

Annual report on the evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF

**United Nation Children's Fund Executive Board
Annual Session 2012**

Evaluation matters...

“...to ensure that UNICEF has timely, strategically focused and objective information on the performance of its policies, programmes and initiatives to produce better results for children and women...and further strengthen evidence-based decision-making and advocacy, transparency, coherence and effectiveness.”

UNICEF Evaluation Policy (2008)

Outline

- A. Evaluation in UNICEF: performance, resources and results
- System wide evaluation coherence
 - National evaluation capacity building
 - The evaluation function in UNICEF:
 - performance and results
 - human and financial resources
 - The Evaluation Office
 - Strengthening evaluation across UNICEF
 - Addressing evaluation challenges in UNICEF
- B. Thematic analysis: evaluation and the prevention of violence against children

A: Evaluation in UNICEF:
Performance, resources and results

System wide evaluation coherence

- Continuing work with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) to harmonize and prepare guidance on:
 - Gender equality and human rights
 - Impact evaluation
 - UNDAF evaluations
 - National capacity development in evaluation
 - UNEG practice exchange
- Joint evaluations

National evaluation capacity development

Working with UNEG and other partners to support NECD through:

- Preparation of guidance, support for country-led evaluations, support for global and regional evaluation associations
- Support for global learning
 - facilitation of knowledge sharing and South-South learning
 - “MyM&E” Web platform (www.mymande.org)
 - New series of web seminars on equity-focused evaluation
- Strengthening country-led M&E systems

Evaluation performance: the global oversight system

Improved oversight is helping UNICEF manage and strengthen the evaluation system.

Key elements of the global oversight system include:

- **Evaluation reports database:** completed evaluation reports are submitted to this central database
- **The Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS):** all evaluation reports submitted are assessed for quality, and feedback with recommendations for improvement are provided on each
- **Management Response database:** Completed MRs are submitted - this allows tracking of MR implementation
- **Global Evaluation Dashboard:** quarterly status reports are provided to field offices

Evaluation performance and results (1)

1. Number of evaluations (2010):

- Completed: 140 *(248 in 2008-9)*
- Submitted to database: 91% *(71% in 2010)*

2. Topical distribution: coverage across all Focus Areas in the MTSP:

- Child survival and development: 25%
- Education and gender: 15%
- HIV/AIDS: 10%
- Child protection: 16%
- Advocacy and partnerships: 1%
- Crosscutting issues etc 33%

Evaluation performance and results (2)

3. Types of evaluations: focus on:

- Impact: 33%
- Outcome: 26%
- Output: 33%

4. Quality of evaluations

	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011 (interim)</i>
<i>Satisfactory</i>	36%	40%	51%
<i>Nearly satisfactory</i>	49%	30%	33%
<i>Poor</i>	15%	30%	14%

Evaluation performance and results (3)

5. Use of evaluation:

Management Responses uploaded:

In 2011: 65% *(47% in 2010)*

6. Corporate-level evaluations:

2010-2011 IMEF lists 15 topics for evaluation.

By April 2012:

- 10 completed
- 3 under implementation
- 2 cancelled

Human resources for evaluation

Evaluation professionals in 95 country offices (2011):

<i>International:</i>	73	} (up 11% from 2010)
<i>National:</i>	41	
Total:	114	

Evaluation professionals at Level 3 and above in 61 country offices. But posts usually combine several functions; many offices rely on evaluation “focal points”.

Staff turnover: 69% of M&E staff report having less than 5 years experience in M&E

Time allocation: M&E staff report spending 14% of their time on evaluation activities

Financial resources for evaluation: spending trends

<i>Item</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>Trend 2009-10</i>
<i>Spending on evaluation (USD)</i>	7,970	9,560	11,122	+16%
<i>Evaluation spending as % of programme spend</i>	0.38%	0.33%	0.33%	No change
<i>Overall spending on research, social data, evaluation as % of programme spend</i>	2.84%	3.1%	2.95%	-0.5%

Conclusion: Evaluation spending has grown in line with overall budget, but remains far below 1% of overall spend.

The Evaluation Office

EO contributes to UNICEF's goals through:

- Global leadership in evaluation
- Corporate evaluations
 - Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) updated in January 2012
- Systemic strengthening of evaluation at all levels

Staffing and resources to be held broadly constant through 2012-2013

- Staffing: 7 professionals
- Overall spending (biennium): c. USD 10 million

Financial resources for the Evaluation Office

<i>Funding source</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2013</i>
<i>Support budget</i>	2,183	2,175	2,023	2,150
<i>RR</i>	787	1,383	1,100	1,100
<i>OR - regular</i>	818	1,075	827	
<i>OR - emergency</i>	1,209	603	937	

Conclusion: the overall trend is flat, but the resource mobilization environment is increasingly difficult

Strengthening evaluation across UNICEF

- 97% of UNICEF evaluations are ‘decentralized’
- Survey of M&E staff indicates that the decentralized evaluation framework is effective in supporting organizational learning, improved performance, strategic decision making, results reporting and evidence for advocacy.
- But there is room for improvement in some areas:
 - quality assurance of evaluation reports
 - senior management oversight of Management Responses
 - communication of evaluation results
 - systematic training in evaluation methods

Improving evaluation quality

Issues:

- quality of evaluation ToR
- skills/capacity of M&E staff to manage evaluation activities
- quality of consultants / adequate budget provision
- sustained management attention (from strategic evaluation planning through to response and follow up)

Actions to improve evaluation quality:

- increased attention to ToR and team selection
- systematic e-learning programme under preparation
- updated guidance on MR prepared
- guidance, resource centre and training on equity-focused evaluation prepared

Addressing evaluation challenges in UNICEF (1)

UNICEF's evaluation policy (2008):

- Provides a sound framework for the evaluation function, comprising both central and decentralized elements.
- Steady progress achieved in implementing the policy.
- But, given many internal and external changes, it is now time to review and update the policy.

Managing the evaluation function:

- Better oversight is strengthening evaluation performance
- It has also highlighted areas for improvement, notably evaluation quality and utilization. Action is being taken towards further improvement.

Addressing evaluation challenges in UNICEF (2)

Country-led evaluation

- After Busan, the way forward is through country-led development. Country-led evaluation can make a key input to development effectiveness, but capacity is patchy.
- With other partners, UNICEF is helping to build national evaluation capacity in government and civil society.

Fully integrating evaluation into UNICEF's MTSP

- The Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Framework aligns evaluation with current MTSP objectives.
- The design of the new MTSP provides an opportunity to ensure that research and evaluation evidence fully informs policies, supports performance and promotes transparency.

B. Thematic analysis:

**Evaluation and the prevention
of violence against children**

Thematic analysis

Purpose:

- To present evaluative evidence based on a synthesis of findings
- To illustrate how UNICEF is developing knowledge in a specific area of work (and identify gaps)
- To make recommendations for improvement

Preventing violence against children is an important but relatively new and challenging area of UNICEF's work (FA4), where evaluation can help to identify good practice and issues for further improvement.

Information base

The review draws on a wide information base:

- 52 evaluations, completed in 2005-2010
- 73% of reports “satisfactory” or better
- Shortcomings in evaluation quality linked to deficiencies in programme design (e.g. poor results frameworks, weak M&E systems) and limited attention to efficiency and cost-effectiveness
- Good evaluation practice followed through widespread use of core evaluation criteria and appropriate methods
- Evaluations generally better in post-emergency contexts with higher funding

Findings and utilization

Findings and lessons focused on the following areas:

- a. Programme relevance and effectiveness
- b. Development of comprehensive child protection systems
- c. Adaptation to specific social contexts
- d. Child safeguarding

Utilization: growing evaluation evidence base used to learn lessons and take action:

- 2 meta evaluations and an inter-agency evaluation
- General compliance with the Management Response requirement
- Numerous examples of national and regional level utilization

Recommendations

Overall, the review found an appropriate focus on programme relevance, strategy effectiveness, and results measurement.

To address gaps, UNICEF is advised to take action in four areas:

- a. Strengthen planning and monitoring and evaluation capacity among monitoring and evaluation and child protection staff
- b. Review and further develop the systems approach
- c. Conduct global level evaluations
- d. Review child safeguarding policies

Thank you

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