

# Executive Feedback

<b>Title of the evaluation</b>	<b>Evaluation of innovation in UNICEF work. Evaluation Synthesis Report</b>
<b>Sequence No</b>	2018/014
<b>Region</b>	HQ
<b>Office</b>	Evaluation Office
<b>Coverage</b>	Global

<b>Evaluation Type</b>	Thematic area
<b>Year of Report</b>	2018

<b>OVERALL RATING</b>	
	<b>Satisfactory</b>
	<b>Meets UNICEF/UNEG standards for evaluation reports and decision makers may</b>
<b>Implications:</b>	<b>use the evaluation with confidence</b>

## SECTION A: BACKGROUND (weight 5%)

	<b>Satisfactory</b>
	The report provides a good overview of how UNICEF's approach to innovation has evolved over time. Additionally, the importance of innovation within UNICEF is explicitly outlined, as the report explains how UNICEF has made innovation a corporate priority. Even so, the background section is quite light (only one page long) and does not provide descriptions of what kinds of innovation are included under the heading "innovation" (this information is provided under the section 'evaluation scope'). Finally, the context (both within the organisation and within the larger development sphere) surrounding UNICEF's innovation work and how the context has affected its work is not discussed within the background section. While this information is somewhat integrated within the findings, it is good practice to provide a summary of the context at the beginning of the report to prepare the reader for the findings to come.

## SECTION B: EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE (weight 5%)

	<b>Satisfactory</b>
	The report identifies the evaluation's two-fold purpose around learning and accountability and explains how UNICEF's internal staff will be the primary users. However, the report does not provide a more detailed breakdown as to how different units or levels within UNICEF are expected to use the evaluation findings and recommendations for different purposes. The evaluation scope is nicely outlined and includes definitions of the thematic elements included within the evaluation scope.

## SECTION C: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY (weight 15%)

	<b>Fair</b>
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The evaluation uses a non-standard evaluation design that combines an organisational assessment with country-specific case studies, drawing on mixed methods. While this design appears to be appropriate to meet the evaluation objectives, the report does not provide an explicit justification for why this design was chosen. The report states that the evaluation followed standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria (with the inclusion of equity) and presents key evaluation questions. However, the questions are not organised according to the evaluation criteria and it is unclear how the questions address the criteria. Additionally, the evaluation does not include an evaluation matrix and therefore the indicators used to guide the assessment to answer each evaluation question is a bit unclear. Data collection methods and sampling are clearly outlined. While the report mentions triangulation, it does not provide a very rigorous discussion around the other ways data was analysed, especially concerning the analysis around contributions towards outcome and impact level results. Evaluation limitations are identified and mitigation approaches are discussed, where feasible. While the evaluation report specifies that the UNICEF Evaluation Office is responsible for ensuring that evaluations meet UNEG Ethical Standards, the report provides no description as to how the evaluation was executed in line with these standards.

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#### SECTION D: EVALUATION FINDINGS (weight 20%)



##### **Satisfactory**

The findings are based on abundant evidence and present both the positive and negative elements of UNICEF's innovation work. Causal factors are well outlined, and the report provides a strong assessment of how UNICEF is monitoring innovation and using this information for decision-making. While it appears as though most of the evaluation questions are well answered, it is difficult to be sure since the findings do not make any reference to the evaluation questions or the evaluation criteria.

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#### SECTION E: EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS & LESSONS LEARNED (weight 15%)



##### **Fair**

The conclusions are logically derived from the findings but do not provide a consistent analysis that indicates the high level issues to be considered. They present a lot of detailed data (including survey data) that is usually too detailed to be referred to in the conclusions. They also do not consistently highlight the implications of the findings for the future. Lessons learned are not presented in a separate section but are scattered informally throughout the findings.

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#### SECTION F: RECOMMENDATIONS (weight 15%)



##### **Satisfactory**

The evaluation provides three recommendations that are logically derived from the findings and conclusions. They generally provide enough information on how to make them actionable but could be further strengthened by providing more information around how they could in reality be implemented. Additionally, the recommendations are targeted towards UNICEF but do not specify which groups within UNICEF should be responsible for their implementation. This makes the lines of accountability somewhat blurred and makes it more difficult for UNICEF to provide a management response and to go ahead with their implementation. While the recommendations are numbered, the report does not specify whether they are presented in priority order and does not indicate the level of urgency in addressing each one. Finally, the report is strong at describing how the stakeholders were involved in the development of the recommendations, therefore increasing their ownership of them.

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#### SECTION G: EVALUATION STRUCTURE/PRESENTATION (weight 5%)

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##### **Fair**

The evaluation report is logically structured and easy to read. However, the report does not contain any findings statements, which makes it more difficult for the reader to grasp the main messages within the findings section. Also, the findings are not structured around the evaluation criteria or evaluation questions, making it difficult to see how the information presented addresses the criteria and questions. Additionally, the report is too long at 87 pages, which reduces its accessibility to stakeholders. The opening pages include most of the information required to understand the evaluation. However, the evaluation timeframe is not clearly stated prior to presenting the Executive Summary. Additionally, the list of tables and figures does not reference any page numbers. The stand-alone case studies report as well as the Organisational Assessment (OA) report are included as annexes, along with the individual case studies for each case study country. However, some important information that is expected within the annexes is missing, such as interview protocols for FGDs and KIIs and an evaluation matrix.

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#### SECTION H: EVALUATION PRINCIPLES (weight 15%)

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##### **Satisfactory**

The evaluation places UNICEF's work within a child rights framework and grounds UNICEF's innovation work within its larger equity and gender equality principles. The evaluation scope includes a question that investigates the extent to which UNICEF's approach to innovation supports its equity agenda (including gender equality), the methodology collects data on gender, and gender is discussed throughout the findings and conclusions. The evaluation is particularly strong at articulating how stakeholders were involved in the evaluation management, the validation of information, and the development of recommendations.

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#### SECTION I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (weight 5%)

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##### **Fair**

The Executive Summary provides a good overview of most of the key elements within the body of the report. However, while "conclusions" are presented, they are in fact more in line with findings. The high-level, analytical and forward-looking elements of the conclusions are generally not highlighted. This somewhat reduces the utility of the Executive Summary to managers since they are likely interested in understanding the more analytical elements of the report. While the Executive Summary provides a considerable amount of valuable information, it is considerably too long (10 pages), which risks making it less accessible to senior managers who likely do not have time to read more than 5 - 6 pages. It is quite wordy and includes a lot of detail that is not necessarily required. In fact, it copies and pastes several sections directly from the body of the report as opposed to re-writing a more synthesized version.

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Does the evaluation meet UN SWAP evaluation performance indicators?

6 Approaches requirements

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Recommendations for improvement

This evaluation report represents a notable effort by the UNICEF Evaluation Office to evaluate a less traditional object of evaluation. By commissioning this evaluation, important information has been gathered to inform UNICEF's strategic thinking and planning around innovation. Because of the important role this evaluation played around generating information, it is too bad that the conclusions did not provide a clearer discussion around the high level issues to be considered and the implications of the findings on the future, and that lessons learned from the case studies were not clearly presented and discussed within the synthesis report. Overall, this evaluation drew on a strong methodology and presented well founded findings. However, some mandatory Geros elements were missing (for instance, a discussion around evaluation ethics) that could easily have been included in the report. In the future, the evaluation manager should make sure to share the Geros guidelines with the evaluators and conduct a quality assurance exercise to ensure that all of the mandatory Geros requirements are addressed by the report. Finally, even for large corporate evaluations, it is important that the evaluation report and Executive Summary remain accessible to stakeholders and senior managers with limited time available to read long reports. In the future, the evaluation manager should insist upon a maximum length of no more than 60 pages and encourage the evaluators to further edit and synthesise their writing and include any non-essential elements within the annexes.

**Lessons for managing future evaluations:**

**Section A** It is expected that evaluation reports will provide some contextual information near the beginning to help the reader to understand within what kind of context the object of evaluation is operating. In this case, it would have been useful to understand any contextual elements (both within UNICEF and outside) that may have an overall influence on its innovation work.

**Section B** It is good practice to break down evaluation users into smaller groups in order to generate more precision around how different groups are expected to use the evaluation findings and recommendations for different purposes. For instance, COs will likely use the evaluation differently than the Ool at HQ. By identifying these different uses from the beginning, evaluators are better placed to make more useful and targeted recommendations.

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### Section C

The evaluation framework could be further strengthened in terms of clarity if the evaluation questions were more explicitly aligned with the evaluation criteria. This could be done by simply adding a reference next to each evaluation question to identify to which evaluation criterion it corresponds. Additionally, it is good practice to include a full evaluation matrix with assessment indicators to increase transparency around the metrics guiding the assessment of each evaluation question. A more in-depth discussion around how outcome and impact level results were assessed would also add value to the report. Even though the evaluation design is strong and appears to be relevant in meeting the evaluation objectives, the evaluation report should explicitly justify the selected design. Finally, Geros standards require all UNICEF evaluation reports to explicitly discuss how evaluators upheld their ethical responsibilities and what ethical safeguards were put in place to protect evaluation participants (even if those participants are UNICEF staff). To learn more about UN ethical standards in evaluation, please see the UNEG Ethical Guidelines at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>.

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### Section D

It would be easier for the reader to follow the evaluation assessment within its established framework if the findings were presented according to the evaluation criteria and guiding questions. Since the report took an alternative approach, it would have been useful to see how references to the evaluation framework could still have been made within the findings section.

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### Section E

The report could be strengthened by editing the conclusions so as to more clearly bring out the high level issues to be considered and to provide more of a discussion around the implications of the findings for the future. While the OA may not have had the opportunity to identify lessons learned, there were likely numerous lessons learned that were identified through the case studies that would have been interesting to highlight in the synthesis report. To learn more about how to effectively present lessons learned, please see: [https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/lessons\\_learned](https://www.betterevaluation.org/en/evaluation-options/lessons_learned).

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### Section F

The recommendations could be further strengthened by providing more detailed information around how they can be implemented, by identifying the group within UNICEF that should be responsible for each one's implementation (or partial implementation), and by identifying the level of urgency in addressing each one.

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### Section G

The report would likely be easier for the reader to navigate if it made reference to the evaluation criteria and evaluation questions, and if it used clear findings statements. Additionally, the body of the report should be further synthesized to no more than 60 pages to encourage accessibility among stakeholders. This could be done by 1) further editing the text and tightening the writing; and 2) moving some of the information (especially from the methodology section) to the annexes. Additionally, Geros standards require that the evaluation time period be clearly indicated within the report's opening pages. The list of tables and figures should also include page numbers. Finally, the annexes should include the interview protocols for FGDs and KIs as well as an evaluation matrix. These are essential elements to include within evaluation report annexes.

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### Section H

The evaluation satisfactorily addresses gender equality. However, the methodology could have been pushed even further to be more explicitly gender sensitive. To learn more about gender sensitive evaluation, please consult: [http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guide/gender-responsive\\_evaluation\\_handbook](http://www.betterevaluation.org/en/resources/guide/gender-responsive_evaluation_handbook)

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Section I

To improve the quality of the Executive Summary, it could be restructured to include a brief overview of the main findings and then a separate conclusions section that provides a more high-level, analytical, and forward-looking discussion. To make the Executive Summary more accessible to senior management, it should be carefully edited to make it more succinct and so that it can fit within a 6-page limit.

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