Revised evaluation policy of UNICEF

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UNICEF Executive Board – 2023 second regular session (5–7 September 2023)
Item 7: Revised evaluation policy of UNICEF
Process overview

**Independent Peer Review**

- **26 April**
  Independent peer review of UNICEF evaluation function finalized and posted on UNICEF and United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) websites

- **May**
  Policy-relevant recommendations of Peer Review incorporated into draft revised policy

- **September**
  Management response to Independent Peer Review finalized and posted

**Policy endorsement process**

- **18 May**
  Draft revised evaluation policy of UNICEF presented to Executive Board at 2023 annual session (informal session)

- **14 June**
  Draft revised evaluation policy of UNICEF presented to Executive Board at 2023 annual session (formal session)

- **22 August**
  Revised policy incorporating Executive Board and Audit Advisory Committee feedback presented at Second Regular Session (informal briefing)

- **5 September**
  Revised policy incorporating Executive Board and Audit Advisory Committee feedback presented at second regular session (formal session)

- **October-December**
  Evaluation Office drafts and issues guidance to support implementation of the revised policy, makes document publicly available

**Additional Executive Board and Audit Advisory Committee feedback**

- **12 April**
  AAC feedback on draft policy shared orally

- **2 May**
  AAC feedback on draft revised policy shared in writing

- **By 30 June**
  All feedback to draft revised feedback received from Executive Board members

- **By 7 July**
  All Executive Board feedback incorporated into draft revised policy and shared with Executive Director, Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board, and Global Evaluation Committee
Process leading to incremental but significant revision

Focused and methodical, extensive and inclusive process leading

Incremental but significant revision to core elements of 2018 evaluation policy of UNICEF
Crucial inputs of Peer Review, Executive Board and Audit Advisory Committee

Changes resulting from the Independent Peer Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations</th>
<th>Sub-recommendations</th>
<th>Policy measures</th>
<th>Measures beyond policy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. UNICEF management should ensure the sufficient and predictable funding of the evaluation function. The 1% target should be clarified indicating how it is calculated and what it included.</td>
<td>1. Utilize 1% as a mechanism for broad and predictable evaluation funding, eliminating funding responsibility for evaluation functions. 2. Establish robust sustainable funding levels for evaluation, presenting it as E8 for informed investment decision. 3. Align funding methods with program cycles for improved evaluation fund efficiency, ensuring resources allocation and monitoring.</td>
<td>Calculating 1% aligned with UNICEF’s goals and tracked by UNICEF’s peer review.</td>
<td>Binding new with increasing needs over time, with E8 target submitted by 1Q of 2023.</td>
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<td>The evaluation function should build on the existing value by understanding, together and critical knowledge functions in the organization, specifically and focused ways to work more together.</td>
<td>1. Create synergies with other knowledge functions 2. Involve children and young people in evaluation. 3. Invest in digital technologies.</td>
<td>Explicit commitment to cooperation with the other UNICEF’s evaluation functions included in core 1.</td>
<td>ADD E8 index to ensure sustained achievement and facilitating potential initiatives proposed 1Q of 2023.</td>
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<td>UNICEF should maintain and further strengthen the improvements that have been achieved in its evaluation mandate. Resources and leadership capabilities.</td>
<td>1. Materials shared reporting of Evaluation Director to UNICEF Executive Director with access to Executive Board. 2. Implement an Evaluation Director and Deputy Evaluation Director appointment. 3. Expand regional evaluation presence, assess and improve reporting structures. 4. Enhance access to key strategic, overall evaluation positions. 5. Prioritize self-development, refine external evaluation process, consider external expertise.</td>
<td>Accountability for evaluation 1% alignment of core 2. (pages 40-42). Declarative evaluation inputs showing improvement in core 2 alignment (pages 32-37).</td>
<td>UNICEF should emphasize sustainable and accountable evaluation function in the potential initiatives proposed 1Q of 2023.</td>
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<td>UNICEF should use its unique mandate and ability to work with and influence the external evaluation environment of UN agencies, academic, voluntary evaluation organizations and foundations to provide national evaluation capacity and expertise evaluation actions within support of UNICEF’s mission.</td>
<td>1. Strengthen linkages via academic journals and conferences. 2. Partner on evaluation activities to signify UNICEF’s impact. 3. Collaborate with corporate and government partners for evaluation support.</td>
<td>Commitments in UNICEF’s next report (pages 40-42). 5. Continued support for the country-led evaluation and UNICEF support of UNICEF delivery and UN coherence (pages 48-71).</td>
<td>ADD E8 index to sustainable initiatives included in core 1. UNICEF should align its role so fast of the Global E8 network. Coalition and a member of the Global Evaluation Initiative.</td>
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Changes since Annual Session of the Executive Board

Feedback received from Executive Board and Audit Advisory Committee in May-June 2023

- Acknowledgement of the extensive process and intensive consultations that led into the policy revision process
- Provision for an independent mid-term evaluation of independence-enhancing measures in the policy
- More explicit emphasis on several existing areas of importance to the Executive Board (e.g., joint, inter-agency, country-led and system-wide evaluations; national evaluation capacity development; outcome- and impact-level measurement; gender, disability and climate)
- Clearer identification of the range of exercises not covered by the policy (i.e., monitoring, research, data analysis)
- Clarification of where independence resides (i.e., with the UNICEF evaluation function, not external consultants)
- Reduction in the section on cooperation with other evidence functions, while retaining evaluation function’s own commitment to such cooperation
- More explicit identification of evaluation function’s central role in determining what type of exercise should be done in specific contexts, and at what level of effort and with what resources, based on its independent perspective on all relevant factors
- Greater emphasis on the relational aspect of the matrix management model (i.e., between and among the Regional Director, Director of Evaluation, and Regional Evaluation Advisor) as a key element in ensuring its success, rather than on the mechanics of reporting lines
- Identification of the Global Management Team as a key forum for discussing evaluation issues
- Inclusion of the formula for calculating progress toward the 1% target
- Small number of non-substantive copyediting and format changes in order to enhance the document’s logical flow in few areas
- Deletion of select non-substantive words and sentences to bring word count back within range of the 8500-word limit

5 | UNICEF Executive Board – Item 7: Revised evaluation policy of UNICEF

6 | UNICEF Executive Board – Item 7: Revised evaluation policy of UNICEF
Key policy improvements

- Sharpening of roles and responsibilities for evaluation and its enabling environment
- Greater clarity on what is and is not evaluation (and covered by the policy and eligible for evaluation resources)
- Numerous independence-strengthening measures within the existing matrix management model:
  - Significantly enhanced role for the evaluation function in evaluation-related decisions
  - Commitment to increasing frequency and depth of interaction among the Regional Director, Evaluation Director, and Regional Evaluation Adviser
  - Inclusion of evaluation function staff in key planning forums and other important decision-making processes
  - Provision for an independent midterm evaluation of these independence-enhancing measures

- Introduction of joint evaluation planning across the three levels of the organization for greater efficiency and complementarity of efforts and for reduced duplication of efforts, waste of resources and evaluation fatigue
- More explicit dedication to cooperation with other evidence functions, with Governments and the private sector
- More explicit commitment to partnership with Governments, the private sector and civil society
- Elevation of joint, inter-agency, system-wide and country-led evaluations as policy commitments
- Explicit attention to embedding ethical thinking into day-to-day evaluation decision-making
- Increased emphasis on several existing strategic areas of heightened priority (e.g., impact evaluation, national evaluation capacity development, evaluation innovations, and meaningful integration of the gender, disability and climate lenses)
- Dedication of attention and resources to fostering consistently high and meaningful use of evaluations, including over the long term
- Restatement of commitment to adequate and predictable resourcing of the function as a management responsibility
- Identification of the formula for calculating progress towards the 1% evaluation expenditure target
- Greater clarity on human and financial resources targets
- Greater flexibility for very large country operations on the 1% target (while also ensuring the evaluation function has a voice in informing the appropriate level of effort)
- Firm grounding of the function, as well as the policy revisions, in normative “why” principles
- Significantly revised theory of change for the evaluation function
Looking ahead

Revised Theory of Change for the UNICEF evaluation function

Implications of theory of change for evaluation in UNICEF

• ToC will shape forthcoming guidance that helps guide implementation of the policy

• ToC will be used as a meaningful tool for implementing the policy and managing the function within the organization

• Future annual reports on the UNICEF evaluation function (AREFs) will be rooted in the ToC and thus be:

  - More analytical in exploring the underlying factors affecting organizational performance in relation to KPIs
  - More holistic in reporting on the actual maturity of the function and its enabling environment (including assumptions, risks and drivers) as well as on KPI performance
Thank you.