Evaluation of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021

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Item 8: Evaluation of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021
Reference document: E/ICEF/2021/5
Purpose and focus: evaluation logic framework

First corporate evaluation of a UNICEF Strategic Plan

Primary purpose:
- Assess SP as a tool for guiding UNICEF and for managing its activities
- Facilitate learning from the Strategic Plan implementation experience
- Provide actionable recommendations and overall strategy for upcoming strategic planning cycle

Evidence-based approach:
- In-depth desk reviews: 62 countries
- 210+ internal and external documents reviewed
- 100+ internal and external stakeholder interviews
- In-depth analyses of 10 country offices
Purpose and focus: evaluation logic framework

Why?
To what extent is the Strategic Plan aligned with UNICEF mission and the UN reform and contributes to the SDGs?

Context
To what extent is the Strategic Plan fit for purpose in a rapidly changing world?

How?
What are the lessons from the operationalization of the Strategic Plan?

With whom?
To what extent has the Strategic Plan contributed to fostering partnerships and new ways of working?

What results?
To what extent does the Strategic Plan enable UNICEF country offices to support national priorities to achieve child-focused SDGs?
Findings

Strategic Plan guiding and framework, with holistic structure, however, systematic collective vision and voices of all children are needed.

Benefits to synchronized cycle of Strategic Plans with UN, however, a longer timeframe is essential to overcome constraints to country office planning and the humanitarian development nexus and to lighten the reporting burden.

Change strategies facilitate agile programmatic work, but systematic country-specific data and lessons learned needed.

Strategic Plan integrates multisectoral approaches, however, funding, reporting, government structure, learning and implementation challenges must be tackled in the new Strategic Plan.
Findings

Humanitarian action as cross-cutting priority is positive, nevertheless bottlenecks still remain to be addressed in the new SP, namely overarching systems, resources, staff capacity and context consideration for risk-informed programming.

Resource concentration on humanitarian-targeted allocations, limiting Strategic Plan operationalization.

Greater consideration to joint advocacy with UN agencies, tailored and evidence-based country specific messages are increasingly important.

Important UNDS reform progress, greater efforts and resources are required to support SDGs through multisectoral, cross-agency coordination and promoting UNICEF mission to be the voice for the rights of all children.
Recommendations

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.

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.

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

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

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

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

7. Ensure provisions to support the United Nations development system agenda while strengthening the UNICEF mission, comparative and collaborative advantages.
Thank you!