

Voices from the Field

How well are we integrating gender in evaluations? Experience from WCAR, by Oumar Ndao Gning, M&E Assistant, UNICEF WCARO



The effective integration of gender equality as a cross-country issue in program evaluations is a key dimension of the quality of evaluations. To assess this dimension, the UNICEF Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS) includes a 'gender rating' that benchmarks performance based on the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) standards for assessing the quality of reports integrating gender considerations. Effective integration of gender considerations in evaluations is also one of the five institutional benchmarks of the UNICEF Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2014-17. The GAP 2015 Annual Report to the Executive Board showed that corporate performance on integrating gender in evaluations is stagnating with the percentage of evaluations rated "outstanding" and "highly satisfactory" in incorporating gender increasing from 47% in 2012 to 52% in 2013 and 51% in 2014.

A more detailed analysis of West and Central Africa Region (WCAR) evaluation ratings indicates that performance on gender goes hand in hand with the overall quality of evaluations. Over the past 6 years UNICEF GEROS ratings have shown that the quality of WCAR evaluation reports has improved overtime, with 52% of evaluations rated "outstanding" or "highly satisfactory" between 2010 and 2015. For the same period, 41% of evaluations were rated "Outstanding" and "Yes" on gender. Looking further, all Evaluation reports overall rated "Outstanding" have their Gender dimensions rated "Outstanding" and 83% of "Unsatisfactory" overall reports are rated "Unsatisfactory" on Gender. Greater variation on gender performance can be noticed for intermediate rating levels ("Highly" or "Mostly"). Except for some reports (21%) which have their Gender ratings better than their overall ratings, most of reports of intermediate quality have their Gender ratings similar (44%) or worse (40%) than their overall ratings. So it seems that when the Evaluation report is not sufficiently good to meet all the requirements ("Outstanding"), the Gender component tends to be among the missing ones. This is in line with findings from an external review commissioned by the Evaluation Office which found that "Gender equality were given insufficient attention in evaluations".

WCAR experience therefore shows that integrating gender considerations in evaluations is a key element to improving the overall quality of evaluations to "assess how far equity and gender equality has been addressed in the formulation, design and implementation of policies, advocacy and programs, [...] and the extent to which interventions have contributed towards meeting their needs, realizing their rights and recognizing their potential".

The domestication of the SDGs, National Gender Policies, the UNICEF Gender Action Plan and the revised UNEG Evaluation Norms and Standards provide us with opportunities to improve accountability and monitoring of gender equality in development programs. Seizing these and delivering on gender equitable results for children will require that we improve our gender

performance in evaluations. The UNEG “Guidance and handbook, Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations”, the strengthening of UNICEF gender expertise at global, regional and country levels as well as improvements in the Geros rating system following the 2015 review provide us with the necessary tools and capacities to improve our collective results. For questions, contact Oumar Ndao Gning, M&E Assistant, ongning@unicef.org, UNICEF WCARO.

Gender responsive evaluations, by Erica Mattellone, Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Cambodia, Malaysia and Myanmar



Gender equality is extremely important for the realization of UNICEF’s mission. UNICEF advocates for equal rights of women and girls and aims, through its country programs, to promote equal outcomes for girls and boys, transforming gender relations towards more gender-equal societies. Promoting and implementing gender-responsive evaluations remains challenging, but there are tremendous opportunities for increasing the quality of our evaluations, and therefore contributing towards UNICEF’s commitments to gender equality. In Cambodia, Malaysia and Myanmar, the challenges that we face in promoting, managing and ultimately using gender-responsive evaluations include: an uneven understanding among stakeholders (i.e., UNICEF staff, Government, implementing partners) regarding issues of gender equality; a lack of baselines and monitoring data, which are disaggregated and consistently collected; and, finally, tight evaluation timelines and budgets that don’t always allow to fully ponder issues of gender equality. To address some of these challenges, we have invested in building the capacity of various stakeholders through increased exposure to the concept of gender equality, and what it means for evaluation; ensuring that gender equality considerations are incorporated in the design of our programs; and similarly in the design of our evaluations. For more information, contact Erica Mattellone, emattellone@unicef.org, Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF Cambodia, Malaysia and Myanmar.