Evaluability Assessment and Formative Evaluation (EAFE) of the UNICEF positioning to achieve the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022–2025

Robert McCouch, Director of Evaluation

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Item 9: Evaluability assessment and formative evaluation of the UNICEF positioning to achieve the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025
Reference document: E/ICEF/2023/3
Background

Exercise was commissioned in the first year of the Strategic Plan in order to help UNICEF identify points of institutional strength and areas requiring course adjustment before these might become more challenging problems for UNICEF and its partners.

Objectives

The exercise aimed to assess traditional evaluability issues and determine whether the strategic elements of the Strategic Plan and other foundational aspects are in place to achieve its goals.

Intended as an early, rapid and forward-looking assessment to help UNICEF and its partners identify, and thus anticipate and manage, potential risks.
Scope and Approach

**Evaluation Question:** To what extent does UNICEF have the most critical technical and strategic elements in place to **achieve the goals it has committed to in the Strategic Plan 2022–2025** and to meaningfully **monitor and evaluate its progress** against these goals?

_Not an assessment of the Strategic Plan itself, but rather the organization's overall preparedness to implement it and measure its progress_

**Scope:** Examined **ongoing operationalization and implementation of Strategic Plan (2022-2025)** --i.e., technical and strategic elements and other foundational aspects. Assessed the 5 programmatic **Goal Areas** and includes 3 case studies.

**Approach:** Designed to be as broad as robust as possible within its intentional time constraints. Applied a **mixed-methods approach**, including a combination of traditional evaluability approaches and the use of a readiness assessment framework that measures five criteria, e.g., **approach, positioning, technical capacity, resources, and partnerships**. Given time constraints, the exercise focused on **internal stakeholders** to examine the organization's preparedness.
Findings: Readiness for the strategic elements

Overall, the organization is developing its preparedness yet there is still much to improve.

All strategic elements were partially in place, with 6 being sufficient/good, 10 insufficient but nascent, and 3 were inadequate/poor.

- Newly introduced elements to the current Strategic Plan had lower readiness ratings than others.
- Cross-cutting elements showed the lowest readiness ratings across all data sources, including the staff survey; however, gender had consistently high ratings as a change strategy and cross-cutting programme.
- The most consistent strengths were demonstrated in positioning, technical capacity and partnerships.
- Weaknesses were found in resourcing.
Findings: Readiness for the technical elements

UNICEF can be optimistic about a high-quality summative evaluation in 2025, but formative evaluative efforts face important barriers.

- While the new Strategic Plan has increased the focus on outcomes for children, the integrated results and resources framework does not capture the contributions of UNICEF to outcomes.
- Mechanisms for using evidence to support decision-making can also be improved.
- The Plan’s direction is clear and sufficient to guide programme alignment. However, it is insufficient when it comes to developing coherent frameworks.
- The monitoring, evaluation, learning and, results-based management practices that support the Strategic Plan while nascent, are still insufficient.
**Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1:** Accelerate programmatic and organizational convergence towards outcomes for children.

**Recommendation 2:** Clarify accountabilities for delivery of Strategic Plan.

**Recommendation 3:** Reduce structural competition to support Strategic Plan performance.

**Recommendation 4:** Provide additional clarity on the process of Strategic Plan prioritization at country level.

**Recommendation 5:** Strengthen change management capability.

**Recommendation 6:** Directly address the divergence between Strategic Plan financial resources and demand needs.
Recommendation 7: Ensure practical collaboration and a joined-up approach on data, research, evaluation and knowledge management.

Recommendation 8: Capitalise on the full potential of intersectionality.

Recommendation 9: Address gaps and technical barriers to progressive evaluability.

Recommendation 10: Improve flow of knowledge and access to technical capacity.

Recommendation 11: Define and enact a systematic approach for responses to global shocks.

Recommendation 12: Clarify the focus on climate action.
Thank you.