-level monitoring systems, to ensure that indicators express both global information needs and local realities.

   b. **Action 6.2** Under its HPM approach, UNICEF should prioritize extending the range of outcome indicators available, to better reflect qualitative changes in conditions for affected populations as part of its accountability commitments.

7. **Link programme integration to recovery**

   A more explicit and defined strategic overview within UNICEF’s humanitarian action is needed, which is firmly geared to resilience and transition goals. This should be linked to the revisited CCCs, above.

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60 A full review of the HPM approach in 2016, included in the synthesis of non-evaluative work, found similarly that HPM is often seen as being too rigid, often separate from existing monitoring and evaluation systems at the country level, and not always offering appropriate indicators. Its recommendations are presently being actioned by UNICEF.
a. *Action 7.1* Collective planning needs to take place across programme areas, with multi-sector programming geared to the same intended goals of resilience and transition. Targets set should be high-level and overarching, rather than limited or sector-specific.

b. *Action 7.2* Regional offices need to supply cross-sectoral, rather than programmatic, engagement with UNICEF country teams.

c. *Action 7.3* UNICEF should better define its strategy for protracted emergencies, with a clear linkage to transition, below.

d. *Action 7.4* The need for transition plans should be clearly defined and integrated within corporate guidance, recognizing different emergency types, and the inevitable presence of protracted crises. All humanitarian responses should be designed and implemented with a clear view towards changing needs and evolving programme modalities, with transition becoming a central part of UNICEF’s core humanitarian cycle and ethos.
Appendices
1. Background

UNICEF is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential. The organization is committed to continually improving its performance for children, including in humanitarian settings.

Emergencies\(^1\) have negatively affected the realization of children's and women's rights, both directly (i.e., through death, injury and loss of protective forces) and indirectly (i.e., by disproportionately affecting poor countries and eroding development gains).\(^2\) Accordingly, the call to humanitarian action has been central to UNICEF's mandate since the organization's inception in December 1946, when it was originally named the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. Later, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols further articulated UNICEF's mandate and mission. The CRC and its associated Protocols identified the universal rights enshrined within it as inalienable – and non-severable during emergencies – and conferred specific rights and duties in emergency situations.\(^3\) The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (the CCCs), revised in 2010, constitute UNICEF's central policy on how to uphold the rights of children affected by humanitarian crises. They provide UNICEF and its partners with a framework for humanitarian action, and commit it to help realize these rights in emergencies. The CCC indicators are also part of UNICEF's Strategic Plan, and thus a core business of the organization. The CCCs have programme commitments for each one of the UNICEF sectors of intervention\(^4\) and operational commitments\(^5\) adapted to the phase of the humanitarian response (preparedness, response and early recovery). Each commitment also has its corresponding benchmark.

Over time, UNICEF's role in emergencies has grown to keep pace with escalating needs. In the late 1990s, disasters affected an estimated 66.5 million children a year. In 2016, an estimated 535 million children – nearly a quarter of the world's children – lived in countries affected by armed conflict, violence, disaster and chronic crises.\(^6\) By 2018, it is estimated that half the world's poor will live in fragile situations.\(^7\) More than 1 in 10 children are living in countries and areas affected by violent, often protracted conflicts, translating to

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5. Security, media and communication, human resources, supply, resource mobilization, finance and management, and information and communication strategy.
nearly 250 million children living in countries affected by conflict.\textsuperscript{8} Natural disasters continue to endanger the well-being of hundreds of millions of children living in areas prone to floods, droughts, cyclones, earthquakes and tsunamis. Climate change poses an ever more serious threat to children, with over half a billion children living in flood-prone areas and nearly 160 million living in high drought-risk regions.\textsuperscript{9} Children are also facing a new generation of fast-spreading epidemics like Ebola.

Figure 1 provides a snapshot of UNICEF’s role in emergencies over the past decade. In 2014, 98 UNICEF country offices (COs) responded to 294 humanitarian situations, including large-scale Level 3 responses to the crises in the Central African Republic, Iraq, the Philippines, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Ebola outbreak in West Africa.\textsuperscript{10} In 2015, this had grown to 102 COs and 310 humanitarian situations. As significant as the number of such crises is their intensity and the extent and nature of the threats, vulnerabilities and needs to which they give rise.

Over the past decade, financial resources contributed by partners to support UNICEF’s work in responding to the needs of children affected by crisis have increased almost three-fold.\textsuperscript{11} Figure 2 below shows the funding received since 2006. In 2015, UNICEF received $1.78 billion in revenue, an increase of nearly $1.2 billion compared to 2006. The increase in funding has enabled UNICEF to support multiple, simultaneous, large-scale emergencies requiring organization-wide responses, including in the Central African Republic, Iraq, Nepal, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

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\textsuperscript{8} UNICEF 2016 Humanitarian Action for Children; <www.unicef.org/appeals/>


2. Justification/rationale for the Synthesis

Given its significant humanitarian profile, UNICEF relies on a range of knowledge sources to help it prepare for emergencies and improve its response to them. Evaluation forms one critical pillar – with the UNICEF Evaluation Policy\textsuperscript{12} and the CCCs both underlining the organization’s pledge to ensure adequate monitoring and evaluation of its humanitarian work. Rigorous, independent evaluation constitutes one of the core means of meeting the learning and accountability needs of UNICEF. This includes accountability for results achieved for children and women in emergencies, fiduciary responsibility for investments in humanitarian action and overall learning and improvement.

As a result, evaluations have acquired growing significance both within UNICEF and in the inter-agency realm. Evaluations now form an explicit element of UNICEF emergency response planning, having been incorporated into the Simplified Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) for Level 3 emergencies. At the inter-agency level, it has been a core element of humanitarian reform, with greater inter-agency collaboration on evaluations to meet the growing need for humanitarian accountability and learning. This trend has carried over into the Transformative Agenda, which has amplified emphasis on joint accountability for results, beginning with more focused preparedness activities, undertaking assessment and analysis, and developing shared strategic plans. Humanitarian evaluation is an explicit element of the humanitarian programme cycle;\textsuperscript{13} evaluations at the end of a cycle determine whether the joint strategic plans have achieved the goals targeted in a relevant, effective and efficient manner. Guidelines have been developed for Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations (IAHEs) of Large-Scale System-Wide Emergencies.\textsuperscript{14}

Due to the magnitude, severity and impact of emergencies on children and women, UNICEF has commissioned several humanitarian evaluations to assess its programme performance, and to contribute to improved evidenced-based decision-making through accountability and learning exercises. With a decentralized evaluation function, most of the evaluations (largely programme/thematic evaluations in countries with some emergencies) have been initiated and managed by COs with support from regional offices. Multi-country, large, comprehensive or thematic evaluations have been managed by regional offices and the Evaluation Office (EO). Other evaluative exercises have been undertaken in specific humanitarian settings or in countries facing emergencies.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{trend_in_emergency_funding.png}
\caption{Trend in emergency funding, 2006–2015 ($ million)}
\label{fig:trend_funding}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{14} Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations of Large-Scale System-Wide Emergencies (IAHEs) Guidelines; <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/iahe_guidelines.pdf>
In 2012, the EO prepared a thematic Synthesis Report on the evaluations of humanitarian action (EHA) undertaken between 2008 and 2012. This was presented to the UNICEF Executive Board in April 2013. The Synthesis Report provided a snapshot of EHA activities within the organization, with an emphasis on major themes emerging from EHAs to help pivot the organization in a clearer strategic direction regarding the appropriate role of EHAs.

Since the 2013 Synthesis Report about 30 humanitarian-related evaluations have been undertaken at the country, regional and Headquarters levels, including large-scale EHAs for L3 emergencies. The latter includes: (1) the real-time evaluation of UNICEF’s response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (2014); (2) UNICEF’s response to the conflict in the Central African Republic (2015); (3) the evaluation of UNICEF’s humanitarian response to the Syria crisis (2016); and (4) UNICEF’s response to the 2014-15 Ebola outbreak in West Africa (2015). Also, UNICEF has supported several IAHEs, including: IAHE in the Central African Republic (2015), IAHE in South Sudan (2015); a synthesis of evaluations on the response to the Syria crisis (2015); and the IASC real-time evaluation of the humanitarian response to the Horn of Africa drought crisis, among others.

The proposed Synthesis will therefore build on the 2013 Synthesis, synthesize evaluations undertaken from 2010 onwards, and provide an indication of the evolution of UNICEF’s humanitarian response over the years, its challenges and achievements, and help identify areas of further inquiry. It is estimated that about 30 EHAs will be reviewed.

3. Purpose and objectives

The Synthesis of results from evaluations of UNICEF’s humanitarian action is an item in the Plan for Global Thematic Evaluations that was proposed for the UNICEF Executive’s Board consideration, and endorsed by the Board in its February 2016 session [E/ICEF/2016/7 (Part II)].16 The aim of this Synthesis is to determine factors supporting or constraining relevant, effective, efficient, connected, coherent and well-coordinated humanitarian action, drawing on evaluation reports and other evaluative documents within the context of UNICEF’s humanitarian work; and identify lessons learned and applied by UNICEF, drawing on a wide range of reviews, assessments and studies.

The Synthesis will serve not only the UNICEF Board but also senior management, staff, development partners and other interested stakeholders. It will provide:

- An overview of UNICEF’s EHA reports and related materials at all levels of the organization, including their number, focus, coverage, themes, quality; the level of investment in EHA compared to appropriate benchmarks, and compared to other humanitarian organizations and UNICEF’s own risk profile. The UNICEF Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS) will be used to assess the quality of the relevant evaluations.

- A gap analysis of where further inquiry is required, identifying areas/sectors with little or no EHA data concerning the impact of UNICEF’s programming for children and women as per its core mandate, or of its fulfilment of its role as Cluster Lead Agency (CLA) – for example, this would include humanitarian areas that have not had an evaluation in the past five years. Means would be identified to strengthen coverage, quality and use of EHAs within the organization.

- A contextual overview providing an indication of key events and trends relevant to the analysis, both within UNICEF and externally.16

- A synthesis of recurrent findings, issues, themes and constraints in programming in these contexts, identifying gaps in the evaluative work, and suggesting areas for further enquiry.

The report is intended to foster discussions on major issues emerging from the analysis, and to provide readers with a summary of evaluation evidence concerning UNICEF’s recent humanitarian action, and related policies, systems and practice. The Synthesis Report will also inform the next UNICEF Strategic Plan. The report aims to highlight success factors and constraints in programming in these contexts, identifying gaps in the evaluative work, and suggesting areas for further enquiry.

16 Including, externally, a brief overview of major trends likely to influence EHA within UNICEF moving forward, e.g. the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit and the related Grand Bargain, development of the new UNICEF Strategic Plan, the Transformative Agenda, and how UNICEF is likely to respond to future emergencies both on its own account and at the inter-agency level. Within UNICEF; the indications of noteworthy strategic developments and issues include Strengthening Humanitarian Action (SHA), the inclusion of evaluation in the L3/L2 SSOPs, partnerships in evaluations including undertaking IAHE; strengthening of the evaluation function via e-learning and EHA capacity development project; and other issues, including resource challenges, etc.
Drawing on evidence from UNICEF EHAs synthesized in developing the report, it is foreseen that the report will include draft decisions and actions for the Board’s consideration, as well as recommendations for UNICEF management’s attention, to be addressed in a management response.

Other users of this Synthesis are expected to include national partners, other United Nations entities, implementation partners, donors, internal and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the UNICEF National Committees that contribute resources and support towards humanitarian action.

4. Scope

The EO recognizes that, in the difficult circumstances of humanitarian action, systematic uptake of findings, lessons and recommendations from evaluations and other reviews can pose significant challenges to organizations, including UNICEF. A synthesis exercise is therefore proposed, which will provide evidence of the state of EHA within UNICEF, including major themes emerging from EHAs, so as to provide a clear, concise and accessible analysis of lessons learned and conclusions drawn, with a view to informing future humanitarian action.

The synthesis exercise will build on the thematic synthesis of 2013, considering all the humanitarian evaluations undertaken since 2010, and that are available in the UNICEF Evaluation Database. Evaluations undertaken from 2010 onwards are important since this is the period during which the Inter-agency Standing Committee (IASC) initiated the Transformative Agenda process to improve the quality of the humanitarian system to better respond to emergencies. This process was informed by, among others, major evaluations undertaken, including after the floods in Pakistan (2013) and the earthquake in Haiti (2011).

The evaluations in the Evaluation Database are quite diverse – some are broad scope evaluations (they look at the performance in several key programmatic areas), while others are narrowly focused (for example, evaluating the effects of specific interventions such as health, education, child protection, nutrition or other relevant UNICEF programmes in a specific area or population). The differences in objectives and methodologies prompt the question of which types of documents can and should be pooled together, and how the different types of documents should be analysed. Clarity with regard to these issues will need to be established in the inception phase.

Also, most of the evaluations have undergone a quality-assurance review by an external firm, to provide UNICEF with an independent assessment of the quality and usefulness of the evaluation reports. GEROS utilizes the following evaluation ratings: ‘outstanding best practice’, ‘highly satisfactory’, ‘mostly satisfactory’ and ‘unsatisfactory’; a few evaluations have ‘no rating’. The EO will arrange for the rating of relevant evaluation reports that have not yet been rated. Evaluations that have an ‘unsatisfactory’ quality rating will be dropped from the sample.

To enable the Evaluation Team to draft useful recommendations that are evidence-informed and can be implemented to further enhance UNICEF’s work, it will be important for the Team to review other documentation (such as related evaluative work) and engage with key UNICEF staff to better understand the ongoing policy, guidance, systems development work, including the follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit/Grand Bargain, the ongoing preparatory work for the next UNICEF Strategic Plan, etc. All these are critical in shaping UNICEF programmes in humanitarian contexts.

5. Methodology and approach

The synthesis process will take a consultative and participatory approach and seek to obtain relevant evidence accordingly. The following is proposed:

1. a systematic mapping and analysis of evaluation reports in the Evaluation Database and GEROS to gauge the number, quality and thematic focus of EHAs conducted since 2010 – this should include patterns in key findings, and conclusions and recommendations that have emerged from them;

2. a review of management responses to the evaluations, and any other reports (e.g. newsletters, pamphlets, briefs, etc.) that may showcase examples of EHA utilization throughout the organization and reasons and challenges underlying non-utilization;

3. a desk review of additional documentation (e.g., 2013 EHA Synthesis Report, Evaluation Database and GEROS review reports, financial information
on specific emergencies, policies, guidance, key reports on systems development work related to humanitarian action, follow-up to World Humanitarian Summit /Grand Bargain), etc.; and

4. engagement with the Reference Group and other UNICEF staff at Headquarters as well as in regional and country offices, to ensure that the focus and recommendations of the Synthesis are appropriate.

The following are the proposed phases of the synthesis process:

PHASE 1: SCOPING AND INCEPTION PHASE

a. Mapping and identification of all evaluation reports and related materials that will be the subject of review and synthesis, based on identified criteria agreed upon with the Reference Group.

b. Developing an analytical framework, which should include clear criteria to select the evaluations to be included and a ‘universe’ of the intended fields for data aggregation. This can be further refined during the synthesis process.

c. Analysis of the distribution of the evaluations against key criteria, providing a sense of context for the synthesis of lessons: i.e. whether these are representative, or are focused on a single region, type of emergency, programme, etc.  Also, the explicit strength of the evidence will need to be considered to ensure that the Synthesis reflects solid evaluative work.

The main output of the scoping and inception phase will be an Inception Report, to be reviewed and commented upon by the Reference Group and approved by the EO.

PHASE 2: DATA REVIEW, ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

a. Analysis of the key issues and lessons emerging. Preparing an initial outline of emerging issues for feedback and discussion.

b. Undertaking the synthesis, identifying key lessons based on sound analysis and evidence from evaluations synthesized, taking note of the various classifications of humanitarian settings/ geographic scope/context (depending on the evidence base, the Evaluation Team will gauge if it is necessary to have a different set of lessons by region).

c. Through further document analysis and key interviews with relevant UNICEF staff, determining and documenting ongoing policy, guidance, systems development work, including the follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit/Grand Bargain, ongoing work towards the new Strategic Plan, etc.

PHASE 3: REPORT-WRITING/FINALIZATION AND DISSEMINATION PHASE

a. Drafting the report, including conclusions and key lessons, clearly indicating the evaluation(s) from which the key lessons have been noted, and share for comments.

b. Developing the recommendations through a consultative process, taking into consideration: (1) lessons (clearly indicating which evaluation(s) the lesson is based on); (2) document analysis and interviews with key UNICEF staff on ongoing work related to strengthening the humanitarian response; and (3) other evaluative work that may be relevant to the Synthesis.

c. Finalizing the Synthesis Report; preparing a Summary Report and other dissemination materials, including a PPT presentation to be used for the webinars.

d. Undertaking dissemination webinars for the various regions and Headquarters.

6. Management and governance arrangements

The EO in New York will manage the preparation of the Synthesis Report. The Evaluation Specialist, Humanitarian, will lead the process under the guidance of the Senior Evaluation Specialist. The EO will commission a team of two individuals – an Evaluation Team Leader and an Evaluation Expert, whose details are provided under Section 8 (Evaluation Team) below. The Management Group will consist of UNICEF staff from EO, and additional members from the Reference Group, as and when requested by the Senior Evaluation Specialist.

A Reference Group will be established to strengthen the relevance, accuracy and hence credibility and utility of the final Synthesis Report. The Group will be chaired by the Senior Evaluation Specialist, and will
comprise representatives from: Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS), Programme Division (PD), Supply Division (SD), and staff from regional offices, specifically regional office staff engaged in support and oversight roles of humanitarian action. An external senior peer reviewer will also provide technical review during the synthesis exercise.

The Reference Group, by guiding the deliverables of the consultants, will help ensure that the synthesis preparation process and final outputs are of a high quality. The Reference Group will promote ownership of the results of the Synthesis Report. The Group will serve in an advisory capacity, its main responsibility being to review and comment on the main evaluation outputs (the ToR, the Inception Report, reports on emerging findings and the draft and final reports). The Reference Group will validate recommendations and ensure they are adapted to UNICEF and its working modality in humanitarian settings.

7. Deliverables and timeline

A. Key outputs

The Evaluation Team will generate the major outputs described below. The UNICEF EO clearance process will be followed. Specifically, first the EO Manager and the Management Group will need to quality check the submission and officially declare it ready for circulation to the Reference Group; second, the submission will be subject to a quality check by the Reference Group, which will provide advisory comments and suggestions. The draft output should then be amended, addressing the comments provided, and in due course approved by the EO. Once the output has been approved, the next phase of the work can begin. The EO should approve the final outputs before they are disseminated more widely.

i. An Inception Report of no more than 20 pages (excluding annexes), which will provide an understanding of how the Evaluation Team intends to undertake the synthesis. The Team will propose the most appropriate options for an analytical framework considering the evaluations that need to be synthesized.

ii. A comprehensive mapping of EHAs and related evaluative work that will be considered should be included as an annex in the Inception Report. The Inception Report should also identify clusters or themes that the Synthesis Report can be broken down into. The selection of clusters and themes will be considered by the Reference Group.

iii. A draft evaluation report, which will provide a synthesis including recurring trends, findings, themes, conclusions and recommendations drawn from the evaluative studies, and also identify evidence gaps and needs.

iv. The final Synthesis Report (maximum 40 pages, or about 20,000 words, excluding annexes), which will address the feedback received on the draft report. The final report should include relevant analysis as outlined in this ToR and a concise executive summary.

v. A summary paper (maximum 8,000 words), which should present key results in a ‘stand alone’ format. The format will be provided by the EO.

vi. Other dissemination materials, summarizing key findings, lesson learnt, gaps, etc., including a PPT presentation to be used for webinars.

B. Tentative schedule for the Synthesis Report

The Synthesis will be prepared over an estimated period of five months from September 2016 to January 2017, with dissemination in February–March 2017, as laid out in the indicative timeline below.

17 See Annex 2 for the proposed Synthesis Report outline.
Towards Improved Emergency Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>End date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. ToRs for the synthesis of results from evaluations of UNICEF</td>
<td>May – June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>humanitarian action in emergencies are drafted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ToRs are reviewed and approved.</td>
<td>July – August 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. An Evaluation Team is recruited (EO) and EO’s expected results are</td>
<td>August 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presented and discussed.</td>
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**Phase 1: Scoping and inception**

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<th>Step</th>
<th>End date</th>
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<tr>
<td>4. All reports to be included in the Synthesis are mapped and identified.</td>
<td>September 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An analytical framework is developed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The distribution of the evaluations is analysed against key criteria, to provide a sense of context for the synthesis of lessons.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Evaluation Team prepares and submits an Inception Report for comment; the Team revises the Inception Report based on comments from Reference Group; EO gives final clearance before the next phase can be started.</td>
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**Phase 2: Data review, analysis and Synthesis**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>End date</th>
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<tr>
<td>5. Evaluation Team undertakes a detailed review and mapping of evaluations and provides an initial outline of emerging issues.</td>
<td>Mid-October 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Analysis and discussions on the key issues and lessons emerging are held; key lessons are identified based on sound analysis and evidence from evaluative material. Evaluation Team produces the first draft Synthesis Report for comment by the Reference Group and clearance by EO.</td>
<td>End October 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. A validation workshop is held to enable the drafting of recommendations that can be implemented.</td>
<td>Mid-November 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The second draft Synthesis Report is produced and submitted for comment.</td>
<td>End November 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Synthesis Report is finalized for management response and publication (EO/Evaluation Team); a Summary Report is prepared for the Executive Board, as well as other dissemination materials.</td>
<td>December 2016 – January 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Dissemination workshops (EO/Evaluation Team) are held.</td>
<td>February – March 2017</td>
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</table>
8. Evaluation Team

As noted above, the Synthesis will be prepared over an estimated period of five months from September 2016 to January 2017. The synthesis process will be led by an Evaluation Team comprising two individual consultants with the profiles below. The assignment is expected to require approximately 50 working days of the Lead Consultant’s services, and 60 working days of the Evaluation Consultant/Analyst’s services.

A. Relevant profiles

i. Lead Consultant: Responsible for the overall delivery of the Synthesis in accordance with the ToR and Inception Report. The Lead Consultant should have:

- an advanced university degree (Masters or PhD) in economics, demography, statistics, evaluation, public policy or other relevant social sciences with a strong background in evaluation design and methodologies, and quantitative and qualitative data collection methods;
- at least 15 years of relevant professional work experience in conducting and managing multi-disciplinary evaluations, including report writing, with at least seven years of experience in EHA with/for UNICEF or other United Nations agencies or other international partners at the global, regional or country levels;
- knowledge of the current literature on humanitarian action; familiarity with UNICEF’s programmes in emergency contexts highly desirable, and of UNICEF’s corporate emergency procedures preferred;
- strong publication record, and experience undertaking synthesis or meta-analysis, especially those related to humanitarian response, using quantitative and qualitative research approaches;
- demonstrated experience leading a team, and ability to work in a multicultural environment and establish harmonious and effective working relationships, both within and outside the organization;
- fluency in English and knowledge of another United Nations language required; knowledge of a third language spoken in a few of the UNICEF programme countries would be an asset; and
- proven experience in writing clear, neutral analyses of complex and sensitive issues.

ii. Evaluation Consultant/Data Analyst: One Evaluation Consultant/Data Analyst with the following background and experience:

- an advanced university degree in social sciences, sociology, development planning, socio-political research or a related technical field;
- at least eight years of progressively responsible work experience and expertise in development and/or humanitarian sector in planning, programme management, research or knowledge management;
- experience undertaking evaluations in humanitarian settings and excellent understanding of evaluation principles and norms; in-depth knowledge of the international humanitarian system;
- experience undertaking synthesis of large numbers of documents, using quantitative and qualitative research approaches;
- knowledge of the current literature on humanitarian action; familiarity with UNICEF’s programmes in emergency contexts highly desirable and of UNICEF’s corporate emergency procedures preferred;
- varied sectoral knowledge and experience in at least three of UNICEF’s programme priority areas;
- strong qualitative and quantitative research skills (at a minimum in a Master’s degree programme);
- ability to undertake complex back-office analyses (e.g., desk reviews, analysis of timeline data, and so on);
- fluency in English is required; knowledge of another United Nations language or a language spoken in several programme countries is an asset; and
- excellent writing and oral communication skills.

B. Roles and responsibilities

i. Lead Consultant

The Lead Consultant will assume the lead role in drafting the Synthesis Report, ensuring that it is of a high quality and is completed in a timely manner. She/he will be responsible for the following tasks:

- conceptualizing the synthesis and ensuring that an in-depth analysis is undertaken and a high quality Synthesis Report produced;
- developing an analytical framework that includes clear criteria for selecting the evaluations to be included in the synthesis,
and a ‘universe’ of the intended fields for data aggregation, and ensuring these are discussed and agreed upon with the Reference Group;

• working closely with the Evaluation Consultant/Analyst, undertaking a detailed review and in-depth analysis of evaluations, and discussing key issues and lessons emerging; identifying key lessons based on sound analysis and evidence from the evaluative material synthesized;

• through further document analysis and key interviews with relevant UNICEF staff, determining and documenting ongoing policy, guidance and systems development work, including the follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit/Grand Bargain, ongoing work towards the new Strategic Plan, etc.;

• preparing the first draft of the Synthesis Report for comments, based on the agreed outline, and the further consultations and documentation review undertaken;

• developing the recommendations through a consultative process with the Management Group and Reference Group, taking into consideration conclusions from the synthesized material, further document analysis and interviews with key UNICEF staff on ongoing work related to strengthening humanitarian action;

• revising and finalizing the Synthesis Report based on the comments received from the Reference Group; finalizing the Executive Board synthesis paper, and other dissemination materials; and

• facilitating at least one face-to-face session and up to three webinars to disseminate the synthesis findings.

ii. Evaluation Consultant/Data Analyst

The Evaluation Consultant/Data Analyst will work closely with the Lead Consultant, and will be responsible for the following tasks:

• in consultation with the Lead Consultant, undertaking the mapping and identification of all reports that will be the subject of review and synthesis, based on identified criteria agreed upon with the Reference Group;

• undertaking a desk review of the ongoing policy, guidance and key humanitarian action reports, and holding consultations with key UNICEF staff to facilitate the drafting of recommendations that are evidence-informed, and that can be implemented to enhance UNICEF’s work;

• undertaking a systematic mapping and review of major evaluative exercises including after-action reviews, reviews, assessments, etc., and identifying lessons learned and applied by UNICEF, drawing on these wide range of reviews, assessments and studies;

• supporting the Lead Consultant in the analysis of the evaluations, helping to draft elements of the report, and helping to finalize the report; and

• supporting the drafting and finalizing of the Summary Report for submission to the UNICEF Executive Board, and preparing other dissemination materials.

C. How to apply

Interested individuals should send an Application Package clearly indicating the position being applied for:

1. Lead Consultant
2. Evaluation Consultant/Data Analyst

The Application Package should include the following:

a. a cover letter, indicating that you are applying for the consultancy for the ‘Synthesis and Gap Analysis of UNICEF Evaluative Work related to Humanitarian Action’;

b. an updated CV/resume, and completed Personal History Profile (P11); a blank P11 can be found at <www.unicef.org/about/employ/files/P11.doc>;

c. a sample report of a similar exercise/subject or an evaluation report, with a clear indication of the applicant’s contribution to the report (hyperlinks to the document are preferred); and

d. availability and daily fee.

Those applying for the Team Leader position should also include a short proposal indicating how they intend to undertake the synthesis.

The application should be transmitted via email by 20 September 2016, at the very latest, to the following email: evalofficeapplications@unicef.org. For any questions or clarifications, kindly contact: Jane Mwangi, Evaluation Specialist (jmwangi@unicef.org), with copy to Koorosh Raffii, Senior Evaluation Specialist, Humanitarian (kraffii@unicef.org).

Candidates should also indicate in the email subject the consultancy they are applying for, as follows:

Email Subject: Application for EHA Synthesis in Emergencies – Lead Consultant

Email Subject: Application for EHA Synthesis in Emergencies – Evaluation Consultant/Data Analyst
ANNEX 2: METHODOLOGY

This Annex describes the methodology for the Synthesis Report, which has prioritized two aspects: a systematic approach and transparency.

Selection of reports

All evaluation reports in the Evaluation Database (<www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/>) were listed and classified as stipulated by the Terms of Reference. Consequently, a list of reports was generated, which contained all reports published from 1 January 2010 to date and that evaluated or otherwise analysed humanitarian action, including preparedness and recovery action.

Between 2010 and 2016,18 UNICEF published 623 evaluations or evaluative documents. Of these, 76 covered humanitarian action – from response through to preparedness and recovery.19 Overall, they evaluated humanitarian action with a value equivalent of $1.57 billion in the period – or just over 53 per cent20 of UNICEF’s total humanitarian expenditure in the period ($3 billion).

Geographically, the 76 evaluations were undertaken across all the seven regions in which UNICEF implemented humanitarian action. They addressed six of the seven sectors in the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017,21 with just over half covering multi-sector humanitarian responses. The most evaluated emergencies were linked to natural disasters, followed by those linked to conflict. A substantial proportion of humanitarian evaluations also covered global approaches or emergency-related systems. Likely due to the organization’s triggering mechanisms, all of UNICEF’s Level 3 responses since 2012, and most Level 2 responses, have been evaluated either by an inter-agency or a UNICEF-specific study.22

Figure 1 below illustrates the evaluative picture of UNICEF’s humanitarian actions between 2010 and 2016:

18 The evaluation count of all reports published on <www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/> was taken in November 2016. In addition, it includes the evaluation of the response to the Ebola emergency in West Africa in 2014/15, which, at the time of writing, was about to be published.
19 Of these 76 reports, 17 were inter-agency evaluations and three were commissioned by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
20 Total humanitarian expenditure by country was provided by UNICEF, based on internal coding of expenditure for humanitarian purposes. Total value evaluated was taken either from evaluation documents where it was clearly stated, or the proportion calculated by applying the programmatic scope of the respective evaluation to UNICEF expenditure figures.
21 Excluding HIV/AIDS in emergencies, for which no evaluation was available.
22 An Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation of the Iraq response was planned, but has been suspended. Emergencies in the Nigeria region and in Yemen have not yet been evaluated. The Level 2 response to the storms in the Pacific Islands has not been formally evaluated.
23 Note: CEE/CIS – Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States; EAP – East Asia and the Pacific; ESAR – Eastern and Southern Africa Region; LAC – Latin America and Caribbean; MENA – Middle East and North Africa; SA – South Asia; WCAR – West and Central Africa Region.
As per the Terms of Reference, all reports of an inter-agency character were then excluded, as were all reports that were rated as ‘unsatisfactory’ in GEROS. A final number of 30 reports remained, which formed the basis of this Synthesis (see Annex 3: Bibliography).

The 30 reports cover all seven UNICEF regions and all sectors of its activity except for HIV/AIDS. Figure 2 below summarizes their characteristics.

24 Reflects the prominent features of the crisis as described in evaluations. Evaluations of systems/approaches may include global evaluations of humanitarian response systems or corporate approaches.
Data extraction

An analytical matrix for the analysis of the 30 reports was designed following several steps:

i. review of key UNICEF strategic documentation
   a. information on the broader humanitarian architecture
   b. information on UNICEF’s institutional arrangements for humanitarian response and relevant key policy documents

ii. review of the 2013 Synthesis Report;

iii. review of a separate Synthesis of Learning from Humanitarian Action (from after-action reports, lessons-learned exercises, internal reviews etc.);

iv. review of a sample of five evaluation reports;

v. review of the Terms of Reference and the analytical fields proposed in its Annex 1 (classification of humanitarian settings) and Annex 2a (possible themes);

vi. discussion with UNICEF’s EO; and

vii. review and comment by members of the Reference Group.

The analytical matrix provided the main analytical ‘spine’ for the exercise, creating a first storyline for the Synthesis Report. It ensured that evidence from the 30 reports was collected systematically and data was not missed or treated differently; that the body of evidence remained transparent; and that findings could be calibrated to the strength of evidence (i.e. frequency of occurrence in the evidence base).

The analytical matrix, in addition to allowing analysis by substantial determinants, filtered the evidence by general features of the emergency as well as the programming area. This allowed for more granularity within the themes and lessons arising from specific emergency settings or in particular programming areas to be drawn out. The analytical framework evolved during the analysis, and several substantial determinants were amended or added to accommodate the actual evidence extracted from the 30 reports. Table 1 lists the substantial determinants and the general characteristics applied in the analysis.

Ensuring evidence quality

The methodology included a mechanism for ensuring evidence quality. The first step was the exclusion of ‘unsatisfactory’ evaluation reports from the sample. The second step was applied through the analytical framework: individual findings were quality-assessed, using a scoring system from 1 to 4 (see Box 1 below). This ensured that weak or unreliable findings were not included in the final analysis (such as that, for example, which relies on an interview with a single individual). A similar system has been applied in other syntheses before.

An Inception Report was prepared at this stage, detailing the analytical approach as described, and describing the evidence base.

After submission of the Inception Report, the data extraction phase commenced. Findings were extracted from the evaluation reports and applied against the analytical matrix. Each finding was scored accordingly, under a column within the matrix, and evidence rating less than 1 was excluded from the Synthesis. This ensured that the Synthesis findings were based only on solid and credible evidence.

Box 1 Scoring for evidence credibility

4 = very good (uses multiple sources that are fully triangulated and a credible international or national source)
3 = good (uses more than two evidence sources that are triangulated and/or a credible international or national source)
2 = adequate (uses two evidence sources that are triangulated)
1 = inadequate (uses a single source that is not credible, with little to no triangulation)

---

25 EHAs relating to emergencies in the Philippines (Typhoon Haiyan), Haiti, Central African Republic, Syria and the Sahel.

26 See, for example, ‘WFP Operations Evaluations Synthesis’ (annual Syntheses presented to the Executive Board). One other recent international synthesis included an ‘evidence strength’ matrix, but this considered only the coverage of the theme within reports (whether it featured in one paragraph/multiple sentences, or in multiple paragraphs), rather than the quality of this evidence. It was not considered sufficiently sound for adoption here.
Table 1: **Analytical fields**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical field: Theme</th>
<th>Analytical field: Detail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Context and programming</strong></td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cause of emergency</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Features</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Onset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Duration of response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Integrated programming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong></td>
<td>Performance of humanitarian interventions in terms of their own intended objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efficiency</strong></td>
<td>Timeliness (swiftness of response including transition from regular to emergency operations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connectedness</strong></td>
<td>Cost if and where available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coherence</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Capacity development/systems strengthening, including at local level</strong></td>
<td>Efforts to strengthen national systems (particularly in different emergency settings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partnerships – United Nations system, national partners, implementing partners</strong></td>
<td>Choice and selection of partners (rationales, inclusion/exclusion, balance of partners)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accountability, including monitoring and reporting and AAP</strong></td>
<td>Use of partnership agreements in emergencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coherence with IHPs</strong></td>
<td>Results measuring and reporting systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Implementation of AAP commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evidence of Strengthening Humanitarian Action in UNICEF</strong></td>
<td>Humanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impartiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neutrality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risks to women and children</strong></td>
<td>Evidence of organizational change and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence of gathering and use of lessons learned to inform humanitarian action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence of management responses implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factors (internal)</strong></td>
<td>Risk identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Risk management in delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other themes emerging</strong></td>
<td>Management/staffing-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comparative advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finance-related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supply and logistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other drivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Activation/surge (SSOPs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political economy aspects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs assessments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communications/information management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nature of response</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Data analysis and synthesis**

In the next step, data analysis was conducted, which described the frequency, intensity and significance of findings. Common themes and patterns were identified across analytical fields. Divergences or contradictions were recorded. Findings were triangulated/informed by the supplementary evidence sources for the Synthesis, including inter-agency evaluations, corporate information, management responses to evaluations, and interviews. A draft Synthesis Report was then generated and submitted to the UNICEF EO for review.

Two meetings with the Reference Group took place during this process. The first meeting, in December 2016, reviewed the Inception Report, including the selection of evaluations and the analytical framework. It ensured that the Synthesis would be situated in a sound and current understanding of the organizational trajectory on humanitarian action, including the follow-up to the World Humanitarian Summit/Grand Bargain, preparatory work for the next UNICEF Strategic Plan and other organizational change initiatives. The second meeting, in January 2017, discussed first trends emerging from the analysis prior to the production of the first Synthesis draft.

**Finalization**

Following presentation of the draft Synthesis Report, it is anticipated that its findings will be discussed with the Reference Group for the exercise. Any necessary corrections will be made, and recommendations will be refined pending Reference Group, EO and any other appropriate consultations.

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**Table 2: Assessing the evidence strength**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/ Criteria</th>
<th>Sub-criteria</th>
<th>Evidence base score*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Needs assessments</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Joint needs assessments</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>Appropriateness</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>National Priorities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>21.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>Moderate-Strong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>30.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>National capacity</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
<td>Sub-national capacity</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>21.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>Moderate-Strong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Timeliness</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Cost-effectiveness</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>Moderate-Strong</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Links to other ops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connectedness</td>
<td>Resilience</td>
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<td>Integration</td>
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<td>Average</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>14.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>Moderate-Strong</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes/ Criteria</th>
<th>Sub-criteria</th>
<th>Evidence base score*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Joint plans</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>other partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Selection of partners</td>
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<td>Moderate</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>Moderate-Strong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cutting</td>
<td>Equity</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cutting</td>
<td>Protection</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-cutting</td>
<td>AAP</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>16.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>Weak - Strong</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
<td>IHP</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principles</td>
<td>CCCs</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution</td>
<td>Weak-Moderate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* this is based on the number of evaluations that assessed a sub-criteria (out of 30 evaluation reports)
## ANNEX 3: BIBLIOGRAPHY

List of evaluations analysed


ANNEX 4: LEARNING FROM HUMANITARIAN ACTION

A synthesis of non-evaluative UNICEF documents on humanitarian action 2010 to 2016

March 2017 | Volker Hüls

Table of Contents

Acronyms ........................................ 68
Executive summary ............................... 68
Purpose, scope and methodology ............ 69
Thematic area 1: Effectiveness of the response. 70
Thematic area 2: Efficiency of the response. .. 76
Thematic area 3: Accountability .................. 80
Bibliography ...................................... 81
Evidence strength matrix ....................... 82
Executive summary

This short collation of learning from internal UNICEF documentation aims to complement a wider synthesis of humanitarian evaluations between 2010 and 2016. It focuses on lessons learned within UNICEF, which are consequently of a more operational nature than those found in formal evaluations.

The reviewed documents shared several themes, which shape this paper. The theme of *results measurement* shows the evolution of measuring humanitarian results since the introduction of Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) in UNICEF in 2011, demonstrating progress and pointing at remaining bottlenecks, specifically with respect to monitoring of outcome and higher level results.

The *integrated programming* theme draws on a dedicated study on this emerging practice, and relates it to experience from other emergency responses in the reviewed period. The evidence shows that increasingly, humanitarian action in UNICEF benefits from integration between two or more sectors, but also that integration is still not a given in multi-sector responses.

Communication with affected populations, or *Communication for Development (C4D) in emergencies*, came to the forefront of UNICEF humanitarian action during the response to the Ebola epidemic, and features with increasing prominence in subsequent humanitarian responses, including as an integrator between sectors.

Communication with affected populations, or *Communication for Development (C4D) in emergencies*, came to the forefront of UNICEF humanitarian action during the response to the Ebola epidemic, and features with increasing prominence in subsequent humanitarian responses, including as an integrator between sectors.

Although early recovery has a dedicated space in the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs), *linking development and humanitarian action* to aid fast transition back to normalcy is not yet a consistent feature in emergency responses. The resilience discourse within UNICEF in the last few years has helped in understanding the synergies better. It has also supported improvements in establishing resilient service delivery systems before emergencies happen. The reviewed documents provide a rich variety of examples of successes and areas of improvement in linking these two core elements of UNICEF country programmes.

On the other side of the trajectory, the *transition from regular to emergency operations* remains challenging.

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**Acronyms**

- AAP: Accountability to Affected Populations
- C4D: Communication for Development
- CCC: Core Commitments for Children
- CEAP: Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure
- CO: Country Office
- DRC: Democratic Republic of the Congo
- EHA: Evaluation of Humanitarian Action
- EMOPS: UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes
- ESARO: UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office
- HPM: Humanitarian Performance Monitoring
- IASC: Inter-agency Standing Committee
- L2: Level 2 (Emergency Classification)
- L3: Level 3 (Emergency Classification)
- MoRES: Monitoring Results for Equity System
- NGO: Non-governmental Organization
- PBEA: Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy
- PCA: Programme Cooperation Agreement
- RRM: Rapid Response Mechanism
- RRMP: Rapid Response to Movements of Population
- SSOP: Simplified Standard Operations Procedures
- WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
- WFP: World Food Programme
for many country offices. In the years since introducing its Simplified Standard Operating Procedures (SSOPs) for Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies, the organization has gained substantial learning in this regard. The examples from the reviewed literature show successes in this transition, but also point out remaining weaknesses that must still be addressed. Internally, both providing and absorbing appropriate surge capacity remains the biggest challenge for offices. Surge staff do not always match office needs, and offices may not always make the best use of surge support. A notable exception has been surge support from the Supply Division. The Immediate Response Team may not always integrate into the country environment as well as intended.

UNICEF’s management of partnerships and Programme Cooperation Agreements (PCA) plays a central role in this transition, warranting a separate theme. The evidence points to PCAs being a delaying factor in scaling up, while also bringing out the benefit of establishing strategic and contingency partnerships before an emergency. Negotiating these as part of preparedness is a good practice that has served country offices well.

Understanding the cost of the response becomes increasingly important for upward accountability. This Synthesis finds a good example of cost-effectiveness in the South Sudan Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), but identifies a shortage of evidence on efficiency in most other documents reviewed.

The Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) is crucial and a firm commitment made by UNICEF. In practice, there are a few positive examples that show how the organization has provided a space for the affected people’s voice in shaping the response plan. These will be helpful in establishing a universal practice of accountability in UNICEF responses.

Purpose, scope and methodology

This collation of findings from internal lessons-learning exercises, after-action reviews and studies of humanitarian action in UNICEF complements a full synthesis of all relevant evaluations of humanitarian action (EHA) by UNICEF between 2010 and 2016. The findings provide an internal reflection of how UNICEF operates in emergencies. This paper should be read in conjunction with the synthesis of evaluative findings of the EHA, to establish a balanced understanding of the results the organization has achieved and the change it has undergone in this period. The scope is limited to available lessons-learned documents, after-action review documents, and studies that are not evaluative in nature but can illustrate some of UNICEF’s learning from humanitarian action since 2010. The findings extracted from the documents are grouped into themes, guided by the main topics found in the sources. These themes are presented in separate sub-chapters, and grouped into the super-topics of effectiveness, efficiency and accountability. In total, 25 documents were reviewed to produce this report; the complete list can be found in the bibliography annexed at the end of this document. Annexed is also a matrix that rates the strength of the evidence of each source against each theme. Given the variety of the source documentation, this rating helps understand to what extent the reviewed literature contributed to each theme. Two documents that are cited in this Synthesis were not included in the scoring. Firstly, a transcript of an interview with a departing staff member from the Syria response was not included for reasons of confidentiality (it was also left out of the bibliography). Secondly, a self-assessment of UNICEF on its practice of AAP was not included in the scoring as it exclusively covered this theme while all other documents addressed two or more themes. It is, however, included in the bibliography.

The ratings were combined to provide a relative score for the evidence strength for each theme, with 1 as the highest score and 0.36 as the lowest score.
Thematic area 1: Effectiveness of the response

RESULTS MEASUREMENT

The theme of results measurement has the second highest relative strength rating (0.79). It is discussed at considerable length in most of the documents reviewed for this Synthesis, and benefits from a recent review of the Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) approach.

The documentation reviewed for this chapter spans the period from early 2010 to mid-2016. During this time, UNICEF successfully piloted and then introduced HPM and has since effectively established a much stronger focus on results in its humanitarian action. Working through the initial difficulties encountered when it introduced the new system during the Level 3 Horn of Africa response in 2011, the organization learned and adjusted the system to become workable. New challenges in recent responses, such as to the Ebola and the European refugee crises, can be expected to further modify and strengthen the established system.

Following pilots in the Haiti and Pakistan responses during 2010, UNICEF introduced HPM\(^1\) fully during the 2011 Horn of Africa response to establish a standardized structure for monitoring its humanitarian achievements (UNICEF, 2012a). In the same year, learning from the South Sudan emergency response had captured that “there was a gap in 2011 around CCC-based indicators and the ability of staff to measure results rather than activities” (UNICEF, 2012b). The introduction was initially felt as an unnecessary burden by staff, but later “results data did improve as a result of its deployment” (UNICEF, 2012a). Partners in the Horn of Africa, however, could not always provide the required data and the country offices had to work on building capacity for more results-based monitoring by their partners on the ground.

In subsequent years the use of HPM has become an integral part of UNICEF emergency responses, and as a standard feature, UNICEF Situation Reports now feature a summary of results against key indicators. While this has strengthened the measurement of results and their reporting in humanitarian action, other factors still affect the quality of the data. In the Ebola response, for example, indicators used for measuring and reporting results changed significantly over time (UNICEF, 2015a). This was partly due to an adaptation of the response to the reality of the situation, but partly also to operational changes: The creation of the United Nations Mission for the Ebola Epidemic Response (UNMEER) required a set of common indicators for reporting progress in reducing the disease burden. While these indicators standardized the reporting on the response, and allowed comparison between country-level results, they were not necessarily the most suitable for measuring results on the ground (Lawry-White, 2015).

In 2015, in Nepal, the main obstacle to measuring results was the limitation of the existing system in gathering information in the field and feeding it into the country-level reporting format (UNICEF, 2015c). In the same year, in the responses to Cyclone Pam and Typhoon Mayak in the Pacific Islands, and to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, lessons learned exercises identified field monitoring and the reporting of results to programme sections as a major challenge (Dunn, 2015; UNICEF, 2014). The RRM in South Sudan posed its own unique challenge in this regard, as the transient nature of its operation and the limitations to continuity

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\(^1\) Since its introduction, the HPM approach has operated under different specific names, including being named Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) in Emergencies during the establishment of the organization-wide MoRES system. The general practice to date is to refer to it as the Humanitarian Performance Monitoring (HPM) approach (Perry, 2016).
after the initial interventions meant that longer-term results of an RRM action could not be measured in many instances (Gilgan & Gugliotta, 2015). Finally, the European migrant crisis also challenged the existing approach to measuring results in humanitarian action, and the review of the response points out that “...more coherent methodologies for measuring results need to be developed so that performance can be monitored along the route of migration” (UNICEF, 2016c).

A dedicated review (or formative assessment) of the HPM approach commissioned by UNICEF in 2016 reflects these experiences. HPM, while often seen as more rigid than originally intended, has improved structured data collection and analysis in country offices (Perry, 2016). While its most prominent feature - the tracking of two to three core indicators per sector - is the most utilized at higher management levels (e.g. through the HPM-based Situation Reports), the assessment found that generating the underlying datasets has also strengthened UNICEF country office data management and supports programmatic decisions (Perry, 2016). Some challenges, however, remain. Firstly, HPM appears to be better suited to rapid-onset and time-limited responses. In protracted crises, the absence of quality and impact indicators becomes increasingly notable and restricts the utility of HPM further on. Secondly, HPM appears to often be managed in isolation, i.e., separate from the established planning and monitoring function of the country offices, depriving it of vital pre-crisis data and missing out on potential synergies. Thirdly, recent emergency responses, especially those to the Zika and Ebola epidemics, but also the response to the migrant crisis in Europe, have triggered questions about the continued validity of the CCC indicators, which are the core of HPM. For example, in crises in middle-income countries, the caseload of severe acute malnutrition (SAM) is less relevant, while at the same time there are no indicators for AAP commitments or C4D responses (Perry, 2016). In middle-income countries, as the 2015/2016 El Nino drought in Southern Africa demonstrated, HPM is not well practised in country offices and has to be strongly supported by additional capacity (UNICEF, 2016b).

INTEGRATED PROGRAMMING

The theme of integrated programming is covered in most documents but not with the same depth as results measurement. It therefore has a lower relative evidence strength rating of 0.74.

The documentation reviewed for this chapter spans the period from mid-2011 to mid-2016. During this time, UNICEF re-engaged in direct implementation in emergencies with the RRM, a prime example of successful programme integration in emergencies. Outside of the RRM approach, integration in humanitarian response has not made substantial progress, but has found traction in the creation of child-friendly spaces during emergencies.
Integrated programming in UNICEF humanitarian action was the subject of a dedicated study released in 2014. Using case studies from emergency responses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Haiti, Lebanon, Pakistan and the Sahel, it aggregated field experiences into the first substantial analysis of the practice and the potential for integrated responses. The study offers a consolidated set of means of integration, which provides an appropriate tool to analyse other responses in the period covered by this synthesis (Vine Management Consulting, 2014).

A key means of integration is the integration by partnership, where either a non-governmental organization (NGO) partner manages a multi-sector programme, or UNICEF or a partner manages other partners in a multi-sector approach to a situation. Other means of integration were identified. One is the use of joint preparedness exercises to bring sectors together; another is integration through using common multi-sector assessments. Integrated planning and integrated monitoring are other related options. The original example for a combination of these is the Rapid Response to Movements of Population (RRMP) approach used in the response to protracted instability in the DRC (Vine Management Consulting, 2014). Here, NGO partners came together to provide multi-sector support to displaced people, backed by joint planning and monitoring through a web-based portal. Multi-sectoral PCAs were also used in the response to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, explicitly applied as a lesson from previous emergencies (UNICEF, 2014).

The most common means of integration observed in the period covered by this Synthesis, however, was integration via entry points. An increasingly common entry point for at least two sectors, education and child protection, is the creation of child-friendly spaces. These may have other sectors contributing to a safe and supportive environment, for example water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and health, but also nutrition and HIV/AIDS. In the documents reviewed for this Synthesis, child-friendly spaces were reported from responses in the Horn of Africa, South Sudan, the Ebola response, and during the response to the migrant crisis in Europe. Interestingly, the establishment of child-friendly spaces was intended during the response to the Nepal earthquake in 2015, but according to the after-action review, this failed to take place because of delayed supplies (UNICEF, 2015c). Child-friendly spaces are now a general feature of education responses in emergencies, as documented by the case studies on education in emergencies in the reviewed documentation (UNICEF, 2010) and in the study on peace-building through education in South Sudan (UNICEF, 2015b). Internal evidence also points to the success of internally displaced persons sites as geographical entry points for joint services in homes during the early Syria response in 2013.2

Integration via entry points has been taken further since the finalization of the 2014 study on integrated programming. The RRMP is UNICEF’s return to direct implementation to accelerate response to initial needs in an acute emergency. The RRMP was used in recent years in responses to the crises in the Central African Republic, South Sudan and Iraq. With respect to RRMP, the experience in South Sudan was considered to be well documented. An internal review of the RRMP in South Sudan was produced in a joint undertaking between the UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) and the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO), and analysed the functionality and impact of the RRMP in this particular context (Gilgan & Gugliotta, 2015). In South Sudan, the RRMP brought together sector specialists and staff with a facilitating role (security, logistics, social mobilization) across agency boundaries in cooperation with the World Food Programme. The teams were deployed directly to identified sites with populations in need, and provided a first response package of essential supplies and services. In South Sudan, the entry points were dual: geographical areas that otherwise remained unreached, and a nutrition theme. All services available in the RRMP contributed to the primary aim of treating acute malnutrition in the targeted sites. While the immediate effects of the RRMP per the review were tangible, a weak point was continuity of services. Ideally, the RRMP should have transitioned into an integration by partnership model, with the explicit goal of attracting NGO partners to previously unserved sites. This, according to the review, did not always succeed, and remains an area for improvement to preserve the initial results achieved by the RRMP mechanism (Gilgan & Gugliotta, 2015).

In the Ebola response, a positive example of integration around an entry point emerged. The community care centres established during the response combined C4D, health, protection and nutrition into a package of services that was effective in reducing case numbers (UNICEF, 2015a). During the response to the 2015/2016 El Nino drought in Southern Africa, integration was constrained by limited use of multi-sector assessments,  

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2 Taken from an internal, confidential interview with a departing staff member who worked in a central position in the Homs office at the time (not included in the literature list).
but benefitted from the prominent use of inherently multi-sectoral cash transfers (UNICEF, 2016b).

While these well-documented methods of integrating emergency responses confirm the positive findings of the study on integration, other documents show that there is still some way for UNICEF to go towards stronger integration, outside of using entry points or purposeful management of partners. The Horn of Africa lessons learned document recorded that “… COs consider that there is potential for more UNICEF cross-sectoral coordination, which they saw as inadequate in this emergency response. COs were clear that there is no consistent approach to integrated working, even where disciplines are organized under child survival. COs generated separate sector plans in their 180-days plans, but without consideration for how to provide integrated delivery of services.” (UNICEF, 2012a). The Nepal after-action review had similar findings on the limits to integration. The main obstacles there were insufficient coordination among section chiefs, combined with the lack of a forum to monitor how programme integration and convergence were working. In addition, it appears that cross-sector areas implemented their own programmes as opposed to adding value to sector work (UNICEF, 2015c).

C4D IN EMERGENCIES

C4D in emergencies is discussed in some depth in most of the reviewed documents, and has a relative evidence strength rating of 0.66.

The role of communication with those that receive assistance, and its role in assisting people while helping to shape and improve the relevance of the response, has evolved over the period covered by this Synthesis. Looking back at the 2010 Haiti response, C4D was “under-used” there (UNICEF EMOPS, 2011). In the lessons learned from the Horn of Africa response, C4D seemed “to be an underdeveloped area for all COs” (UNICEF, 2012a). In the lessons learned from the 2011 South Sudan emergency response, C4D was described more as a cross-cutting communication function than as a means to engage people and learn about their needs (UNICEF, 2012b). The 2014 study on integrated programming describes a similar impression: “Currently, Communication for Development is more about ‘telling’ - sending messages about behaviour change, rather than listening, the potential of which UNICEF has still to exploit.” (Vine Management Consulting, 2014). The Initial Response Team in the L2 response to Typhoon Haiyan did not include a C4D specialist, a gap explicitly mentioned in the lessons learned review of the response (UNICEF, 2014).

The Ebola response fundamentally changed this background role of C4D in emergencies. For the first time, C4D was vital to the success of, and was leading, an emergency response. UNICEF even took on a formal inter-agency leadership role in C4D (UNICEF, 2015a). At the same time, the skill set needed for using C4D in emergencies was hard to find within
the organization. The lessons learned exercise for the Ebola response found that “it is now a unique moment for UNICEF to revisit the C4D conceptual framework and organisational capacity to lead the sector in future emergencies” (Lawry-White, 2015). In the same year, the Nepal earthquake after-action review stated that “C4D [was] not at the optimum level,” partly owing to the fact that no C4D specialists were involved in response planning (UNICEF, 2015c). In the El Nino drought response in Southern Africa in 2015/16, the lack of current baselines limited the tailoring of C4D approaches, making them generic and not necessarily geared towards specific needs of affected populations (UNICEF, 2016b).

Two recent examples of the increasing importance of C4D in humanitarian settings, however, show the progress the organization is making. The Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy (PBEA) Programme in South Sudan has successfully worked with constructive two-way communication channels to address the roots of conflict in communities through education facilities (UNICEF, 2015b). When UNICEF responded to the needs of migrants in Europe in late 2015, teams on the ground quickly realized that they needed different approaches to dealing with highly transient groups. Their role often came down to listening, communicating advice, and providing well-targeted mobile supplies that migrants felt they needed most. The success of this interactive method of assisting people in need was a key lesson learned that sets the response in Europe apart from more ‘traditional’ emergency responses for UNICEF (UNICEF, 2016c).

LINKING DEVELOPMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

Linking development and humanitarian action has considerable depth of expertise, comparable to the theme of C4D in emergencies (relative evidence strength rating of 0.68).

The documentation reviewed for this chapter spans the period from early 2010 to mid-2016. During this time, UNICEF repeatedly experienced the concurrent or sequential implementation of regular and emergency programmes, without necessarily being able to link them fully. The resilience discourse within UNICEF in the last few years has helped understand the synergies better, and has also helped establish more resilient systems for service delivery before emergencies happen.

The connection between development and humanitarian action is at the heart of UNICEF programmes. Usually, country offices commence emergency operations from within a regular country programme, and do not always suspend the development elements in favour of a humanitarian response. In practice, therefore, country offices work across what is often still a divide, with commonly found parallel structures for emergency and regular programmes. The resilience discourse in the organization has in recent years strengthened efforts to integrate development and humanitarian thinking. Resilience is intrinsically covering both ends of the development–humanitarian transition: resilient communities are less affected by emergencies while humanitarian assistance can build resilience. In 2016, UNICEF produced a dedicated study that analysed the state of play in the organization and proposed the options for establishing a strong culture of linking development and humanitarian action (UNICEF, 2016e).

Elements of linking development and humanitarian action are visible in the literature from the entire period covered by this Synthesis. The concept of ‘early recovery’, a term describing the active building of capacity during humanitarian response to allow speedy transition back to normalcy, is well defined in the CCCs. The lessons learned in the 2010 Haiti earthquake response show that such early capacity investment can be productive. From the beginning, UNICEF worked with national authorities in the response, provided support to make government offices operational based on capacity assessments, and deployed a dedicated early recovery expert to the country (UNICEF EMOPS,
The response in South Sudan in the same year showed that early investment in education is the foundation of other development goals, making it central to post-crisis transition (UNICEF, 2010).

Programming in South Sudan provided more opportunities for making these linkages, reflecting the complex and protracted character of the emergency where both development and humanitarian programming took place. The lessons learned during the response in 2010, which point out institutional and infrastructural gaps, urge UNICEF to include early recovery in its planning process and to increase the connection between the wider humanitarian community and development partners in the country (Orchison, 2012). In the same country, a study on conflict-sensitive peacebuilding through education (UNICEF, 2015b) concluded that it was important in the context to “…establish linkages between lifesaving humanitarian responses [and] development activities.” It put forward that there is a crucial role for safe and protective learning spaces in this, which as “Zones of Peace” can aid the rebuilding of social cohesion among divided communities (UNICEF, 2015b).

The 2014 response to the Ebola epidemic allowed UNICEF to look at connecting humanitarian action and development from a different angle. An anthropologist contracted by UNICEF pointed out in her case studies that C4D could be a powerful element in the humanitarian–development transition. In its role to “keep communities at the centre of … programming” through community-led initiatives, it could empower communities to take control of their own recovery and thus become more resilient against future outbreaks (UNICEF, 2015a). In this regard, UNICEF was constrained by the structure of its funding. Effectively, it had to manage completely disconnected ‘getting to zero’ and ‘recovery’ programmes. This reduced the effectiveness of a potentially more holistic programme that could ‘build back better’ (UNICEF, 2015a).

The response to the Nepal earthquake in 2015 was another reminder of how multiple planning frameworks hinder a holistic approach to linking development and humanitarian action. The lessons learned documentation on the response found that there was a need to urgently reconcile the parallel plans for relief, resilience, early recovery and rehabilitation, and it recommended that interlinkages identified in the process should be worked into the subsequent regular programme (UNICEF, 2015c).

“Breaking silos and the traditional humanitarian/development divide” turned out to be highly productive in the response to the migrant crisis in Europe during 2015. The ability to connect the immediate humanitarian response to UNICEF’s longer-term development work in the region by engaging with relevant government institutions and the social system was invaluable and produced benefits for sustainability beyond the immediate response (UNICEF, 2016c). Interestingly, the opposite effect was observed in the response to the El Nino drought emergency in Southern Africa in 2015/16. Here, the fact that the majority of donor funding in the smaller middle-income countries was very specifically earmarked made it more difficult to transition from a general emergency response to such highly specific programming (UNICEF, 2016b).

The 2016 study on linking development and humanitarian action reinforces these lessons from past responses, and again points out the risks separate funding and planning streams for regular and humanitarian programmes pose to good programming: “If UNICEF conceives of humanitarian action and resilience separately, they will remain parallel agendas, limiting the potential for humanitarian programmes to develop resilience” (UNICEF, 2016d). This appears to be particularly relevant when humanitarian action transitions back to regular programmes as the previous examples have shown. The study sees a very relevant role for the early recovery approach in this phase of programming (UNICEF, 2016d).

The cases collected for this study on linking development and humanitarian action show that overall, UNICEF has been more successful in supporting local capacity pre-crisis, which can then deal with emergencies when they occur. For example, UNICEF supported the expansion of rural health services in Ethiopia, which had a positive impact on the treatment of acute malnutrition in the 2011 emergency. The notable absence of such investment, though, severely constrained the response in Mali in 2012. There was little investment in the network of community health workers, which then urgently needed to be strengthened in the middle of scaling up the emergency response. Had it been in place prior to the emergency, scaling up would have been faster (UNICEF, 2016e).

According to the Mali case study, the strengthened health worker systems, although a ‘by-product’ of the emergency response, nevertheless gave the country more human resource capacity in the health sector, and allowed it to transition out of the emergency phase more smoothly. This underlines how humanitarian action in itself can benefit long-term capacity that remains after the emergency (UNICEF, 2016e). Mali also provides a positive example of integrating known prior development issues into the emergency response.
Towards Improved Emergency Responses

plans, and ensuring that the humanitarian action “dovetailed with longer term development vision and programming” (UNICEF, 2016e).

As part of recent analysis to better understand programming in fragile environments, UNICEF produced a case study on its work with local government structures in Libya. Here, in a highly fragile environment, and with protracted humanitarian needs, the UNICEF programme engaged with local municipal authorities to oversee and facilitate the delivery of services to children through community-based organizations. This effectively merged elements of development and humanitarian programmes, demonstrating the synergies between them (UNICEF, 2016a).

Thematic area 2: Efficiency of the response

THE TRANSITION FROM REGULAR TO EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

Partly owing to the nature of the documents reviewed, this operational theme has the strongest evidence across all sources and consequently the highest relative strength rating of 1.

The documentation reviewed for this chapter spans the period from 2010 to 2016. During this time, UNICEF introduced, reviewed and revised the Level 3 and Level 2 SSOPs, which now govern the scaling up of responses at the country level. It appears that the SSOPs have positively impacted the way surge support is now provided to country offices, but concerns remain regarding the appropriateness of surge staff and the productive absorption of surge staff in country offices.

Documentation within the scope of this Synthesis has two examples of good practice for transition to emergency operations. In 2013, the Kenya Country Office anticipated a humanitarian emergency after potentially disputed elections, and undertook a comprehensive preparedness exercise in advance of the event. The exercise built on lessons from other emergencies and provided a good example of country office-level preparedness when a humanitarian situation can be anticipated (UNICEF, 2013b). In South Sudan, staff were evacuated after an outbreak of fighting in 2014, putting at risk the continuation of the PBEA Programme. While at their evacuation duty station, staff undertook a replanning exercise, and reshaped the programme to function in an emergency environment. When the opportunity arose to return, PBEA staff implemented the emergency-adjusted programme and achieved results despite the changed circumstances. This provides a good example of how existing programmes can be adapted to continue in an emergency situation (UNICEF, 2015b).

The response to the Haiti earthquake in 2010 brought to the fore several areas where UNICEF needed to improve when implementing humanitarian action. Lessons learned from the response (UNICEF EMOPS, 2011; UNICEF EMOPS and UNICEF HATIS, 2013) have shaped subsequent responses and helped strengthen systems. This influence was immediately apparent in the emergency response in South Sudan in 2011, where the emergency fast-track recruitment process that had been re-established because of the Haiti experience was utilized successfully (Orchison, 2012). The HPM system piloted in Haiti (see also the
section on results measurement above) was formally introduced in 2011, coinciding with the Horn of Africa drought response (UNICEF, 2012a). The Horn of Africa response also followed the new corporate emergency activation procedure (CEAP), another improvement resulting from the Haiti experience (UNICEF, 2012a; UNICEF EMOPS, 2011).

The reviewed documents indicate that when emergencies occur more unexpectedly, the surge support offered under the L2 and L3 SSOPs – which were established subsequent to the CEAP – works well and quickly adds much needed capacity to country offices (UNICEF, 2012a, 2014, 2015c). This overall positive experience, however, comes with several caveats. Firstly, barriers in the receiving country office may slow down staff deployment. The experience in the Horn of Africa response showed that the three country offices did not necessarily have a plan on how to restructure themselves for an ‘all out’ emergency response. This may have reduced some of the benefits of fast surge support, when additional emergency staff were, for example, constrained by missing Terms of Reference, or slow provision of work spaces and basic equipment (UNICEF, 2012a). Secondly, gaps in the global support to staff deployment can cause delays. The emergency staff surge for the Ebola response was slower than in other L3 emergencies partly because clarity on medevac procedures for staff was established fairly late (Lawry-White, 2015). Thirdly, management of staff appears instrumental in making the surge work. The experience in the Philippines showed that unless roles are well defined, and there is quick and effective decision-making, the potential of additional surge staff is underused (UNICEF, 2014). A similar experience was noted in the early stages of scaling up the Syria response. Finally, surge staff may not always be fully compatible with the needs of the country office. For example, the unfamiliarity of surge staff with the country environment can be a hindrance. In Nepal, resident staff felt they constantly had to ‘on-board’ new colleagues (UNICEF, 2015c). In the smaller country offices in the Pacific Islands, country office staff had little knowledge of the L2 SSOPs and were confronted with surge staff who had been applying the SSOPs since their launch. It appears that debates on what procedures to apply, and how, somewhat hampered the response (Dunn, 2015). There is also evidence that on occasion, surge staff did not have the required qualifications or experience, or were not of the calibre needed for the tasks at hand (UNICEF, 2015a, 2015c). Related evidence points to remaining uncertainties about the role of the Immediate Response Team; it is not always clear whether it is supporting or replacing the country office emergency team (UNICEF, 2014, 2015a). The Supply Division has done an exemplary job in providing surge staff with clear definitions of responsibilities. This was most evident in the Ebola response, where the Supply Division provided surge specialist support on the ground, on time and under very clear terms. The effects were felt and appreciated by the country offices (Lawry-White, 2015; UNICEF Supply Division, 2015).

In several recent emergencies, country offices have experienced significant differences between the workload and attitudes of staff working on regular programmes and staff dedicated to the emergency response. In the Horn of Africa drought response, the country offices shifted part of their capacity to the emergency response, while maintaining substantial human resources dedicated to the regular programme. A portion of regular staff therefore continued working on the country programme while emergency and surge staff scaled up the emergency response (UNICEF, 2012a). Similar parallel structures developed during the Ebola response (Lawry-White, 2015). Consequently, the involvement of country office staff in the emergency response varied; some regular staff continued with their normal programme activities, while others were pulled into the emergency response. The available documentation points to inconsistent management of these differences. In the Horn of Africa response, some regular staff cancelled their leave while others did not; here and in the Ebola response, some regular staff appeared to continue with normal operations and normal working hours while others worked long hours and some even experienced burn out. Statements in the available documentation point to these differences causing friction and motivational issues within the offices (Lawry-White, 2015; UNICEF, 2012a).

Related to the need for clarification of staff roles is decision-making regarding which parts of a country programme to continue and which to suspend in an emergency. The need to make this clear in a response from the beginning was a lesson learned during the Level 3 declaration for the Central African Republic in December 2013 (UNICEF EMOPS & UNICEF HATIS, 2013).

Slow-onset emergencies pose their own unique challenges for UNICEF. The El Nino-induced drought in Southern Africa in 2015/2016 affected several middle-income countries with UNICEF country offices that

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3 Taken from an internal, confidential interview with a departing staff member who worked in a central position in the Homs office at the time (not included in the literature list).
were predominantly engaged in policy support and advocacy. They did not have the capacity to react to the steadily growing needs of the affected populations (UNICEF, 2016b). Also, preparedness measures in these countries were designed for sudden events, and not for a slow-onset and gradually worsening situation like the El Nino drought. Up-to-date data were not always readily available, and the point of decision for declaring an emergency was unclear in many countries (UNICEF, 2016b). Consequently, scale-up relied heavily on regional office and surge mechanism support.

**PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMME COOPERATION AGREEMENTS**

Despite its importance in the transition from regular to emergency programmes, the theme of partnerships and cooperation agreements has much less evidence in the reviewed documentation, and scored a relative evidence strength rating of only 0.58.

The documentation reviewed for this chapter spans the period from mid-2011 to 2015. During this time, UNICEF applied the simplified partnership procedures enabled by the SSOPs to varying degrees. It appears that even after establishing these procedures, and as late as 2014, the utility of the simplified processes depends on the level of confidence of responsible staff members to use them.

Except for the RRM, UNICEF does not regularly use direct implementation for humanitarian action. Partnerships with implementing organizations in humanitarian action, usually with international and national NGOs, are therefore central to UNICEF’s performance on the ground. Contractual tools originally conceived for regular country programme implementation, UNICEF’s programme cooperation agreements (PCAs) can be “perceived [by partners] as inflexible and too slow to be finalized during emergency response” (Orchison, 2012).

Generally, country offices that had pre-agreed partnerships found it easier to scale up their response when an emergency happened. This was the case in the Somalia country office during the Horn of Africa drought response in 2011 (UNICEF, 2012a). Conversely, in the Nepal earthquake response in 2015, the country office had no standby or contingency PCAs in place. Despite having regular NGO partners, it found that as larger partners had their own fundraising channels, they were not reliant on UNICEF for funding and started implementing their own programmes. Consequently, UNICEF had to work with smaller and less experienced partners, increasing the complexity of partner management (UNICEF, 2015c). Similar experiences were reported for the response to Cyclone Pam in the Pacific Islands in 2015 (Dunn, 2015). The Kenya Country Office, in preparing for a possible humanitarian crisis after potentially contested elections in 2013, put in place contingency PCAs with key partners. Those were to be activated if and when the need arose (UNICEF, 2013b).

Having existing partnerships, however, was not in itself sufficient to ensure fast responses. Country offices that had understood and applied the simplified procedures for establishing PCAs provided in the L2 or L3 SSOPs were able to scale up their response faster than those that had not. In South Sudan in 2011, partners felt that delays in the processing of PCAs “hampered timely action on their part” (Orchison, 2012). During the Horn of Africa drought response, the Somalia country office struggled to apply the simplified procedures and large
numbers of PCAs were delayed by a review process that was too complex for the needs of the response (UNICEF, 2012a). During the Pacific Island response to Cyclone Pam in 2015, the country office in Vanuatu had no contingency PCAs in place, but made good use of the simplified procedures for Small-scale Funding Agreements. This to an extent compensated for the absence of contingency PCAs (Dunn, 2015). In the Philippines, during the response to the Typhoon Haiyan emergency in 2014, some sections embraced the simplifications the SSOPs offer for partnerships while others did not, with differences in the timeliness of their responses (UNICEF, 2014). Prevailing risk-aversion may be partly to blame (Lawry-White, 2015).

UNDERSTANDING THE COST OF THE RESPONSE

There is little reference to efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the reviewed documentation, leading to the lowest relative evidence strength rating of 0.36.

The lessons learned document on the Horn of Africa response states categorically that “UNICEF does not have an understanding of the cost-effectiveness of its emergency programmes, or any way of analysing it” (UNICEF, 2012a). The learning from the Ebola response suggests that country and regional offices need “more capacity to forecast cost and affordability on response and recovery” (Lawry-White, 2015). While this is mirrored in other sources for this Synthesis, more recent reviews show that at least some learning is taking place regarding which approaches are more cost-effective than others. The RRM in South Sudan is a case in point within the scope of this Synthesis. RRM missions were used in places instead of airdropping of supplies (Gilgan & Gugliotta, 2015; WFP & UNICEF, 2015). Airdrops are expensive, their targeting is difficult and losses from damage due to the drop are prevalent. They are also an extremely unidirectional process of delivering aid: they do not allow direct interaction with affected people, which may result in reduced relevance and value of the aid to beneficiaries. The RRM, where it replaced airdrops, inserted this interactive element very prominently. Also, as it entailed undertaking a local situation assessment and tailoring services to the situation on the ground, RRM appeared to be much more effective at a lower cost (Gilgan & Gugliotta, 2015).

While the RRM is a suitable example of the cost effectiveness of one approach over another, data on the efficiency, or value for money, of a response do not seem to be available. Outside of the realm of this Synthesis, evaluations of UNICEF’s recent L3 responses have attempted such calculations, but have not succeeded. While integrated programming is thought to be more efficient, according to the study, there are no hard data confirming this. There is otherwise little and often no reference to efficiency in the documents informing this Synthesis.
Thematic area 3: Accountability

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AFFECTED POPULATIONS

AAP is covered in several documents in this synthesis, giving it a relative evidence strength rating of 0.62.

The evidence for this topic spans the period from 2011 to mid-2016. During this time, UNICEF made substantial progress in better understanding and applying accountability in humanitarian action. Especially in recent operations, such as the responses to the Ebola and the European refugee crises, evidence points to a much more interactive approach to communicating with those in need, and shaping the response accordingly.

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the primary body for the coordination of international humanitarian action, holds AAP to be one of its main principles. UNICEF maintains its own set of accountability standards, the CCCs. Despite the commitment and a framework in place, accountability is brought up repeatedly as a weakness in the documents reviewed for this Synthesis.

A self-assessment by UNICEF of its performance against AAP commitments, conducted in 2013, found: “In summary, the self-assessment reports that UNICEF already has in place systems that make individual programs more accountable and transparent to populations that it seeks to assist in times of crisis. However, implementation of these commitments is patchy and often the subject of individual staff members or offices rather than systemic endeavours” (UNICEF, 2013a).

The Horn of Africa drought response lessons learned exercise found that “UNICEF did not appear to have any concerted strategy for communicating with people affected by the [Horn of African] emergency. UNICEF needs a strategy to allow it to fulfil its IASC commitments to accountability to affected people” (UNICEF, 2012a). Subsequent reviews feature limited information on AAP. However, along with a significantly more prominent element of C4D, and the introduction of community care centres, the 2014 Ebola response marked significant progress in taking AAP seriously. Communication around the centres, while still somewhat weaker on the ‘listening’ element, was mostly two-way as expected under the IASC commitments (UNICEF, 2015a).

The response to the migration crisis in Europe in late 2015 showed further progress of a more ‘listening’ approach to accountability. UNICEF realized that large numbers of unaccompanied children moving in groups were not going to be helped by the traditional approach of using referrals to social services. Such referrals would not have been in the best interest of the children. Rather, UNICEF changed its approach to providing advice and any child protection support it could in a manner more relevant to a transient population. UNICEF also allowed recipients to choose what items they needed from the standard kits rather than forcing them to use the kits as complete sets. While these adaptations were not reported as practising accountability, they should be seen as exactly that, and may indicate a growing understanding within UNICEF that two-way communication with affected people is key to accountable assistance (UNICEF, 2016c).
Bibliography


United Nations Children's Fund, ‘Building Partnerships with Municipalities as a platform for engagement and potential mechanism to go to scale in the absence of a single legitimate national government in Libya’, Case Study, 2016a.


### Evidence strength matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Results measurement</th>
<th>Integrated Programming</th>
<th>Linking Development and Humanitarian Action</th>
<th>CAD in Emergencies</th>
<th>The transition from regular to emergency operations</th>
<th>Partnership/P/Cs</th>
<th>Understanding the cost of the response</th>
<th>Accountability</th>
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**Relative evidence strength is calculated by dividing the sum of all individual ratings for one theme by the sum of all individual ratings for the highest rated theme.**

**Strength Rating**

1. Theme is covered only in context of other topics
2. Theme is covered by at least one paragraph or multiple sentences
3. Theme is covered by multiple paragraphs or a whole chapter

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82 Towards Improved Emergency Responses
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https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_100819.html

For further information, please contact:

Evaluation Office
United Nations Children’s Fund
Three United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017
evalhelp@unicef.org