EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT AND PRESENTATION OF THE EVALUATED PROGRAMME

In 2007, UNICEF has signed with the Tunisian government the sixth Program of Cooperation UNICEF-Tunisia (2007-2011). The revolution occurred in the country in January 2011 having led to a period of transition, this program has been extended until 2014.

In the context of the preparation process for the new cycle of cooperation 2015-2019, UNICEF, in consultation with its national partners, has decided to proceed with the evaluation of the Child Protection component of the program.

During the period 2007-2013, the logical framework of the program component was based on:

- A Program Component Result (PCR) accompanied by 12 indicators and formula as follows: "The Child Protection system, including the monitoring of situations, is strengthened to support the children in conflict with the law and children in danger".
- Three Intermediate Results (IR):
  - IR1 with 4 indicators and formula as follows: "The stakeholders of the Child Protection system aimed at protecting street children, children in conflict with the law and children deprived of a family environment are equipped with tools and methods facilitating the coordination for a more appropriate response".
  - IR2 with 3 indicators and formula as follows: "The sensitive issues of protection are studied and the information system allowing for the tracking of children situation is reinforced and updated ";
  - IR3 accompanied by 2 indicators and formula as follows: "The children in the refugee camp of Choucha have the monitoring and adequate support in Child Protection and Education in view of a sustainable solution".

Outside the central level, systematically covered, the geographical target has been readjusted during the period studied: between 2007 and 2011, it included "10 governorates" - Grand Tunis (4), Kairouan, Nabeul, Gabes, Gafsa, Sfax, Medenine -, and then, in 2012-2013, "all governorates, in particular the most disadvantaged".

Between 2007 and the date of completion of this evaluation study (mid-2013), the program component, managed by a program specialist and an assistant at half-time, has mobilized a financing of more than $2.5 million. It has been implemented by UNICEF and, for the national party, by the Ministry of Women and Family (MAFF), the Ministry of Social Affairs (MAS) and the Ministry of Justice (MJ). Partnerships have also been forged with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and civil society organizations, including Santé Sud, RAET and STC (UK).

The national framework for implementing the Child Protection component of the Program of Cooperation UNICEF-Tunisia relies on a favorable legal framework and a diversified protection device. Tunisia has ratified the CRC in 1991 and lifted all reservations to this convention in June 2008. Tunisia has also proceeded to the alignment of a large part of its domestic legislation on the international standards, even if gaps still persist.

Due to the enactment of the Child Protection Code in 1995, the State has put in place governmental bodies and care institutions, including Child Protection Officers (DPE) - who have treated nearly 6000 reports in 2012 - and a wide range of care centers for children in danger or in conflict with the law. In addition, the voluntary sector dedicated to the protection of the child is growing, notably to support children deprived of a family environment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The general objective of this evaluation is to help improve the impact of partners’ intervention in the field of Child Protection based on international norms and standards.
It seeks the following specific objectives: (i) Assessing the achievement of the outcomes contained in the Child Protection component of the program (ii) Measuring the relevance and effectiveness of the program component, while addressing some issues related to its efficiency, its impact and sustainability, (iii) Assessing and analyzing its contribution to the national institutional framework for Child Protection, (iv) Assessing its contribution to social change (improvement of knowledge, strengthening of the protective role of families, etc.), (v) Learning some lessons from the main conclusions and proposing recommendations to guide the next cycle of cooperation.

The evaluation framework, with 17 evaluation questions, is based on the classic criteria of the exercise - relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability -, with a strong emphasis on the first two criteria and an additional cross-cutting axis concerning Results-Based Management (RBM).

**APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGY**

The methodology is based on the human rights based approach and gender approach, considering the respect of children and women’s rights of as they are set forth in the international instruments. The study also took into account the Equity based approach, giving a particular interest in the realization of the rights to protection of all children in Tunisia, in particular the most vulnerable and marginalized.

The data collection was carried out through a documentary review and a field survey. In the context of the review, a hundred reports and documents have been examined and analyzed, relating to the program, quantitative data and relevant indicators, services and actors of the Child Protection system and children who are at risk or victims of violence, abuse or exploitation.

The field survey has been based on three qualitative tools. As well have been made (i) 46 individual or collective semi-structured interviews from 180 key stakeholders, (ii) 2 workshops on “work in networks” and “information systems” involving 67 persons and (iii) 14 focus groups (FG) with 151 children and three FG with 18 parents.

A wide range of stakeholders involved in the program and in Child Protection have been surveyed: responsible for UNICEF and the SNU, institutionalized children and adolescents, families of institutionalized children, governmental and non-governmental actors at central and regional level, resource persons. In total, more than 400 people have been part of the qualitative survey, which has covered all regions of the country. The evaluation lasted more than five months, from June 20 to November 29, 2013.

The data analysis was conducted with full independence and neutrality. The evaluators have sought to take into account the different legitimate points of view and all the collected information. Triangulation of data has allowed to check the main findings and to validate the conclusions in order to draw guidelines for the next program.

The study was conducted in accordance with the rules defined by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) and UNICEF, notably concerning the ethical principles of prior consent, anonymity and confidentiality in the context of data collection and analysis.

**MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The Child Protection component of the Program of Cooperation UNICEF-Tunisia appeared generally relevant in relation to the situation of vulnerable children, children in danger or requiring special measures of protection. Indeed, the program intervened on behalf of existing legal categories of

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1 All children interviewed were supported by the structures involved in the accompaniment of children in danger or in conflict with the law. The field work through the focus group has therefore been conducted from a non-representative sample - since including only institutionalized children - but designed as being significant because of the diversity of profiles (age, sex, level of education, type of vulnerability etc.), areas of residence (urban, peri-urban, rural) and social backgrounds.
children in danger or in conflict with the law, and in support to Child Protection services, which largely cover the different vulnerability profiles.

The priorities for action of the program component are relevant to the priorities of the UNDAF 2007-2011 and to the Transition Strategy of the United Nations in Tunisia 2011-2013.

Similarly, they are aligned on the first three axis of the National Plan of Action for Children (PNAE) 2002-2011, which set out priorities for Tunisia in the field of the Rights of the Child, including the rights to protection. Nevertheless, promoting and improving the prevention of difficulties of integration, of exploitation and marginalization, which constitute the fourth axis of the PNAE, do not number among the priorities for action of the program component.

In addition, the Child Protection component is broadly in line with the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy. However, the axis linked to social change is little developed, being rather dealt in synergy with the cross-cutting components of the program.

After 2011, the Child Protection component has been able to adapt to the political changes in Tunisia by strengthening its partnership with the civil society and mobilizing substantial funds ($2.2 million) to develop interventions in the field of juvenile justice.

Similarly, the program has quickly responded to humanitarian emergencies related to the Libyan crisis, initiating a partnership with STC (UK) and investing nearly a half-million dollars to put in place integrated services for the family and the child to support refugees in the camp of Choucha and this, in accordance with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

The relevance of the program component appears more relative with respect to the quality of its logical framework and its monitoring and evaluation system. The logical framework is complex, the indicators are excessively numerous, often composites and sometimes non-relevant or non-measurable. Similarly, the means of verification are not mentioned. The monitoring and evaluation is also weak: the program does not have a monitoring and evaluation framework established according to the quality standards; the follow-up effort has long been focused on activities rather than results and no evaluation study has been carried out after 2007. Since 2012, the UNICEF country team is committed to strengthening its monitoring and evaluation system in accordance with the Results-Based Management principles.

Similarly, the initial geographical targeting (10 governorates) was not relevant because only based on the availability in these territories of “care units” for children deprived of family support while the program interventions greatly exceed the case of this category of children. As for the targeting of the different categories of children, it would have been more relevant if it had been mainly based on Equity, allowing to reach in priority the most vulnerable and marginalized children, including victims of trafficking, exploitation and sexual violence, which are only partly covered by Child Protection services.

In terms of efficiency, the expected results of the program between 2007 and 2013 appear partially met: 3 are achieved, 11 on track, 4 not achieved and 3 non-measurable.

The important number of “on track results” and the piecemeal nature of some achievements make it difficult the overall assessment concerning the PCR. Similarly, the assessments on some key issues appear to be mixed.

In relation to the central issue of the de-institutionalization, the program have achieved good results in building the capacity of the National Institute for Child Protection (INPE), placing children born out-of-wedlock, managing families and monitoring placed children. However, the foster care system could not be decentralized and remains weakened by the insufficient commitment at national level and the paucity of grants to host families.

Similarly, the program results appear to be weak concerning the reintegration into their families of children in danger placed in welfare centers and the social integration of children in conflict with the law after the period of deprivation of liberty. A pilot experiment of direct cash transfers to
institutionalized children’s families is being implemented in order to encourage family reintegration. If successful, this pilot experiment could revive a favorable dynamics.

Regarding the interventions aimed at preventing violent behavior, they remained limited and are currently suspended due to a lack of leadership.

Overall, the analytical reading of the results achieved suggests that the program was effective with regard to several axis of intervention including:

- The development of policies and strategies;
- The ownership of the child rights based approach by many national actors;
- The professionalization of the DPE and INPE staff;
- The production of an evidence base on sensitive issues;
- The development of a system for monitoring the situation of children attending care centers.

Conversely, the weaknesses of the national framework for Child Protection on which the program has not succeeded in making a difference are:

- The low political leadership in the field of Child Protection;
- The difficulties in implementing the policies and strategies;
- The low quality of the approaches and childcare in many welfare centers (CIJE, CDIS, CSOE, etc.);
- The centralization of childcare services and the rigidity of their management;
- The lack of coordination.

The effectiveness of the program component activities varies considerably according to the type of activities considered.

The effectiveness of activities aimed at strengthening policies and strategies is good with regard to support the development of advocacy documents, strategies and plans of action but is limited as to their use and implementation.

The capacity building is a major activity of the program, in particular the training. In this area, the effectiveness of activities varies according to the target. It is overall good for the DPE and the INPE staff but limited for childcare centers staff. The low ownership by these stakeholders of the approaches and skills covered by the training courses is reflected in many testimonies of children attesting of persistent violations of their rights. The criticism of the courses includes (i) their theoretical nature and the lack of hands-on exercises, (ii) the lack of participation of the recipients in the choice of the main training issues, (iii) the fact that training activities only cover part of the staff within the same institution.

In the area of situation monitoring, the effectiveness of the activities aimed at generating evidence is good. Similarly, the activities supporting the establishment of databases for the INPE and the DPE staff have been effective. On the other hand, for the CIJE and the CDIS, the establishment of an information system has not yet been successful.

In the implementation of the component activities, the initial geographical targeting on 10 governorates has not been respected between 2007 and 2011 and has been abandoned in 2012-2013 for the benefit of a more relevant targeting on "all governorates, in particular the most disadvantaged".

In addition, the program component activities are consistent with five of the eight key elements of the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy. But the alignment appears low as regard to element 3 (attitudes, traditions, customs, behavior and practices), element 4 (Open discussion, including the engagement of media and civil society) and element 5 (Children’s life skills, knowledge and participation), whereas the need for action in these areas has strongly emerged from the interviews and focus groups. However, these gaps are partially offset by the good synergy between

\[2\] According to the speech diffusers of DPE.
the Child Protection component with the cross-cutting components of the program, in particular "Advocacy, Partnership and Participation" and "Monitoring and Social Policies".

Based on qualitative data, many reasons explain the partial achievement of the program component result, including: political obstacles (before 2011) and the slowing of public services (after 2011), persisting gaps in the CPE, a lack of capacity both within the UNICEF team and national partners (governmental and non-governmental) at central and regional levels, poor leadership and a lack of systemic vision for Child Protection, low ownership of the program approaches and logical framework, a lack of motivation of some stakeholders and social workers (due to difficult working conditions, bureaucratic management, feelings of isolation, lack of communication), the persistence of adverse social norms and practices.

Finally, by sorting, analyzing and triangulating all collected data on the program effectiveness, the study helped identify the persistent flaws in Child Protection system in Tunisia:

- Unachieved revision of the CPE;
- Difficulties in reintegration of children in conflict with the law, especially into the educational system;
- Non-compliance with the norms and standards of care for vulnerable children and child victims (child abuse, lack of child friendly spaces, lack of confidentiality, etc.) in some Child Protection services and other relevant public services (health, police, justice...);
- Lack of capacity of education professionals concerning the reintegration of children in conflict with the law and the prevention and detection of cases of violence against children;
- Lack of capacity of health/police/justice professionals in terms of care and support for children in danger, children in conflict with the law and victims of violence;
- Absence of brigade for the protection of minors at the level of the National Gendarmerie;
- Lack of centers for emergency accommodation and child placement services, in particular at the regional level;
- Low consistency and continuity of care due to the lack of coordination mechanisms.

Regarding future action aimed at increasing the program efficiency, two options have emerged: improving the effectiveness of capacity-building activities and institutionalizing work in networks.

The impact of the program component has been considered impossible to evaluate but the conclusions emerged from qualitative data indicate that it is weak, as much on the lives of children at risk that on the community. The impact of the program component on key stakeholders’ behavior is considered significant for the DPE and the INPE staff but low for other categories.

As regards the program component sustainability, all stakeholders agree that UNICEF support is essential to pursue advocacy for improving national legislation and policies, strengthen national partners’ ownership of human rights approach and international standards, improve the quality of care for children at risk and child victims, complete the evidence base on sensitive issues, capitalize on exchanges of experience and international expertise.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the major findings and conclusions listed above, the evaluation offers a series of guidelines and recommendations in preparation for the next program 2015-2019.

The first guideline is about developing Child Protection component of the cooperation program UNICEF-Tunisia 2015-2019, including the monitoring and evaluation framework, according to the principles of the RBM and in line with the UNICEF approaches and strategies. The recommendations to be implemented are: (i) Developing the Child Protection program component, including the framework of monitoring and evaluation, according to the quality standards and the principles of the RBM, (ii) Developing the Child Protection program component in accordance with the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy and with the Equity based approach.

3 Note that face to the increase of crimes and offenses against children, the National Gendarmerie has recently announced the creation of a Sub-Directorate for Child and Family Protection within the General Directorate of the National Gendarmerie.
The second guideline seeks to support the development of a national Child Protection policy according to a systemic vision. The recommendations to be implemented are: (i) Advocating for the pursuit of the legislative reform and the effective implementation of existing laws, (ii) Providing technical support to government for organizing consultations with all stakeholders in view to develop an integrated and inclusive national policy for Child Protection, (iii) Strengthening the professionalization at governmental and non-governmental levels and (iv) Strengthening partnership with civil society organizations.

The third guideline is focused on encouraging social change to enhance a protective environment for children. The recommendations to be implemented are: (i) Completing evidence base on the most vulnerable children, in cooperation with the University and other United Nations agencies, notably concerning child victims, children on the move and children in conflict with the law, (ii) Conducting surveys and studies on knowledge, attitudes and practices, in particular with regard to violence against children, child work, exploitation and trafficking, abandonment of children and reintegration of children deprived of a family environment and (iii) Developing a communication strategy to promote behaviors conducive to Child Protection and supporting the setting-up of implementation mechanisms.