

Management response to the evaluation of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021

Vidhya Ganesh

Director, Division of Data, Analytics,
Planning and Monitoring

UNICEF Executive Board Informal briefing
27 January 2021

Item 8 – UNICEF management response to
the evaluation of the UNICEF Strategic
Plan, 2018–2021 ([E/ICEF/2021/6](#))

unicef 
for every child



Overview

A number of critical reviews and evaluations since 2018 have been valuable in strengthening implementation of the current Strategic Plan.

The implementation of the Strategic Plan and related efforts to integrate the findings of the midterm review were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

UNICEF conducted its first-ever evaluation of its Strategic Plan from August to November 2020 with the following primary purposes:

- (a) To assess the use of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 as a tool for guiding UNICEF and for managing its activities;
- (b) To facilitate learning from UNICEF experience during the implementation period;
- (c) To provide actionable recommendations for the overall strategy of UNICEF and the planning process for the strategic planning cycle for 2022–2025.

The evaluation was not an assessment of UNICEF performance, but designed to assess the utility of the Strategic Plan in guiding the organization.

Evaluation Recommendation 1

Conceptualize the strategic plan as a holistic framework, reflecting the voices of children, with a limited number of priorities pitched at the outcome level along with clear paths for collaboration with other United Nations agencies.

Management response: Agree

Action

1.1 UNICEF will ensure that the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 builds on the holistic approach of the current Strategic Plan. It will be designed as a framework document that will give direction to UNICEF offices to adapt in support of national priorities and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

1.2 The Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 will incorporate a results architecture that links management, development effectiveness and high-level development results, aligned to child-focused Sustainable Development Goal targets. This framing of the Plan's results will represent a full articulation of the whole-of-organization approach to achieving outcomes.

Evaluation Recommendation 2

Develop a longer-term 2022–2030 strategy for children, with a strong focus on outcomes, allowing for flexibility to address emerging threats to children, in collaboration with other United Nations agencies.

Management response: Agree

Action

2.1. The Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 will have a longer-term (2022–2030) time frame, with a phased implementation approach, aligned with the 2030 Agenda. It will also have an increased outcome-level focus compared with the current and previous strategic plans.

2.3 In developing the new Strategic Plan, UNICEF will continue to make strategic decisions based on comparative and collaborative advantages. This includes the comparative advantage of UNICEF in providing critical policy advice to influence change for children and to address emerging threats that constrain the rights of children.

Evaluation Recommendation 3

Place equal emphasis on measuring change strategies and enablers alongside programme results.

Management response: Agree

Action

3.1 In operationalizing the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, UNICEF will ensure that systems are in place for monitoring the utility and effectiveness of different categories of results, including those related to programme as well as change strategies and enablers or their equivalents. In keeping with the aims of the new monitoring framework, this will also support the objective of strengthening organizational learning and will enable reporting on these results through such key management documents as the annual report of the Executive Director of UNICEF.

3.2 In developing their office management plans for the period 2022–2025, divisions that have responsibility for operationalizing and monitoring change strategies and enablers will be directed to explicitly address the issue of adequate capacity. This will specify the need for institutional capacity to better report, monitor and generate evidence on how change strategies and enablers can support country-level programming and coordination with other United Nations agencies.

Evaluation Recommendation 4

Strengthen outcome-level reporting and appropriate funding sources for a multisectoral approach.

Management response: Agree

Action

4.1 Building on the multisectoral approach of the current Strategic Plan Goal Area clusters, the new strategic plan will contain multisectoral and cross-sectoral outcome-level indicators.

4.2 UNICEF will continue to negotiate with donors to appropriately link funding sources to multisectoral programming, in support of the organization's efforts to overcome constraining siloed approaches. In these negotiations with donors, UNICEF will also make the case for multisectoral approaches as a catalyst for enhanced collaboration with other partners, including other United Nations agencies.

Evaluation Recommendation 5

Reflect the organization's dual development and humanitarian mandates in the long-term strategy, overcome bottlenecks of duality in programming, reporting, resource mobilization and staff capacity and integrate peacebuilding processes.

Management response: Agree

Action

5.1 In addition to integrating the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action and the recommendations of the humanitarian review process, the Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 will be the first strategic plan of the organization to systematically integrate a humanitarian lens into the analysis that shapes the theories of change and the consequent results framework. The plan will clearly indicate the comparative criticality of humanitarian action with respect to every high-level target and make sure that the corresponding strategies and theories of change reflect the extent of that criticality.

Evaluation Recommendation 6

Address the skewed distribution of resources, particularly in non-humanitarian contexts, to ensure that no one is left behind.

Management response: Agree

Action

6.1 In funding negotiations and agreements with donors, UNICEF will continue to draw attention to the necessity of addressing the skewed distribution of resources, including the ways in which this limits UNICEF operations in non-humanitarian contexts.

6.2 UNICEF will continue joint advocacy efforts within the United Nations system to improve the quality and predictability of funding to the system and to highlight challenges in partner compliance with the funding compact.

Evaluation Recommendation 7

Ensure provisions support the United Nations development system agenda while strengthening the UNICEF mission, comparative and collaborative advantages.

Management response: Agree

Action

7.1 In operationalizing the new strategic plan, country offices will continue to provide flexibility for working with other United Nations agencies across varying operating contexts and sectors, and to reinforce the criticality of national ownership and the alignment of country programmes with national priorities.

Conclusion

UNICEF has agreed with the findings and accepted all seven of the recommendations of the evaluation.

UNICEF is currently integrating the findings of the evaluation into the development of its new Strategic Plan, 2022–2025.

The first draft of the new Strategic Plan, reflecting UNICEF's efforts to integrate the recommendations, will be presented to the Board in advance of the annual session in June 2021.

Thank you.