Mapping of UNICEF-Supported NECD Interventions

Findings and Recommendations

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To start with... some partners’ comments

“Proactive involvement of UNICEF has led to more focus on UNICEF concerns.”

“UNICEF is the main agency supporting NECD globally, please continue the good work.”

“We would like to express our deep appreciation to UNICEF who has been the sole development agency that has been consistently providing support to NECD activities over several years, which was instrumental in the achievement of most of the outcomes and impact and has shaped the NECD situation in the country.”
Findings and Recommendations

1. Context and Objectives
2. Methodology
3. Characterization of NECD Interventions
4. Performance of NECD Interventions
5. Qualitative Analysis
6. Recommendations

➢ Priority will be given to undertaking strategic evaluations and enhancing the accountability system, focusing on decision-making and partnerships.

➢ Evaluation will support the achievement of Strategic Plan objectives by generating findings, conclusions and recommendations to inform management decisions at all levels and across all results, including in humanitarian action.
Context of the Mapping: SDGs & Agenda 2030

- Evaluation should be included in the framework for the post-2015 development agenda from the outset (UNEG)

- Follow-Up and Review (FUR): Operating at the national, regional and global levels, it will promote accountability to our citizens, support effective international cooperation in achieving this Agenda and foster exchanges of best practices and mutual learning. (par 73/ Agenda)
Objectives for the Mapping of UNICEF-Supported NECD Interventions

1. Clear visual picture of the type of work that UNICEF has done alone or in partnerships
2. Analysis of the range of UNICEF supported interventions in NECD
3. An analysis of the performance UNICEF supported interventions in NECD
4. A set of realistic, affordable and practical recommendations
5. An indicative set of conditions & benchmarks for go/no go
6. Database
Objectives for the Mapping of NECD UNICEF Supported Interventions

Clarifying notes:

➢ Not an evaluation
➢ Not an exhaustive listing of UNICEF-supported NECD interventions
Definition of NECD

“The ability of the national government, with contributions from many partners, to produce, manage, and use evaluation effectively to better inform policy and programme decisions”

(IIED and al., 2016).
Findings and Recommendations

1. Context and Objectives
2. **Methodology**
3. Characterization of NECD interventions
4. Performance of NECD interventions
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Data Collection Methods

- Review of relevant documentation
- In-depth interviews with key stakeholders
- Online survey of UNICEF CO M&E staff
Metadata

UNICEF Country Office were contacted: 84
Total of respondents: 100
NECD interventions identified: 60
Case Studies documented (7 Countries, 4 Regional/Global): 11
List of Case Studies

Country Level

Kyrgyzstan: “Improvement of capacity building to establish a monitoring and evaluation system in Kyrgyzstan” (2014) and Formation of institutional conditions and capacity to introduce M&E system in Kyrgyzstan» (2015)

Morocco: Support to the culture and institutionalization of evaluation


Philippines: “National Evaluation Policy”

Rwanda: Establishment of the Rwanda Monitoring and Evaluation Society


Ecuador: South to South Cooperation between the M&E unit in the Colombian and Ecuadorian Planning Ministries
List of Case Studies

Global and Regional Levels

- EVALPartners
- EVALSDGs
- GPFE (Global Parliamentarian Forum for Evaluation)
- EAPRO: Review of national evaluation systems and capacities in Asia Pacific for evaluating progress towards SDGs - a joint UNDP UNICEF initiative
Findings and Recommendations

1. Context and Objectives (ToR)
2. Methodology
3. *Characterization of NECD Interventions*
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Level of NECD interventions

- 87% of the NECD interventions were conducted at the national level.

Bar chart showing the distribution of NECD interventions across different levels:
- Country: 87%
- Sub-national
- Regional
- Sector
- Global
Type of country in which the NECD interventions took place

63% of the NECD interventions supported were conducted in middle income countries.
Work domain in which the NECD interventions took place

- 100% of the NECD interventions dealt with the Development domain
- 18% dealt with both development and humanitarian domains
Target groups of NECD interventions

- **Government** was the main target group.
- **CSOs**, **Parliament**, **Academia** and **NGOs** were also largely involved.
Target group of NECD interventions

Most of the NECD interventions were at enabling environment and institutional levels.
NECD interventions were quite varied and had multiple objectives. The four major ones were to: contribute to the development of NEPs, build up partnerships to conduct NECD, provide training and professional development opportunities as well as awareness and advocacy activities for NECD.
Most NECD interventions took into account specific dimensions of equity, SDGs, gender equality, and human rights.
Mapping the Results

https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=1LtSFWucEkqqfcAlSy0Cfh1tDEHTfNGqW&ll=0%2C32&z=3
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Alignment with Reference Documents

NECD interventions had a partial but direct alignment with all relevant documents.
Performance Criteria

Note: Grades given by respondents on an ordinal scale of 0 to 3
Evaluation of performance

1. Performance criteria with highest grades: relevance (2.7), effectiveness (2.3), efficiency (2.2), outputs (2.4).

2. Results are rated by respondents as high. The grade goes down a little bit along the chain of results: immediate outcomes (2.1), final outcomes (2), impacts on children and women (1.7), impacts on SDGs (1.8). This is to be expected. Also many interventions were too recent to be able to identify and measure final outcomes and impacts.
Major outputs

Global/Regional
- Global partnerships
- Communication material and platforms
- Learning material and platforms
- Advocacy material and platforms
- Evaluations
- Documentation and publications

Country
- Creation and/or strengthening of evaluation institutions, legal/policy frameworks, and evaluation plans
- National partnerships on evaluation activities with a wide range of actors
- Improved evaluation knowledge and skills of various key actors
- Learning and advocacy material and platforms
- Evaluations
- Documentation and publications
Major outcomes

Global/Regional
- Putting evaluation on the agenda of work of many global/regional actors
- Introducing evaluation in global/regional policy-making frameworks
- Promoting a culture of evaluation in global/regional policies and programs
- Building up global/regional resources, momentums and synergies for evaluation

Country
- Introducing evaluation in policy-making frameworks
- Promoting a culture of evaluation in national policies and programs
- Developing a stronger evaluation function and M&E systems
- Building up national resources, momentums and synergies for evaluation
Evaluation of performance (cont’d)

➢ Sustainability rated good (2). Challenges were noted sometimes in terms of:
   i. Follow up and reporting
   ii. Keeping up the momentum
   iii. Resources compared to scope and time required for the initiative
   iv. Political cycles with their implications on the change of counterparts.
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Factors Supporting Good Performance

Global/Regional

- Collaboration among UN agencies
- Visibility
- Actors engagement with M&E for SDGs
- UNICEF reputation as leader
- Strategic alliances
- Focus on advocacy
- Multi-level collaboration

Country

- UNICEF experience and approach in the implementation of good practices
- Building credibility
- Facilitation of key alliances
- Dissemination in CoP
- Raised interest created by the NECD
Challenges to Good Performance

Global/Regional

- Slow and heavy policy-making processes
- Unclear or different roadmaps across partners
- Changes in government/political crisis threaten continuity
- Limited evaluation skills
- Limited resources within UN for NECD

Country

- Political and government cycles
- Enabling environment sustainability to support capacity building process
- Endorsement of National Evaluation Policies
- Limited evaluation skills
- Institutionalization evaluation practices
Lessons Learnt

Global/Regional
- Make NECD part of work plans
- Scope/timeframe not consistent with resources
- Wider partnerships maximize results
- Professionalization of evaluation
- Parliament/Government ownership is the entry point

Country
- UNICEF valuable partner but enhanced follow up to keep the momentum
- South-South exchange of country experiences
- Need to define objectives and targets properly for NECD
- Ensure participation of many actors
- Political changes play against achieving outcomes
Good Practices

Global/Regional

- Integration of NECD as part of UNICEF work plans in some countries
- Knowledge and experiences exchange among countries/parliaments
- Wider partnerships
- Spotlights initiative
- Development of national capacities

Country

- International exposure, learning and exchange
- Institutional framework for M&E practice
- Engagement in an extensive network
- UNICEF strong coordination/advocacy for team work
Comparative Advantage of UNICEF

Global/Regional
- Strong focus on NECD
- UNICEF CO connections at country level
- Wide network of M&E professionals at the global level
- Channels and access to parliamentarians and other non traditional stakeholders
- Honest broker

Country
- Experience, expertise and teamwork
- Flexibility and limited bureaucracy
- Openness to collaboration
- Neutrality
- Strong alliances
- Advocacy capacity
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1. Context and Objectives
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6. **Recommendations**
Recommendation 1: Keep UNICEF as a leader in NECD at all levels (global, regional, country), ...

➢ You do it well. One major role of UN is to develop national capacities and UNICEF has more evaluation capacities than other UN organizations

➢ Your leadership is very much appreciated by partner organizations that benefit from NECD and/or work with you to deliver those NECD interventions

➢ UNICEF brings a unique contribution to NECD through its child-oriented lens (intersectoral, target group of all social policies key to SDGs) and an ability to work at global, regional, country and subnational levels,
Recommendations to Evaluation Office

Recommendation 1 (cont’d): ... but be selective and manage for results

➢ Be realistic upon available resources and needs in terms of levels of effort for sustainability
➢ Define criteria to be used in a go/no go grid used at all levels to select NECD initiatives you will support
➢ Set milestones for outputs and outcomes and hold internal units and partners accountable through a monitoring system, type Monitoring for Results (M4R)
➢ Conduct periodic evaluations of NECD interventions
➢ Maintain the database of NECD interventions (mapping)
Recommendations to Evaluation Office

Recommendation 2: Keep engaging UNICEF into global partnerships (e.g. EVALPARTNERS, EVALSDGs, GPFE), ...

- Partnerships provide institutional traction, help mobilize resources, and lead to more sustainable results
- You have spearheaded global partnerships which address unique evaluation issues with a strategic perspective
- Apart from their own results, those partnerships have numerous fallouts at regional and national levels
- Activities in this domain are high value for money as UNICEF influences evaluation policies of major institutions and can leverage additional resources for promoting its priorities
Recommendations to Evaluation Office

Recommendation 2 (cont’d): ...but do not hesitate to move on your own

- Building consensus and moving the bureaucracies can be demanding in terms of time and energy. So, UNICEF should seize opportunities and position itself on selected niches that will position the institution on future areas and not wait for reluctant or slow partners.
Recommendations to Evaluation Office

Recommendation 3: Share your experience and know-how in evaluation at all levels

➢ Overall evaluation policy, processes, norms, standards, etc.
➢ Methodological guidelines to UNICEF and its partners
➢ Training and coaching of evaluation units within UNICEF
➢ Quality control of evaluations conducted by or ordered by UNICEF
Recommendation 3 (cont’d): ...while respecting the diversity of situations and national ownership

- No « one size fits all » approach
- Keep a balance between concern for short term effectiveness and time for learning and ownership
- Conduct an NECD readiness assessment to identify if UNICEF has value added and draw a roadmap for NECD adapted to each specific case, with milestones
Recommendation 4: Include NECD in all regional strategies (regional evaluation strategies, 2030 Agenda) and encourage and support Country Offices to do the same at their level...

- NECD is essential for developing the culture of evaluation
- Making NECD part of the strategy puts the focus on this domain and creates accountability
Recommendation 4 (cont’d): ... but support NECD activities where you make a difference as a regional office, i.e.

- Help deliver concrete milestones, not just talk-talk events
- Where the regional perspective
  ✓ is eye-opening
  ✓ stimulates positive competition among countries
  ✓ enables to seize economies of scale
Recommendations to Regional Offices

Recommendation 4 (cont’d): ... and use a two tier approach

- **Basic services to all country offices** (sharing practices, promoting South-South and triangular cooperation, documenting case-studies with support from Evaluation Office)

- **More intense coaching of selected Country Offices** with higher expressed interest (demand) and high potential for growth in evaluation capacity (strategic)

Given limited human and financial resources, the regional office cannot support all country offices and must make choices.
Recommendations to Country Offices

Recommendation 5: Keep your traditional positioning as a honest broker engaging a variety of actors in children focused NECD interventions ...

- Government, but also Parliamentarians, CSOs and NGOs, academia, private sector, VOPEs
- Other UN agencies, international organizations and bilateral donors
- Take advantage and link with global networks
- Consider the sub-national level when relevant (large countries, more direct linkages with children and UNICEF other programmes)
Recommendations to Country Offices

Recommendation 5 (cont’d): ... But be strategic in selecting your NECD interventions with a portfolio approach...
- Spend most of the NECD budget on a few interventions using a go/no go grid and then keep supporting it over time to get results
- Keep a little seed money for new promising NECD interventions with a grant system
Recommendations to Country Offices

Recommendation 5 (cont’d): ... And manage for performance and results
- Monitoring system with milestones (e.g. monthly financial execution, quarterly physical progress and semesterly results)
- Yearly performance reports
- Include NEC as a performance indicator in the PER of UNICEF management and relevant staff
- Sign performance contracts with partners who receive resources from UNICEF
Recommendation 6: Further engage into evidence generation on NECD whenever relevant, ...
- Generate the data for the mapping of NECD interventions to be kept updated by Evaluation Office
- Progress has been made in many countries, although several countries still need help
- Document more NEC to better inform; e.g. Voluntary National Reviews and better evaluations
Recommendation 6 (cont’d): … But move further into analysis and use of this information

- Build on the created data base to expand coverage and keep it updated
- Develop a simple web-based information system with a portfolio perspective (e.g. Projects for Results - P4R) for updating the system in a decentralized way and giving access to a large number of stakeholders
- Add business intelligence tools to increase its potential for analysis and its user-friendliness
Recommendations to all levels

Recommendation 7: Consider more the sustainability of NECD interventions

➢ Openness to opportunities and developments, but less one off activities
➢ Institutionalize NECD with multiple anchors: laws, policies, support to specific units, guides, information systems, etc.
➢ Get some external medium term support through an LTA on NECD
➢ Manage the political cycle
Thank you!

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