**UNICEF Evaluation Management Response Template**

**Evaluation title:** UNICEF Upstream Work in Basic Education and Gender Equality 2003–2012  
**Year:** 2014  
**Office and person in charge for management response:** Programme Division, Ted Chaiban, Director  

**Overall response to the evaluation:** The evaluation examined how and how well UNICEF engaged in upstream work in Basic Education and Gender Equality, which is defined as “activities which were intended to have or had a system-wide, sustainable effect on the national capacities of public sector duty bearers in the basic education sector for fulfilling children’s rights, directly or indirectly.” The evaluation was conducted in a proficient and methodical manner. Evidence was gathered from a review of documentation, a survey, four case studies and interviews with selected staff members. While some of the case studies could not fully reflect the context, overall the evaluation provides a balanced and properly justified analysis together with a sound set of recommendations that will help to improve the effectiveness of the organization’s work. The evaluation confirms that UNICEF can and does play a critical role at global, regional and national levels in upstream work, and that this complements and adds value to the organization’s downstream work on the ground. While UNICEF engagement in upstream work had strengthened over the course of the evaluation, there is evidence that further work is required to improve skill sets, financial instruments and ability to monitor results from upstream work. UNICEF management recognizes that a robust response to all of the recommendations in this evaluation offers the opportunity to play a more substantive role in global, regional and national policy formation and financing mechanisms to the benefit of children.  

**Planned use of evaluation:** The findings and recommendations from the evaluation will be used to steer ongoing efforts to integrate upstream and downstream work to support action in countries. The evaluation will also be used to strengthen UNICEF systems for monitoring the scale and impact of upstream work in the education sector and beyond, enabling the organization to make evidence-based decisions on the allocation of resources to this work. In the education sector, the evaluation will also be used to guide efforts to build the capacity of country offices to engage more effectively in upstream work, while at the same time continuing to improve downstream results and overall programming.

**Recommendation 1:** UNICEF Strategic Policy and Strategy Division\(^1\) needs to develop an organization-wide framework for defining, targeting, measuring and reporting on the results of upstream work.  

**Management Response: (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree):** PARTIALLY AGREE  

*If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:* Management believes its Strategic Plan 2014–2017 already provides the appropriate framework for supporting the achievement of upstream results. UNICEF has developed a toolkit as part of the Monitoring Results for Equity System (MoRES) rollout, which provides a framework for defining, targeting, measuring and reporting on activities related to enhancing the enabling environment to support the achievement of results for children, especially the most disadvantaged. The foundations of the Global and Regional

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\(^1\) Data, Research and Policy Division.
Programme have been described in the Strategic Plan and theory of change, and have been consolidated in a reference document for the UNICEF Global Management Team (June 2014).

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<th>Actions planned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A technical resource package (which includes tools) on defining, targeting, achieving, measuring and reporting on upstream results will be included in several Strategic Plan-related tools and products.</td>
<td>Division of Data, Research and Policy</td>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>Consultations with various parts of the organization have commenced.</td>
<td>Technical resource package</td>
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**Recommendation 2:** UNICEF introduction of multidimensional budget and expenditure codes in 2014 is commended. However, UNICEF Headquarters should ensure that the generic intervention codes in the new coding system comprehensively and clearly denote, and are linked to, upstream work.

**Management Response:** (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree) **AGREE**

*If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:* N/A

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<tr>
<td>Provide quality assurance over the application of generic intervention codes to the implementation of upstream work at all levels of UNICEF. (These codes include evidence generation and research; policy dialogue and advocacy; partnerships; and South-South cooperation).</td>
<td>Division of Data, Research and Policy</td>
<td>Quarterly activity. The next round of quality assurance will start on 1 November 2014 and finish by</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>Monitoring of the application of programme codes is a continuous activity. The next round of monitoring will start on 15 November 2014 and will pay specific attention to the use of codes for upstream work.</td>
<td>Reports from the VISION system</td>
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On the basis of monitoring reports, make adjustments to UNICEF programme coding systems to reflect the dimensions of the upstream work. This will be timed to coincide with the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

15 December 2014

**Recommendation 3:** UNICEF Headquarters needs to develop mechanisms to manage pooled or third-party funds in ways that are more aid-effective, including the use of country systems.

**Management Response:** (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree) PARTIALLY AGREE

*If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons:* UNICEF agrees to explore options for greater use of partner country’s existing financial systems rather than imposing parallel systems that may entail additional transaction costs, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action. This work will begin with an independent review of experience in managing pooled funds. The results of the review will be used to draft guidance on managing pooled funds, including a risk management tool, guidance on supervision of funds, and the activities required to strengthen partner government capacity to manage funds directly.

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<tr>
<td>Conduct an independent review</td>
<td>Public Partnerships Division/ Programme Division/ Division of Financial and Administrative Management</td>
<td>2nd quarter 2015</td>
<td>Not started</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Independent review report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of guidance note on managing pooled funds</td>
<td>Public Partnerships</td>
<td>3rd quarter 2015</td>
<td>Not started</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Guidance note on</td>
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</table>
**Recommendation 4:** The UNICEF Global Education team should consider requesting a global formative evaluation of capacity-building/system strengthening work so as to build its understanding of what works when and where.

**Management Response:** (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree)  AGREE

*If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: N/A*

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<td>Education will be included as a focus area in a planned evaluation of Support for National Capacity Development in 2015.</td>
<td>Education Office</td>
<td>1st quarter 2016</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>Agreement between Education Section, Programme Division, and the Evaluation Office.</td>
<td>2015 Evaluation Plan</td>
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**Recommendation 5:** UNICEF Basic Education and Gender Equality needs to expand its efforts to build country education team capacity for upstream work. This has implications at the global, regional and country levels.

**Management Response:** (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree)  AGREE

*If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: N/A*

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<tr>
<td>Revise generic job description for country office Education Chiefs to include a central focus on upstream work.</td>
<td>Education Section, Programme Division/Division of</td>
<td>August 2014</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>A generic job description for a P5 country office Chief of Education has been revised, in coordination with Regional Education Advisers</td>
<td>New generic job description for P5 Chief of</td>
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<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Implementing Entity</td>
<td>Status</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Reference</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brief Regional Representatives and Deputy Representatives on the</td>
<td>Division of Human Resources</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>The Evaluation of Upstream Work in Education has been disseminated to Regional Representatives and Deputy Representatives.</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>importance of ensuring that key posts do not fall vacant at the same</td>
<td></td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>The first cohort of 54 Education Chiefs, Representatives and Deputy Representatives already completed the Harvard Graduate School course on Equity, Quality and Leadership in Education. The second cohort of 58 participants is attending the course.</td>
<td>Harvard course brochure</td>
<td></td>
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<td>time, and ensuring that posts are open to national staff.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>An online course on Public Finance and Social Equity is also available to all Education staff.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to offer key staff learning opportunities on upstream work</td>
<td>Education Section, Programme Division</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>The guidelines were issued to build the analytical capacity of countries to engage in upstream work in education. The document was disseminated to education staff globally. Discussions are also underway on training/capacity-building for staff on the use of the guidelines.</td>
<td>Education sector analysis</td>
<td></td>
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<td>in education.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>guidelines</td>
<td>guidelines</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disseminate education sector analysis guidelines.</td>
<td>Education Section, Programme Division</td>
<td>September</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Continue to enhance existing Education Team site and its use as a</td>
<td>Education Section, Programme Division</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>A team site was developed and all 600 UNICEF education staff have access; regular updates are reinforced through e-newsletters.</td>
<td>Education team site</td>
<td></td>
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<td>resource for knowledge uptake and capacity development.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Underway</td>
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Brief Country Representatives and Education Chiefs on the importance of budgeting time and money explicitly to upstream work, and to strengthen cross-sectoral linkages.

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<th>Education Section, Programme Division/ Evaluation Office</th>
<th>Ongoing</th>
<th>Underway</th>
<th>A global meeting on the Global Partnership for Education was held in May 2014 where this point was discussed. The outcomes from this meeting have been disseminated to education staff globally.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Recommendation 6:** The 2007 UNICEF Global Education Strategy approach of balancing upstream and downstream work at the country level was appropriate. UNICEF Education should continue to seek this balance: country offices and education teams should target and link upstream and downstream work appropriately, depending on their circumstances.

**Management Response:** (Agree, Partially Agree, Disagree) **AGREE**

If recommendation is rejected or partially accepted, report reasons: N/A

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<td>UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014–2017 to include a balance of upstream and downstream work in education.</td>
<td>Programme Division and Education Section, Programme Division</td>
<td>June 2014</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The education outcome area in the UNICEF Strategic Plan was developed in consultation with the education cadre and includes a narrative and theory of change based on a balanced approach to upstream and downstream work.</td>
<td>UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014–2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance to regional offices and country offices to allocate appropriate resources to both upstream and downstream work.</td>
<td>Programme Division and Education Section, Programme Division</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>The Evaluation of Upstream Work in Education has been circulated to all education staff, and was discussed at the Global Education Team Meeting in October 2014.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Underway</td>
<td>All new country programme documents will be reviewed by Programme Division to ensure that they include a balance of upstream and downstream work in education.</td>
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