The Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) was initially developed in 2012 to operationalise UNICEF’s re-focus on equity. The fundamental premise of MoRES is that UNICEF has not, to the fullest extent possible, approached its programming and policy work from an equity and deprivation perspective. It is based on the rationale that an equity-focused system is needed to resolve critical analytical, targeting, monitoring and decision-making shortcomings in programming and programme implementation. MoRES was introduced in 2012 across 27 countries and a global mainstreaming phase followed in 2013.

The evaluation of MoRES was designed to understand whether the approach was conceptually sound and whether its practical applicability would result in accelerating progress in reaching the most disadvantaged children. The evaluation also analysed management arrangements supporting the roll-out of MoRES.

MoRES has been an evolving and continuously adjusted concept. It has been applied differently over time, in different contexts and across a variety of sectors. This makes direct comparisons between country experiences problematic. The evaluation team therefore developed an innovative and iterative process to unpack, frame and evaluate the MoRES concept and its application.
Key Evaluation Findings

1. Overall findings pertaining to corporate level decision-making:

The equity refocus has significantly sharpened UNICEF’s attention to the world’s most vulnerable children. The introduction of MoRES represents a potent blend of strategic and operational intent. MoRES presented UNICEF with a number of opportunities. For example, evidence-based analysis and prioritisation through MoRES has helped UNICEF better align its programming to the needs of the most disadvantaged children.

The conceptual complexity of MoRES as a system has created challenges. The evaluation found no clear consensus within UNICEF on the concept or purpose of MoRES. While the underlying analysis and programming tools sharpened the focus on issues of inequity, operationalization proved to be very complex.

The roll out of MoRES was not coordinated well. The strong sense of urgency that was created around the MoRES roll-out raised high expectations. However, a more participatory process involving frontline and field staff, as well as a clearer management structure, would have strengthened organisational buy-in and practical application.

2. Lessons drawn from analysis of the elements that make up the MoRES concept:

Situation Analysis: In some countries MoRES has encouraged cross-sectoral working which has resulted in greater attention to the child rather than the sector as the focus of concern. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, rolling sectoral SitAns included the identification of cross-sectoral working priorities, based on analysis of common barriers and bottlenecks. The evaluation also noted difficult ethical challenges in reaching local consensus on prioritisation in some countries, given competing needs.

*Source: UNICEF, Re-focusing on Equity: questions and answers, November 2010.*
Determinants Framework: While a lot of data has been generated, there remain questions about the kind of determinants that are relevant to issues of equity. There is also widespread uncertainty across the county offices and government partners on a range of technical issues associated with the Determinants Framework.

Barrier and Bottleneck Analysis: There is strong and widespread ownership and understanding of the concept of bottlenecks or development constraints. There are significant technical challenges associated with the Barrier and Bottleneck Analysis approach, for example, identification of appropriate indicators is problematic. Nevertheless, there are convincing examples of reductions in barriers/bottlenecks since the introduction of MoRES in 2012.

Examples in reduction of Bottlenecks since the introduction of MoRES

- In Senegal management problems associated with the storage of local vaccine supplies have been removed.
- In Zimbabwe and a range of policy initiatives are being introduced, including elimination of health sector user fees.
- In DRC monitoring of intermediate outcomes has helped influence policy making at the central level by introducing a family health kit approach to health service delivery.

Monitoring of Intermediate Outcomes: Monitoring at intermediate level can bridge the gap between conventional output and impact monitoring. However, capacity issues affect the quality of data and limit the frequency of monitoring.

Feedback Loop: Although there is considerable evidence of additional data-gathering, there is as yet only limited evidence of the feedback loop leading to actual programme adaptation. Those who perform the data analysis that determines the need for programme adaptation are not those who make decisions in response to this evidence. Complex/fragmented planning and finance cycles in many countries and highly centralised budgets further exacerbate the problem of responding to local level analysis.

3. Introducing a new concept at the country level has resulted in a series of challenges, opportunities and benefits:

Context makes a difference. MoRES is almost never being introduced on to a ‘blank page’. As a complex and interlinked approach, the variable institutional contexts in which UNICEF operates is a fundamental consideration in determining which elements of MoRES apply and how.

Government buy-in, investment and capacity is a vital consideration for scale-up. This requires demonstration that MoRES strengthens or adds value to government systems and processes.

There has been a considerable transfer of effort to MoRES across UNICEF. Country Offices have made a concerted effort to implement MoRES and have been flexible and adaptable in their approach. Findings emanating from the case studies show that there remain significant technical challenges that signal a need for stronger guidance.
## Recommendations

- Maintain the focus on equity; UNICEF should emphasise that the primary purpose of MoRES is to support UNICEF’s refocus on equity through a central commitment to generating robust evidence.

- Develop a mainstreaming strategy based on the enhanced conceptual clarity and findings produced by the formative evaluation report.

- Resolve the technical challenges associated with MoRES processes and tools.

- Develop a policy advocacy strategy at national level for stronger links (a feedback loop) between locally identified barriers/bottlenecks and access to the resources required to remove them.

- Evaluate MoRES as an approach which supports the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan and Country Programme, rather than conduct a stand-alone (impact) evaluation of MoRES.

- UNICEF management should use the experience of MoRES roll-out (and evidence from other initiatives) to inform the management and implementation of future major organizational change initiatives within UNICEF.