

EVALUATION REPORT

March 2021

unicef 
for every child

Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Work to Link Humanitarian and Development Programming



EVALUATION REPORT

March 2021

Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Work to Link Humanitarian and Development Programming

Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Work to Link Humanitarian and Development Programming

© United Nations Children's Fund, New York, 2021

United Nations Children's Fund
Three United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017

March 2021

The purpose of publishing evaluation reports produced by the UNICEF Evaluation Office is to fulfil a corporate commitment to transparency through the publication of all completed evaluations. The reports are designed to stimulate a free exchange of ideas among those interested in the topic and to assure those supporting the work of UNICEF that it rigorously examines its strategies, results, and overall effectiveness.

The report was prepared by independent consultants Glyn Taylor (team leader), Abby Stoddard, Paul Harvey, Karimou Adjibade, Meriah-Jo Breckenridge and Monica Czwarno. Jane Mwangi and Laura Olsen managed and led the overall evaluation process with active engagement and support from UNICEF staff in various headquarters divisions, regional offices and country offices.

The purpose of the report is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge among UNICEF personnel and its partners. The contents of the report do not necessarily reflect the policies or views of UNICEF. The text has not been edited to official publication standards and UNICEF accepts no responsibility for error. The designations in this publication do not imply an opinion on the legal status of any country or territory, or of its authorities, or the delimitation of frontiers.

The copyright for this report is held by the United Nations Children's Fund. Permission is required to reprint/reproduce/photocopy or in any other way to cite or quote from this report in written form. UNICEF has a formal permission policy that requires a written request to be submitted. For non-commercial uses, the permission will normally be granted free of charge. Please write to the Evaluation Office at the address below to initiate a permission request.

For further information, please contact:

Evaluation Office
United Nations Children's Fund
3 United Nations Plaza
New York, New York 10017
evalhelp@unicef.org

This report is available online at:

<https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/reports#/detail/17156/evaluation-of-unicefs-work-to-link-humanitarian-and-development-programming>

UNICEF. 2021. *Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Work to Link Humanitarian and Development Programming*. UNICEF Evaluation Office, New York.

PREFACE

Efforts to link humanitarian action and development programming span decades, though the approach and terminology have evolved over time. Most recently, the term ‘nexus’, which is shorthand for ‘development, humanitarian and peace nexus’ has gained traction and emerged from a series of inter-linked policy processes, including the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Humanitarian Summit, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development-Development Assistance Committee recommendation, the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and Pathways to Peace, a joint United Nations and World Bank humanitarian, development and peace initiative.

Similarly, UNICEF’s work in this area has evolved over the decades and, in recent years, the organization has sought to deepen the links between its humanitarian and development programming. In 2019, UNICEF published the Procedure on Linking Humanitarian and Development (LHD) Programming, which brings together many of the existing work and guidance on nexus issues. In 2020, the UNICEF Evaluation Office commissioned and conducted this forward-looking evaluation to provide insights and recommendations for practical improvements in UNICEF’s work in this area. In addition to serving both learning and accountability purposes, the evaluation also aimed to serve as a baseline to inform a global evaluation of LHD programming that will take place in the next five years, and to contribute to the organization’s learning under the new and unprecedented circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Originally designed around six in-depth country case studies, the evaluation approach was redesigned at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and data was collected along three layers: 1) a review of the countries listed in the LHD Procedure; 2) a more detailed review of the 10 largest country offices by humanitarian expenditure; and 3) two in-depth country case studies of programming in Ethiopia and Indonesia. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation is based primarily on an in-depth document review, an online survey and remote interviews. The COVID-19 pandemic provided the evaluation team with an opportunity to observe, in real-time, UNICEF’s response to the crisis and the penultimate chapter is dedicated to the nexus in the context of that response.



The evaluation examined UNICEF’s overall approach to the nexus; its policy commitments in coordination processes; and its commitments in planning and programming, including for accountability to affected populations, gender and disability responsiveness, linking humanitarian cash and social protection, conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding and social cohesion. The evaluation also assessed how the organization’s planning, reporting, monitoring, financial and human resources systems and management structures support nexus programming. Finally, it assessed the COVID-19 response through the lens of the nexus. The evaluation contains several practical recommendations for how to advance the nexus in UNICEF programming.

The evaluation was conducted by a specialized team of independent consultants. I am grateful to the team leader, Glyn Taylor, for his leadership and guidance, and would like to acknowledge the contributions of the evaluation team, which consisted of Paul Taylor, Abby Stoddard, Meriah-Jo Breckenridge and Monica Czwarno (Humanitarian Outcomes), and Karimou Adjibade, a retired UNICEF staff.

At UNICEF headquarters, the reference group contributed valuable time and energy to the evaluation. I would like to thank Jan Eijkenaar, Martin Eklund, Pernille Ironside, Fitsum Assefa, Ana Cristina Matos, Anna Azaryeva Valente and Mignonne Fowlis. The evaluation also benefited from the inputs of other colleagues from UNICEF regional offices, country offices and headquarters divisions, and these inputs are gratefully acknowledged.

My colleagues in the Evaluation Office also deserve recognition for their work in seeing the evaluation through. Laura Olsen and Jane Mwangi conceptualized the evaluation approach, managed the evaluation and provided extensive inputs to finalize the evaluation report. Dalma Rivero, Celeste Lebowitz and Geeta Dey provided strong administrative support throughout the evaluation process.

Fabio Sabatini
Director of Evaluation a.i.
UNICEF

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	iii
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	viii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1. INTRODUCTION	11
1.1 Evaluation purpose and objectives	12
1.2 Evaluation scope	13
1.3 Evaluation approach	14
1.4 Evaluation methodology	16
1.5 Limitations and opportunities	18
1.6 Ethical considerations	19
1.7 The nexus: history and context surrounding key issues	20
2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE	24
Summary of Chapter Findings	26
2.1 The Procedure and LHD in other UNICEF guidance	27
2.2 Understanding and acceptance of the guidance	32
2.3 Reconciliation of UNICEF's development and humanitarian mandate and support to peacebuilding	36
2.4 Overarching findings	43
3. PARTNERSHIPS AND THE NEXUS	45
Summary of Chapter Findings	47
3.1 UNICEF policy, procedures and guidance: Coordination, system strengthening and capacity building	48
3.2 National system strengthening	48
3.3 Localization and capacity building	50
3.4 Nexus coordination, communication and leadership	52
3.5 Overarching findings	56



4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING	57
Summary of Chapter Findings	59
4.1 Emergency preparedness and risk-informed programming	60
4.2 Accountability to affected populations	65
4.3 Gender and disability in policy, guidance and strategy	71
4.4 Humanitarian cash and social protection in UNICEF	77
4.5 Peacebuilding/social cohesion	81
4.6 Overarching findings	83
5. INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES	85
Summary of Chapter Findings	87
5.1 Planning, monitoring and reporting	88
5.2 Financing and LHD	91
5.3 Human resources, supply and LHD	97
5.4 Overarching findings	98
6. COVID-19 AND THE NEXUS	99
Summary of Chapter Findings	102
6.1 LHD in the overall COVID-19 response architecture	103
6.2 LHD in UNICEF guidance and planning on COVID-19	104
6.3 LHD commitments in country office responses to COVID-19	106
6.4 LHD in partnerships and support to local, sub-national and national actors	108
6.5 LHD and UNICEF's internal systems in the COVID-19 response	111
6.6 Overarching findings	114
7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	115
REFERENCES	126
ANNEXES	130
Annex 1. Terms of reference	130
Annex 2. List of interviewees	134
Annex 3. Nexus framework for the South Asia region	139



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAP	Accountability to affected populations
CCC	Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action
CERP	Climate, Environment, Resilience and Peace section (UNICEF)
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CPD	Country programme document
CSO	Civil society organization
DAPM	Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (UNICEF)
EMOPS	Office of Emergency Programmes (UNICEF)
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
LHD	Linking humanitarian and development
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD	Programme Division (UNICEF)
RAM	Results Assessment Module
SMS	Short message service
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Photo: © UNICEF/UN0443455/Dejongh

This formative evaluation is a forward-looking exercise, designed to provide insights and recommendations for practical improvements in UNICEF's approach to the humanitarian, development, peace nexus (until now labelled by UNICEF as 'linking humanitarian and development (LHD) programming). In addition to this primary purpose, it aims to document the progress of UNICEF's work in this area to serve as a baseline to inform a global evaluation of UNICEF's work on LHD programming that will take place during the period of the next Strategic Plan and contribute to UNICEF's learning under the new and unprecedented circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. The intended users are UNICEF management and staff, across the organization as well as the UNICEF Executive Board and other key partners.

Evaluation objectives, scope and approach

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to:

- Critically assess UNICEF's efforts in LHD programming to improve and strengthen this linkage going forward.

The secondary purposes of the evaluation are to:

- Document the progress of UNICEF's work in this area to serve as a baseline to inform the global evaluation of UNICEF's work on LHD programming that will take place during the period of the next Strategic Plan;
- Contribute to UNICEF's learning under the new and unprecedented circumstances presented by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic;
- Add to the body of work available to the international development and humanitarian communities as they consider how best to link humanitarian and development programming in the broader sense and address challenges similar to those faced by UNICEF.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the extent to which the 2019 Procedure on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming is being implemented across the organization;
- Assess the effectiveness of these measures in improved programming and systems-strengthening support to governments;

- Assess how UNICEF has taken forward its commitments to LHD programming in its global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a formative exercise, the evaluation looks primarily at recent developments and assesses the *direction* of work in this area. The team used the 2019 Procedure on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming as a focus, but the concept was understood more broadly to include the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. It covers all aspects of UNICEF's work in this area, including the response to COVID-19. It assesses how well UNICEF has integrated its programming and how well its supporting functions such as human resources, fundraising and monitoring, have supported more integrated programming. It also assesses UNICEF's leadership and engagement at the inter-agency level to advance the nexus agenda.

The evaluation is organized around 13 evaluation questions. These questions are grouped into five themes, which correspond to the sections in this report. The evaluation criteria used include coherence, connectedness, coverage, effectiveness and gender. The evaluation employed a mixed methods approach, collecting, synthesizing and triangulating qualitative and quantitative evidence from internal (UNICEF) and external sources. Originally designed around six, in depth-country case studies, the evaluation approach was redesigned at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Data was collected along three layers: 1) a review of the countries listed in the procedure; 2) a more detailed review of the 10 largest country offices by humanitarian expenditure; and 3) two in-depth country case studies of programming in Ethiopia and Indonesia. Data collection involved over 180 interviews with UNICEF staff and partners, an in-depth

document review and a survey. The timeframe covers the period of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 through October 2020.

The Nexus: History and context

There is a long history of practice, debate, and policy around linking different types of interventions in crises. During the 1980s and 1990s the discourse centred on linking relief and development in order to improve the recovery process from crises. Later, in order to stress the lack of a linear progression from relief to development, some began using the terms relief and development ‘continuum’ and ‘contiguuum’. More recently, the term ‘resilience’ became widely used as a framing and analytical device and United Nations documentation discussed integration. ‘The nexus’ is the latest term to gain widespread traction.

Evaluation findings

Overall, UNICEF has made significant advances in its approach to the humanitarian development and peace nexus. Most notably, in 2019, the publication of the mandatory Procedure on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming, which brings together existing strands of humanitarian and development programming, marked an important milestone for the organization. In 2020, the revision of the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs) shifted the organization’s attention to issues raised by LHD programming. UNICEF’s adoption of the OECD Development Assistance Committee Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and

its common definitions is another important step forward. Many country offices have seen improvements in their programme planning, and as a result, have created the basis for better outcomes for vulnerable children and their families. The findings are organized around five themes.

Definition and coherence

UNICEF’s overall approach to the humanitarian, development and peace nexus requires updating and strengthening. The current framing of ‘linking’ humanitarian and development programming neglects the peacebuilding dimension and reinforces the idea that these are two *discrete* ways to programme. This is, in part, an internalisation of the heavily bifurcated assistance architecture that has developed over time and appropriately reflects the operational reality in some contexts. It is essential that UNICEF embrace the approach outlined in the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review which emphasizes “*greater cooperation, coherence, coordination and complementarity among development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace*”¹ across its *internal* systems and structures for planning, reporting and financial management, rather than reinforcing two siloed modes of programming.

The need for LHD programming is not integrated into the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 at the highest possible level. As a concept in the Strategic Plan, LHD is subsumed under humanitarian programming and one of its change strategies. Although it is a stated priority and the subject of the LHD Procedure, it is one of many competing priorities.

¹ United Nations General Assembly, ‘Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system’ A/RES/75/233, December 2020.

LHD is defined most comprehensively in the revised CCCs. Published in 2020, the CCCs show a marked improvement in UNICEF's treatment of LHD issues. However, while the CCCs are applicable in all UNICEF country offices, they are the core policy framework for UNICEF's humanitarian action. This risks reinforcing the misperception that LHD is primarily a humanitarian issue, not a development issue. Similarly, it is subsumed in the Strategic Plan under humanitarian programming.

In the Strategic Plan, LHD is treated as a means to strengthening results rather as an objective in its own right. While this is deliberate and appropriate – Strategic Plan objectives are defined in terms of results for children – it has significant implications for how it is treated in UNICEF reporting and monitoring systems.

The Procedure and higher-level guidance do not adequately discuss possible tensions between the components of UNICEF's multiple mandates, including peace, and offer little practical guidance on how to bridge the elements. In particular, the Procedure underplays the need to “safeguard operational independence and principled humanitarian action when linking humanitarian and development programmes” and includes only minimal reference to conflict sensitivity and UNICEF's contributions to peace. For UNICEF, transitioning from the implementation of a development framework to operating as an independent humanitarian actor remains a challenge. Other than the CCCs, which provide policy guidance on the Sustaining Peace Agenda and UNICEF positioning regarding linking humanitarian and development programming, the triple nexus in complex emergencies, including in United Nations integrated settings, these tensions are ignored.

The Procedure has had traction within UNICEF, particularly in supporting the development of the most recent Country programme documents (CPD) and annual reviews, which show marked improvement. This speaks to the successful institutionalization of the concept. Country offices understand that the contextualization of the concept is also essential, and the usefulness of the Procedure is significantly strengthened with the support of regional offices and headquarters divisions, notably the Programme Division (PD) Climate, Environment, Resilience and Peace (CERP) unit. Overall, however, the evaluation found a lack of consistent and organization-wide understanding of the nexus and the Procedure's requirements, partly due to the lack of a defined process for rolling the Procedure out and communicating it effectively to country offices.

Partnerships and the nexus

The evaluation found clear and consistent policy commitments to linking humanitarian and development programming in coordination processes; to better supporting local humanitarian action; and to strengthening national and local systems and capacities for humanitarian responses that are linked to development.

These policy commitments are not translated consistently into improved practice, however. UNICEF's government partnerships have allowed for significant achievements in system-strengthening. Strengthening civil society partnerships is a more complicated topic and the views of partners were mixed. Some noted that relationships were partly hindered by rigid UNICEF systems, poor communication on nexus-related strategies and minimal inclusion of partners in the programme planning and design processes. The quality of the relationship between UNICEF and its local non-governmental organization (NGO) partners

could benefit from a more participatory and mutual decision-making approach, as opposed to what NGO partners described in interviews to be akin to a 'subcontracting' approach.

UNICEF is a key coordination agency in humanitarian settings. Its dual mandate and sectoral strengths position it to work proactively towards coherent approaches within and across its specialist sectors. However, the organization needs to invest further in staff with strong coordination and leadership capacities who are able to work confidently across humanitarian and development programming. While coordination is effective within sectors, it is less effective across sectors. UNICEF needs to more explicitly promote the geographical convergence of humanitarian and development approaches; forge stronger linkages with peacebuilding actors; and engage more systematically with partners working in fragile and conflict contexts.

Planning and programming

The Procedure commits UNICEF to strengthening its work on risk-informed programming; emergency preparedness; accountability to affected populations (AAP); gender and disability responsiveness; linking humanitarian cash and social protection; conflict sensitivity; and peacebuilding and social cohesion. Across these commitments, while UNICEF is making progress and developing strong guidance, the guidance is not consistently translating into effective action at the country level.

There is evidence that the *institutionalization* of risk-informed programming is improving, meaning that the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming is being applied more consistently. More can be done to ensure that the Guidance is *contextualized* appropriately for each respective context and integrated into

UNICEF planning and programming guidance and processes. Ultimately, the approach to risk in each country should be dynamic and iterative, with an explicitly practical focus. There also remains a significant lack of analytical capacity for comprehensive risk and contextual analysis, including conflict analysis.

AAP is still not systematically integrated into UNICEF humanitarian planning and programming. While staff recognize the importance of AAP, it is not comprehensively embedded into key country documents, and recent evaluations have highlighted the weakness of AAP mechanisms within sectors and country programmes. Existing Programme Policy and Procedure guidance does recognize the need to connect development and humanitarian approaches to accountability but there is little evidence that this is happening in practice. The basics of good humanitarian AAP practice need to be in place before this can happen.

UNICEF has clear policy and guidance on gender responsiveness, inclusivity and disability sensitivity. In practice, however, this guidance has not consistently resulted in strong gender and disability responsive programming in humanitarian contexts, protracted crises and contexts affected by fragility and conflict. Disability sensitivity was noted as a newer area that UNICEF is increasingly focusing on, and for which new training and guidance is currently being rolled out. Inclusion and engagement of children and youth are central to UNICEF's approach.

UNICEF's dual mandate, strong body of guidance and firm policy commitments have positioned it to effectively link humanitarian cash and social protection approaches in fragile and conflict-affected places. UNICEF is advancing this agenda in several country

contexts and the COVID-19 response has given the organization new impetus to strengthen and expand social assistance in times of crisis.

There has been a great deal of uncertainty and a lack of consensus in regard to UNICEF's role in peacebuilding. In general, peacebuilding and social cohesion are treated lightly in the LHD Procedure; and in general, they are not well articulated in UNICEF's planning processes and programmes, and they are underprioritized in UNICEF's human resource management. There are strong examples of country offices taking this work forward, however, as well as signs of improvement in policy, guidance and support to field offices. UNICEF's role in sustaining peace and peacebuilding is emphasized and clarified in the revised CCCs, both at the policy and programme levels. Similarly, UNICEF's new Programme Policy and Procedure platform and Rights and Results Based Management training similarly incorporate normative and programmatic guidance² on UNICEF's contribution to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Internal systems and structures

UNICEF's systems and structures are designed to service bifurcated external systems that are not always supportive of nexus approaches. Workarounds have become institutionalized, which has led to inefficiencies. While UNICEF will need to continue to engage in processes such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework and humanitarian response planning process – which will likely remain aligned with CPDs and Humanitarian

Action for Children appeals – greater alignment and coherence must be forged in UNICEF's internal processes and systems.

In the current Strategic Plan, LHD is defined as a way of creating more effective programming, rather than as a goal in itself. This is deliberate, appropriate and in keeping with the norms of results-based management systems. Yet, the end result is that there is no effective method of estimating the extent to which nexus approaches are operationalized – use of data extrapolated from coding against the humanitarian marker as a proxy is inadequate and activities associated with nexus approaches are in a grey area. The tagging system does not interpret whether UNICEF is making progress towards LHD; but rather quantifies the contribution of activities to each mode of programming. The indicator set appended to the Procedure is a similarly weak proxy. While consistently measuring and reporting against these indicators as a set would represent an improvement, the situation calls for more innovative solutions for quantifying the proactive application of nexus approaches.

Country offices continue to see the lack of flexible and appropriate financing for nexus approaches as the most significant obstacle to planning for and implementing these approaches. Given its dual mandate and prominent position in the international community, UNICEF can play a more prominent role in advocating for systemic change and new standards in support of nexus approaches.

² Furthermore, the new digital work planning system and associated procedure (under development since 2020) will facilitate analysis and collaboration in the development, implementation and monitoring of work plans.

The evaluation also found that UNICEF needs to strengthen the skills, capacities and mind-sets of its staff to more effectively meet its LHD commitments and programme effectively across the nexus. That includes strengthening staff capacities in key nexus-related areas such as peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity, AAP, gender and disabilities. The evaluation also found that capacity to undertake contextual analysis, including risk analysis, and socio-economic and conflict analysis is weak in regional and country offices.

COVID-19 and the nexus

The system-wide COVID-19 response risks re-producing humanitarian and development siloes and missing opportunities to strategically link humanitarian and development programming. In its COVID-19 response, UNICEF has adapted its ways of working to respond to the

pandemic in ways that create real opportunities for better linking programming for public health emergencies and development programming in its planning and reporting systems. Investing in both the immediate response (i.e., infection prevention and control) and alleviating the medium- to long-term socio-economic impacts has provided an important foundation for improving nexus programming. UNICEF can build on these foundations, as well as its work with and through states to strengthen state-led responses to the pandemic, which have relied on its strong relationships and networks with government line ministries across multiple sectors, as well as its sub-national presence.

Recommendations

Definition and coherence

1. Adopt the approach and language of the nexus in keeping with the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy. Rather than 'linking', emphasis should be on strengthening cooperation, coherence, coordination and complementarity internally across UNICEF's planning, programming and reporting, and externally through United Nations-wide mechanisms.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

2. Ensure that this new approach and language are integrated fully and prominently into the next Strategic Plan. All programme policies, procedures and guidance should clearly state the requirement for coherent, collaborative and complementary approaches to the fullest extent possible in all of UNICEF's programming. While this integration is



Photo: © UNICEF/UNI394714/Dejongh

being completed, a second iteration of the Procedure is warranted, in line with normal revision schedules.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS, PD and the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes.

3. As part of this process, ensure that a clear statement of UNICEF's role and contribution in relation to the peace dimension of the nexus and the centrality of humanitarian principles is integrated into the next Strategic Plan and all programme policy, procedures and guidance, including the revised Procedure.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS and PD.

4. Ensure that all major programming tools, including new CPDs and annual and rolling work plans, reflect an explicit, coherent and collaborative approach across humanitarian and development programming, including contributions to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Responsibility: DAPM, PD, EMOPS and regional offices.

5. Create and implement a communication and roll-out strategy and process for the revised Procedure.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS and PD.

Partnerships and the nexus

1. Review and strengthen how UNICEF approaches its civil society partnerships, in line with its localization commitments. In doing this, emphasize achieving better results for children through more coherent and collaborative nexus approaches. Where UNICEF has flexible and multi-year funding, pass this on to partners.

Responsibility: EMOPS, PD, DAPM, the Public Partnerships Division and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

2. Invest in training and support to ensure that UNICEF staff in leadership, senior programme and coordination roles (within sectors, and across headquarters and regional and country offices) can coordinate confidently across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming. This includes building skills for: better managing transitions; better supporting ministries, local government units responsible for disaster risk reduction; and better supporting sector ministries on preparedness. UNICEF staff should be able to coordinate across modes of programming and programme sectors, integrating any new learning effort into the new overarching Rights and Results Based Management training.

Responsibility: DAPM, Division of Human Resources, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

Planning and programming

1. Develop and implement a strategy to strengthen the application of the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming at the country level. Ensure that its application is dynamic, iterative and directly linked to existing programming and managing systems. Regional offices and PD should play a stronger role in interpreting and contextualizing the Guidance for application at the country level.

Responsibility: PD (including CERP), DAPM, EMOPS and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

2. Embed AAP more systematically in planning and programming for humanitarian action, in line with guidance and Core Humanitarian Standard on Accountability and Quality commitments. Create two-way linkages between humanitarian approaches to AAP and development approaches to social accountability and participation.

Responsibility: EMOPS, PD, DAPM and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

3. Take forward policy commitments to gender- and disability-responsive programming in humanitarian contexts. Drawing on gender and disability programmes in the development context, make the humanitarian programmes more responsive to the rights of women and girls and those with disabilities.

Responsibility: PD, EMOPS and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

4. Develop and implement a strategy and invest further in the capacities and staff needed to strengthen UNICEF's approach to peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity and improve the treatment of peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity in the next Strategic Plan and the revised LHD Procedure, as well as its roll-out and associated guidance (i.e., UNICEF Programme Guidance for Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding and UNICEF Guidance for Conflict Analysis).

Responsibility: PD, EMOPS and DAPM and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

5. In addition to including conflict analysis in approaches to risk-informed programming, ensure that conflict sensitivity is consistently and continuously emphasised in planning and programme development and adjustment. This needs to be undertaken in a way that supports coherence and complementarity between humanitarian and development programming.

Responsibility: PD, EMOPS and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

Internal systems and structures

1. At the country level, harmonize and combine work planning processes for humanitarian and development programming using stronger context and risk analysis, including conflict analysis. At the headquarters level, wherever possible, harmonize and combine the guidance on development and humanitarian programming and ensure that it is reflected in the Programme Policy and Procedure site, UNICEF's gateway to programming guidance.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

2. At all levels (country, regional and headquarters), review programme performance management structures (monitoring, measurement and reporting) to support the implementation of a combined reporting system that brings headquarters reporting structures together.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

3. In parallel with this review, develop an improved set of specific indicators to track the prevalence of nexus approaches. Develop a nexus marker, similar to the humanitarian marker, and provide robust and regular staff training to support its use.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

4. Drawing on stronger results-based planning (including multi-year) and reporting, take a leadership role in conducting advocacy to advance global humanitarian financing commitments and increase levels of quality funding (predictable, flexible and multi-year) that can support nexus approaches.

Responsibility: Office of the Executive Director, Public Partnerships Division, Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

5. Re-examine the system for designating and distributing funding streams (other resources-regular/other resources-emergency) and/or the budget allocation processes in support of nexus approaches. Investigate whether priority can/should be given to nexus approaches in the targeting of other resources-regular and other resources-emergency; and whether this designation remains relevant.

Responsibility: Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, Public Partnerships Division, PD and EMOPS.

6. Emphasize the recruitment of staff with mixed development, humanitarian and peace skills and capacities, especially at management levels. Invest in strengthening human resource capacities to undertake and/or support context and risk analysis (including conflict analysis) in country and regional offices as appropriate. Review training at all levels, including partner training, to ensure that nexus approaches are integrated.

Responsibility: Division of Human Resources, EMOPS, DAPM and PD.

COVID-19 and the nexus

1. Maximize learning and opportunities for linking humanitarian and development programming and contributions to peace and social cohesion provided by the COVID-19 response, including through more integrated planning and reporting systems, and simultaneous investment in short- and medium-term measures.

Responsibility: EMOPS, PD and DAPM.

2. Build on the momentum of the COVID-19 response to further support shock-responsive social protection and strengthen local and national capacities for disaster risk management.

Responsibility: PD and EMOPS.

1

INTRODUCTION



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0368707/Al-Safadi

1. INTRODUCTION

This independent evaluation has been designed as a formative and baseline evaluation of UNICEF's work to link humanitarian and development programming. It focuses on the Procedure on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming (hereafter referred to as "the Procedure"), which was issued in May 2019. The evaluation is a forward-looking exercise, designed to provide insights and recommendations for practical improvements in UNICEF's approach to LHD programming.

This introduction sets out the purpose and objectives, intended users, scope, approach, methodology, limitations and ethical considerations of the evaluation and provides a brief overview of key concepts and terms and how they relate to UNICEF's policies, procedures and guidance.

1.1 Evaluation purpose and objectives

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to:

- Critically assess UNICEF's efforts in LHD programming to improve and strengthen this linkage going forward.

The secondary purposes of the evaluation are to:

- Document the progress of UNICEF's work in this area to serve as a baseline to inform the global evaluation of UNICEF's work on LHD programming that will take place in 2022;

- Contribute to UNICEF's learning under the new and unprecedented circumstances presented by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic;
- Add to the body of work available to the international development and humanitarian communities as they consider how best to link humanitarian and development programming in the broader sense and address challenges similar to those faced by UNICEF.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the extent to which the Procedure is being implemented across the organization;
- Assess the effectiveness of these measures in improved programming and systems-strengthening support to governments;
- Assess how UNICEF has taken forward its commitments to LHD programming in its global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. INTRODUCTION



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0448005/Lister

1.2 Evaluation scope

- Timeframe:** As a formative evaluation, this study looks primarily at recent developments and assesses the direction of work in this area. The data collected cover the period of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, through October 2020.
- Programming:** The evaluation covers the entirety of UNICEF’s LHD programming work, spanning headquarters divisions, regional offices, country offices and field offices. It covers all aspects of UNICEF’s work in this area, including in the COVID-19 response. It assesses how UNICEF has bridged its LHD programming in all sectors and in all supporting functions, such as human resources, supply, fundraising, communication, advocacy and leadership. It will also cover UNICEF’s engagement at the inter-agency level, including its role in clusters.

- Geographic:** Because the Procedure is applicable to all UNICEF offices (headquarters divisions, regional offices and country offices), the evaluation covers UNICEF’s work in all offices.

However, more focus is given to countries that are (1) affected by conflict and fragility, as identified in Annex A of the Procedure;³ or (2) among the 10 largest humanitarian responses by expenditure. Additionally, although Indonesia does not meet either of these criteria, it was added as a country of focus based on discussions with the Reference Group and the East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office. This means that the following countries are given particular attention:

Afghanistan, Angola, Bangladesh, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti,

³ The countries identified as fragile in Annex A of the Procedure were selected because they appeared both in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 2018 States of Fragility and are classified as “very high” risk-prone countries under the INFORM Risk Management Index. This is complemented by Level 2 and Level 3 emergencies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, United Republic of Tanzania, Turkey, Uganda, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

1.3 Evaluation approach

The evaluation is organized around 13 evaluation questions. These questions are grouped into five themes, which correspond to the sections in this report. The criteria used include coherence, connectedness, coverage, effectiveness, gender and efficiency. The themes are:

1. **Definition and coherence:** This part of the evaluation looks at the coherence of the Procedure itself, as well as its coherence with the wider architecture of the international aid system and within UNICEF's regulatory framework. It also covers how well the Procedure has been communicated, understood and implemented (as well as implementation constraints).
2. **Partnerships and the nexus:** This part of the evaluation considers UNICEF's leadership role with regard to the nexus, how well UNICEF is coordinating on nexus issues and the extent to which UNICEF aligns with other coordination efforts in the humanitarian and development spheres. It also looks at the extent to which UNICEF

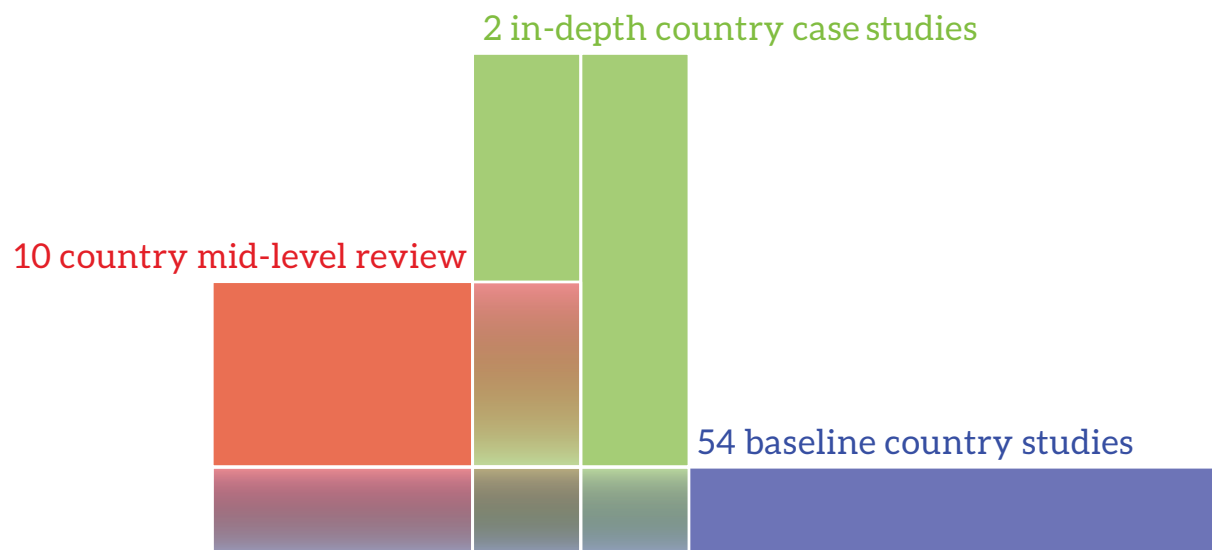
is strengthening systems, working with partners on the nexus and advancing the localization agenda.

3. **Implementing the nexus in planning and programming:** This part of the evaluation looks at how well risk-informed programming, emergency preparedness, accountability to affected populations (AAP), gender disability, social protection, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding are reflected in planning and implemented in programming.
4. **Internal systems and structures:** This part of the evaluation covers planning, monitoring, and reporting, as well as the financial and human resources for implementing the nexus.
5. **COVID-19:** This part of the evaluation looks at how well UNICEF has integrated the nexus into its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The full terms of reference can be found in Annex 1.⁴

The original evaluation design involved six in-depth country case studies. This had to be adapted following the outbreak of COVID-19 and associated lockdowns, which prevented researchers from travelling, and meant that the evaluation had to be particularly sensitive to the availability of country office staff. Instead of six in-depth country case studies, the evaluation built on three separate levels of analysis: (1) a baseline document review for all countries listed in the Annex A of the Procedure; (2) a mid-level review for the 10 largest responses by expenditure; and (3) two in-depth country case studies (Ethiopia and Indonesia) (*see Figure 1*).

⁴ The evaluation terms of reference contained the principal research questions as originally proposed. These questions were revised based on interviews and exchanges with UNICEF during the inception phase. The inception report is available at <https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/reports/#/detail/17156/evaluation-of-unicefs-work-to-link-humanitarian-and-development-programming>.

Figure 1: Evaluation layers

■ Baseline country studies:

The first layer was a baseline review of all 54 countries covered by the evaluation. This included a review of a limited set of key documents; an online survey of UNICEF staff, counterparts and implementing partners; and an analysis of financial data from UNICEF's internal systems. This gave the evaluation an overview of how the nexus has been implemented in all 54 "fragile" countries.

■ Mid-level review:

The second layer included an additional analytical component: a small number of key informant interviews and an AAP review. The countries included in this level of analysis were the 10 largest UNICEF's country offices by humanitarian expenditure in 2019: Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and Yemen. The information collected through this review was synthesized and published as a standalone product entitled "Quality review of linkages between humanitarian and development programming in the top 10 UNICEF humanitarian responses" (referred to in this report as the 'Top 10 Review').

■ In-depth country case studies:

Ethiopia and Indonesia were the subjects of in-depth country case studies. These in-depth studies included the methodological components for the baseline and mid-level review, plus additional analytical layers: a larger number and range of remote key informant interviews (in lieu of in-country visits); a broader and more detailed document review; and a more targeted and detailed financial analysis.

1. INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia and Indonesia were selected for in-depth case study, following discussion with the reference group, based on the following criteria.

Regional representation: In the original design, the evaluation was intended to cover countries from as many UNICEF regions as possible. This was deemed important for a number of reasons: contextual diversity; the examination of the role of the regional office as a variable in the evaluation; and because uptake of recommendations is likely to be broader in a more inclusive evaluation. Given the reduction in the number of in-depth case studies, the additional set of remote key informant interviews aimed to provide a similar balance and range.

Country context: The evaluation (in-depth case studies and key informant interviews) aimed to cover as wide a range of contexts as possible – including as many of the following as possible:

- Countries with mostly humanitarian programming;
- Countries with a primary focus on development (albeit with a focus on high-risk environments);
- Established development settings recently affected by crisis;
- Middle- and low-income countries;
- Countries affected by, or at risk of, different types of emergencies, including: cyclical crises (drought, food security); major armed conflict; natural disasters (or high risk of); chronic/complex emergencies; climate-related; and public health crises (or risk thereof).

Coverage by other UNICEF evaluations:

To the fullest extent possible, the evaluation endeavoured to lessen the potential burden on country offices by:

- Avoiding duplication with other recent, ongoing or planned evaluations;
- Utilizing ongoing evaluations or data collection exercises by adding additional nexus-related questions where possible.

While the adjustments to the methodology did reduce the depth with which the evaluation could examine LHD programming challenges in particular contexts, the additional interviewing did add to the breadth of the evaluation. The team, therefore, feels that it was possible to generate a rich overview and granular understanding of the key issues.

1.4 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation employed a mixed methods approach, collecting, synthesizing and triangulating qualitative and quantitative evidence from internal (UNICEF) and external sources. The evidence was organized around the evaluation matrix, which is available in the inception report. It includes the evaluation questions and sub-questions, alongside indicators, evaluation methods and tools for data collection and analysis.

The data collection and analysis methods were:

- Document review;
- Online survey;
- Financial data and analysis;
- Semi-structured remote key informant interviews.

1. INTRODUCTION

Document review

The evaluation team compiled and systematically reviewed core country office documents (i.e., situation reports, situation analyses, country office annual reports, Humanitarian Action for Children reports and country programme documents (CPDs)) from 2018 to 2020⁵ to identify evidence of action by UNICEF in the following areas relevant to the nexus:

- Risk-informed programming (working towards resilience/preparedness for potential emergencies);
- Capacity building (of government systems and/or civil society for independent action);
- Geographical convergence for a multi-sectoral concentration on the most vulnerable;
- Peacebuilding/durable solutions (if applicable);
- AAP;
- Conflict sensitivity and humanitarian principles.

For each area, the documents were scored on a scale of 0 to 3 for strength of evidence of action:

- 0 – Not found
- 1 – Weakly evidenced (terms used but no concrete examples given)
- 2 – Moderately evidenced (more detailed references to the area in programming)

- 3 – Strongly evidenced (direct illustration of programme implementation of this nexus goal)

For the two in-depth country case studies, the evaluation team worked with the country offices to review a wider set of internal and external documents relevant to LHD and the nexus across sectors.

The evaluation team also reviewed external literature on LHD and the nexus and systematically examined relevant UNICEF guidance materials, tools and policies and other recent evaluations.⁶

Online survey

The evaluation team developed an online survey instrument using skip logic to target three respondent groups in the top 10 and selected other countries. The survey targeted country office staff, implementing partners and personnel from other humanitarian actors.

Constraints related to COVID-19 meant that the survey could not be disseminated as widely as originally hoped and limited the number of responses to 253 in total.

Key financial data and analysis

The team analysed UNICEF expenditure data for 2018 and 2019. At the broadest level, UNICEF distinguishes emergency expenditures from regular resource expenditures, but to more accurately reflect the programmes that contain both development and humanitarian elements,

⁵ With the exception of some country programme documents that were just ending at the time of the review (e.g., Yemen and the Democratic Republic of the Congo).

⁶ These include: United Nations Children's Fund, 'Evaluation of Social Cash Transfer Programmes in Emergencies' (forthcoming), UNICEF; United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Evaluation of UNICEF's WASH Programming in Protracted Crises, 2014–2019: Results in development', UNICEF, May 2020; United Nations Children's Fund, 'Evaluation of UNICEF Contribution to Education in Humanitarian Settings', UNICEF, New York 2019.

1. INTRODUCTION

it uses a humanitarian marker in the form of a four-point rating scale that indicates the extent to which the programme encompasses humanitarian programming: (1) none; (2) marginal; (3) significant; and (4) principal. The financial analysis broke down programme expenditure by region and country in order to query the following:

- What is the current composition of UNICEF expenditure along all four categories of the humanitarian marker?
 - by region
 - by country and emergency level
- Have proportions changed over time? That is, are we seeing a greater number of programmes in emergency contexts that are in the middle of the scale, indicating ongoing development activities in the midst of humanitarian response?
- In emergency contexts, what are the trends in expenditures directed towards programmes in cooperation with governments and social safety nets?

The researchers augmented the data analysis with interviews of UNICEF financial and public partnerships staff to contextualize the numbers and investigate the implications of the current composition of funding resources in terms of capacities and incentives to promote LHD.

Interviews

Key informant interviews supported all layers of the evaluation. The research team developed interview questionnaires tailored for different groups of stakeholders. The evaluation team undertook 176 interviews in total, approximately 20 during the inception phase and 52 as part of the Top 10 Review. In total, 127 of the interviews were with UNICEF

staff. The remaining 49 interviews were with partners, including 13 donor representatives and 18 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (14 international) and 8 external / academic. Approximately 70 of the interviews were conducted at the country level. *See Annex 2* for a full list of interviewees.

1.5 Limitations and opportunities

COVID-19

As mentioned, the primary challenge faced by the evaluation team was the onset of COVID-19, which had several implications for how the exercise was conducted. First, it meant that the initial evaluation design, which was based on six in-country case studies, was impossible to implement due to travel restrictions and the fact that UNICEF staff and partners responding to the pandemic were no longer available to host these visits. The number of country case studies was reduced from six to two and they were conducted remotely. To address this challenge, the evaluation team modified the evaluation design and conducted additional interviews with a wider range of UNICEF staff in country and regional offices and headquarters divisions. The team interviewed recently retired and former UNICEF staff, as well as other stakeholders at the global level.

Second, UNICEF staff and partners were occupied with the response, which meant fewer responses to the online survey and fewer staff available to be interviewed. This limitation was overcome by expanding the list of interviewees twice during the evaluation process to ensure that adequate data were being collected.

COVID-19 also presented an opportunity to learn, in real-time, about UNICEF's nexus response. Several county offices that had previously

1. INTRODUCTION

implemented a purely development programme, began responding to the emergency. The evaluation team was able to observe how different parts of the organization were able to work together as the response unfolded.

Affected population consultations

The evaluation team recognized the importance of including, if possible, the views of affected populations. It originally proposed remote mobile phone surveys to get people's views about their key immediate and longer-term priorities, risks and needs and whether the assistance they were receiving, including that provided by UNICEF, was striking the right balance in terms of helping to meet immediate needs while strengthening resilience in the medium to longer term. Ultimately, these surveys were not undertaken due to budget constraints and complications related to COVID-19, but are recommended for future years of the Top 10 Review and the future evaluation.

In addition, while the evaluation team attempted to examine existing AAP data and beneficiary feedback mechanisms to examine people's views about the adequacy and balance of assistance, existing AAP data did not enable this. While the Top 10 Review explored whether U-report mechanisms could be used explicitly for this purpose, the lack of a standardized approach across the 10 countries precluded this. Instead, the review team requested examples of data from AAP mechanisms or initiatives in each participating country and reviewed them for useful evidence. The materials were found to be so disparate and distantly related to the subject of this research that they were not incorporated into the findings.

1.6 Ethical considerations

This evaluation was undertaken in line with the relevant UNICEF and United Nations Evaluations Group (UNEG) guidance on evaluation ethics; specifically, the UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluations;⁷ the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations System, which commits signees to independence, impartiality, proper disclosure of conflicts of interest, honesty and integrity, among other principles;⁸ and the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis.⁹ In addition to adhering to the ethical standards required by UNICEF and UNEG, Humanitarian Outcomes abided by its own policies and procedures governing codes of conduct of evaluation team members, safeguarding and data protection.



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0388984/Panjwani

⁷ United Nations Evaluation Group, 'UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation', UNEG, March 2008.

⁸ United Nations Evaluation Group, 'UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System', UNEG, March 2008.

⁹ United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis', UNICEF, 1 April 2015.

1.7 The nexus: history and context surrounding key issues

There is a long history of practice, debate, and policy around linking different types of interventions in crises. In the 1980s and 1990s, the discourse centred on the premise that greater linkages between humanitarian and development programming would improve the process of recovery or rehabilitation from crises.¹⁰ At the same time, stakeholders recognized that transitions from humanitarian to development programming did not represent a simple linear progression; often humanitarian and development approaches were carried out simultaneously, processes of recovery were fragile and countries or regions were prone to slipping back into crisis. The following decade saw calls for greater coherence between different actors in recovery and rehabilitation from crises, underscoring that there were necessary distinctions that were important to maintain if humanitarian principles were to be respected.¹¹ At the same time, humanitarians warned that developmental approaches might compromise neutrality and divert attention from a necessary focus on emergency response¹² and underscored that there were necessary distinctions that were important to maintain if humanitarian principles were to be respected.¹³

It is also important to consider the perspectives of crisis-affected governments and people in relation to the nexus. However, as yet, there is little evidence or literature to draw these out. Further learning and evaluations need to make this a priority. Governments have had concerns around labels such as fragility, which can be interpreted as implying a western centric view. There are also sovereignty concerns around the role of international actors in politically sensitive areas of peace-building although government positions are evolving in this regard and many countries have joined initiatives such as the International Network on Conflict and Fragility and are part of concerted approaches to better address fragility. Crisis-affected people are less concerned with whether assistance is labelled as humanitarian or development and are more concerned with its timeliness, adequacy and duration.

There has also been considerable debate about the appropriate balance between funding for humanitarian response and recovery and the extent to which humanitarian action should be designed to support people's abilities to provide for themselves. In addition, there is the question of whether humanitarian approaches based on the provision of life-saving inputs should be complemented by approaches that protect livelihoods and build durable solutions.¹⁴ There has been a recurrent concern for the lack of funding for humanitarian to development transitions once labelled as the 'recovery gap' and there

¹⁰ Buchanan Smith M. and S. Maxwell, 'Linking Relief and Development: An introduction and overview', *IDS Bulletin*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1994.

¹¹ Harmer, A. and J. Macrae eds., 'Beyond the Continuum: The changing role of aid policy in protracted crises', HPG Report 18, ODI, 2004.

¹² Macrae, J. ed., 'The New Humanitarianisms: A review of trends in global humanitarian action', HPG Report 11, ODI, London, 2002; Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 'Politics and Humanitarianism: Coherence in crisis', HD Report, Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, Geneva, 2003.

¹³ Harmer, A. and J. Macrae eds., 'Beyond the Continuum: The changing role of aid policy in protracted crises'.

¹⁴ Lautze, S. and J. Hammock, 'Coping with Crisis, Coping with Aid. Capacity building, coping mechanisms and dependency, linking relief and development', Feinstein International Famine Center, Tufts University, Boston, 1996.

1. INTRODUCTION

have been attempts to fill this gap through funding instruments such as Multi-Donor Trust Funds.^{15, 16}

There have also been calls to not create unnecessary parallel service delivery mechanisms, and instead, supporting existing government-led services to maintain access to social services such as health and education in times of crisis.

The terminology has evolved along with the debate. In order to stress the lack of a linear progression from humanitarian to development, some began using the terms humanitarian and development ‘continuum’ and ‘contiguuum’. More recently, the term ‘resilience’ became widely used as a framing and analytical device and United Nations documentation discussed integration. ‘The nexus’ is the latest term to gain widespread traction.

There has also been increasing recognition on the side of development actors of the importance of adopting risk management approaches that systematically identify, assess and reduce risks associated with hazards and human activities. Existing guidance emphasizes that risk management should be an integral part of the way organizations do their work, rather than an add-on activity, and within a process of constant improvement.¹⁷ A risk-informed approach to programming sees disasters not as one-off events to be responded to, but as deep-rooted and longer-term problems that must be planned for, and disaster risk reduction

not as a distinct sector, but as something that must be integrated into long-term development planning to reduce underlying socio-economic vulnerabilities, protect interventions against hazards, and ensure that development policies and programmes do not inadvertently increase or create risks.¹⁸

The current nexus initiatives emerged from a series of inter-linked policy processes that have included the Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the World Humanitarian Summit, and Pathways to Peace, a joint United Nations and World Bank humanitarian, development and peace initiative. Discussion of the nexus gains impetus by virtue of its connection to central processes of the United Nations – United Nations reform, the Grand Bargain, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and Member State processes such as the OECD Development Assistance Committee recommendation and the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review. This momentum is further evidenced by the increased involvement of the World Bank in the peace and development arenas.¹⁹

The ‘triple nexus’ refers to nexus definitions that incorporate peacebuilding as well as humanitarian and development. The G7+ process, the New Deal and OECD fragile states principles, which include a commitment to “focus on state building as the central objective”, have endeavoured to reposition states affected by

¹⁵ Chandran, R., et al., ‘Recovering from War: Gaps in early action; report for the UK Department for International Development’, NYU Center on International Cooperation, New York University, New York, 2008.

¹⁶ Vaux, T., ‘Proportion and Distortion in Humanitarian Assistance’, in ALNAP, Review of Humanitarian Action in 2005, ODI, 2006; ‘Politics and Humanitarianism: Coherence in crisis’.

¹⁷ Twigg, J., ‘Disaster Risk Reduction’, HPN Good Practice Review 9, New Edition, ODI, 2015.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ International Council of Voluntary Agencies, ‘Demystifying the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus - Topic 1: The “nexus” explained’, ICVA, 2019, <www.icvanetwork.org/topic-1-%E2%80%9Cnexus%E2%80%9D-explained>, accessed 26 January 2021.

1. INTRODUCTION

conflict and fragility at the core of responses.²⁰ The Grand Bargain, agreed to in the run-up to the World Humanitarian Summit, included a commitment to provide “more support and funding tools to local and national responders.”²¹ Often abbreviated as ‘localization’ this entails a commitment to channel funding more directly to national actors.

In some contexts, and within some organizations, approaches to the nexus have explicit peacebuilding objectives. The World Health Organization (WHO) (2019), for example, talks about the potential for “... using Health Services as a platform to build peace and using health services to provide tangible development gains (peace dividends)”.²² Delgado et al. (2019), in a review of the extent to which World Food Programme (WFP) programmes contribute to peace, find that, “Significant components of WFP’s programming in four countries do indeed contribute to improving the prospects for peace”.²³ McCandless (2012) cites, “... a significant and growing body of evidence that suggests that public administration and social services – delivered in an effective and equitable manner – can contribute to peacebuilding”.²⁴ Nixon and Mallett (2017) however, cautioned that the idea that delivery of services can provide peace dividends and contribute to state-building, “... is based more on received wisdom than empirical evidence” and that “aspects of the way in which services are delivered and experienced can influence

the way people think about government”. The literature on ‘do no harm’ has also made clear that without careful sensitivity to conflict, humanitarian and development programming can exacerbate tensions.²⁵ Peacebuilding and peace dividends cannot therefore be assumed to flow neatly from service delivery and whether or not programming is contributing to peace or indeed aggravating conflict needs to be carefully assessed, monitored and evaluated on a case-by-case basis.



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0429231/Dejongh

²⁰ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, ‘Principle for Good international Engagement in Fragile States and Situations’, OECD-DAC, 2017.

²¹ ‘The Grand Bargain – A Shared Commitment to Better Serve People in Need’, 23 May 2016.

²² World Health Organization, ‘The New Way of Working: Strengthening the humanitarian, development, peace nexus’, 2019.

²³ Delgado, C. et al., ‘The World Food Programme’s Contribution to Improving the Prospects for Peace: Preliminary report’, SIRPI and WFP, 2019.

²⁴ McCandless, E., ‘Peace Dividends and Beyond: Contributions of administrative and social services to peacebuilding’, UNPSO, New York, 2012.

²⁵ Nixon, H. and R. Mallet, ‘Service Delivery, Public Perceptions and State Legitimacy: Findings from the Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium’, ODI, June 2017; Anderson, M., ‘Do No Harm: How aid can support peace or war’, *International Journal on World Peace*, vol. 16, no. 3, September 1999.

1. INTRODUCTION

The OECD Development Assistance Committee defines the nexus as follows: “Nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions. Nexus approach refers to the aim to strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity between the three pillars of the nexus. The approach seeks to capitalize on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – in order to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict”.²⁶

There remains, however, a high degree of terminological confusion and lack of measurement frameworks. The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (2018), for instance, highlights “the lack of a common vernacular.” The nexus is therefore complex both in terms of how it is defined and understood and in terms

of where it is situated.²⁷ Poole (2019) found that “The purpose and scope of nexus approaches is not yet clear enough at country level” and that basic questions persist on whether the intention is to work on a set of technical issues within the scope of humanitarian and development programming (such as nutrition, food security and health) or to address more fundamental and political challenges related to mandates and the international aid architecture.²⁸

The implications of this complexity for this evaluation were twofold. First, the researchers were careful to examine how the nexus was being defined, understood and operationalized by different stakeholders. Second, the evaluation sought to assess how UNICEF is defining, understanding and situating itself in relation to the nexus within this complex institutional environment.

²⁶ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, ‘DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development/Peace Nexus’, OECD, 2019.

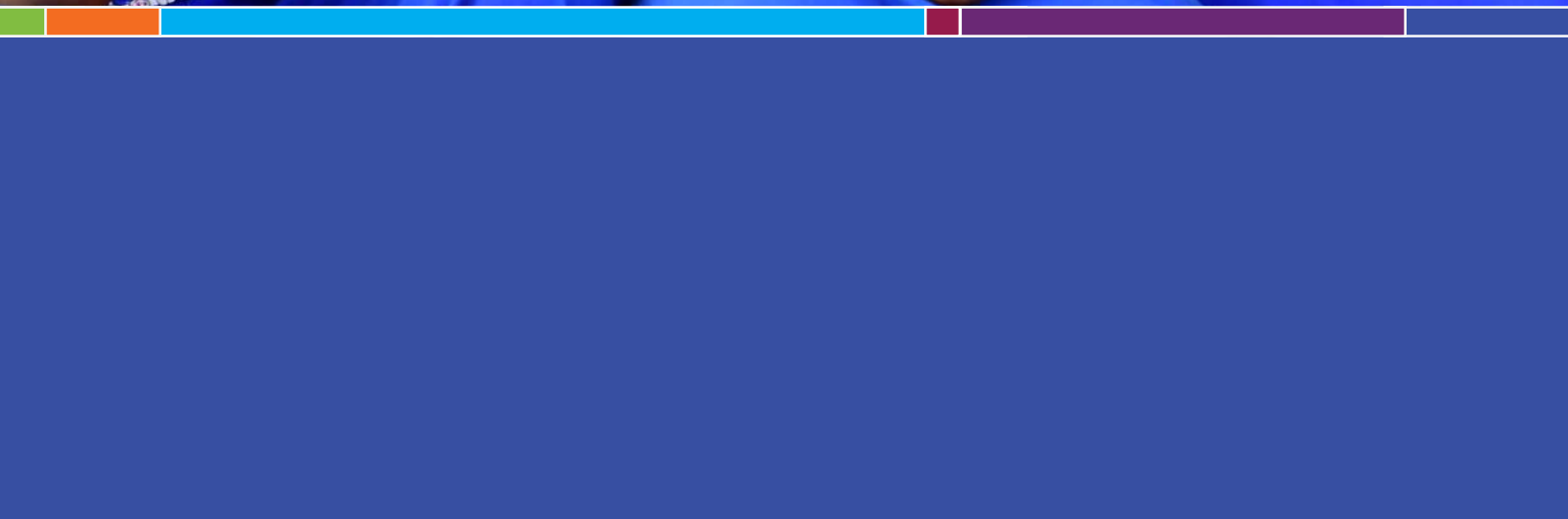
²⁷ ‘Demystifying the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus - Topic 1: The “nexus” explained’.

²⁸ Poole, L., ‘Financing the Nexus: Gaps and opportunities from a field perspective’, FAO, NRC and UNDP, 2019.

2 DEFINITION AND COHERENCE



Photo: © UNICEF/UNI394519/Dejongh



This section begins by taking a high-level view of how UNICEF has defined and positioned LHD programming. It does so by examining how the concept appears in UNICEF's regulatory framework, with a particular focus on the LHD Procedure (2019). This is followed by a look at how the concept of LHD is communicated to, and ultimately received and interpreted by staff at the country office level. The analysis draws on a review of the most relevant documentation from UNICEF's policies, procedures and guidance and interviews across UNICEF.

This section also looks at how potential tensions between UNICEF's humanitarian and development mandates influence development/humanitarian linkages. It asks how such tensions are handled in policies, procedures and guidance and ultimately in practice. In doing so, it takes experiences from country case studies, supplemented by evidence from other evaluations and responses from remote interviews. Across three parts, Section 2 seeks to answer the following key questions:

Section 2.1

- Does UNICEF have a clear, common definition and understanding of the nexus and related key terms?
- Is UNICEF's global set of policies and guidance coherent and consistent?

Section 2.2

- How do UNICEF staff understand the goals of LHD? Is there a clear and consistent understanding across the organization?
- To what extent is guidance on LHD programming well communicated, commonly understood and accepted across the organization?

Section 2.3

- Are potential tensions between principled humanitarian action and UNICEF's partnerships with governments or peacebuilding objectives reflected and reconciled in analysis and planning?
- What are the chief constraints – political, organizational or principled – to implementing LHD in the context? In conflict-affected contexts, how has LHD been shaped by conflict-sensitive programming principles?

● SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FINDINGS

UNICEF's overall approach to the humanitarian, development and peace nexus is framed as linking humanitarian and development programming. This framing neglects the peacebuilding dimension and reinforces the notion that these are two discrete ways to programme. This notion is, in part, a reflection of the heavily bifurcated assistance architecture that has developed over time.

The need for LHD programming has not been prominently integrated into the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 and the organization's policy and guidance. As a concept in the Strategic Plan, LHD is subsumed under humanitarian programming and one of its change strategies; and its treatment in policy and guidance – which is largely limited to humanitarian policy and guidance – risks reinforcing the misperception that LHD is a humanitarian issue.

In the Strategic Plan, LHD is treated as a means to strengthening results rather as an objective in its own right. While this is deliberate and appropriate – Strategic Plan objectives are defined in terms of results for children – it has significant implications for how it is treated in UNICEF reporting and monitoring systems. Although it is a stated priority and the subject of the LHD Procedure, it is one of many competing priorities.

The LHD Procedure does not define LHD clearly. The sheer breadth of procedures and guidance linked to the Procedure in the absence of a clear policy statement inhibits a clear and consistent understanding. The peace component of the nexus approach is noticeably absent in UNICEF's framing of the nexus in the Procedure. The Procedure does commit UNICEF to “where appropriate, address the causes of conflict and violence through appropriate peacebuilding approaches” but provides no further guidance.

LHD is defined most comprehensively in the revised CCCs,²⁹ specifically in the glossary. This is a very positive step. While the CCCs are applicable in all UNICEF country offices, they are the core policy framework for UNICEF's humanitarian action. Having the most comprehensive treatment of the LHD concept in a largely humanitarian framework risks neglecting the LHD challenges that arise in development-focused countries. In interviews, there was little mention or evidence of country teams in development contexts drawing heavily on the CCCs or using the CCCs.

The Procedure has had traction and is frequently referenced as a useful tool for the development of new CPDs and recent annual plans. This speaks to the successful institutionalization of the concept. Country offices understand that the contextualization of the concept is also essential, and the usefulness of the Procedure is significantly strengthened with the support of regional offices and headquarters divisions, notably the Programme Division (PD) Climate, Environment, Resilience and Peace (CERP) unit. The Procedure clearly indicates the need for situational analysis, including mandatory conflict analysis. In the absence of detail, it is clear that country and regional offices need to have the capacity, or to be able to access the capacity, to undertake this analysis.

²⁹ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action', UNICEF, New York, 2020.

2.1 The Procedure and LHD in other UNICEF guidance

The LHD Procedure and the CCCs represent UNICEF's most recent effort to introduce a nexus approach more consistently and systematically across its programming. However, efforts to link and/or ensure coherence across UNICEF's humanitarian, development and peace programmes have been discussed for decades. Given this long history, a number of issues surface when determining if there is a common definition and understanding of the nexus within UNICEF. In looking at this topic, it is helpful to start with the positioning of the nexus within UNICEF's regulatory framework (its policies, procedures and statements).³⁰



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0372483/Kaur

Nexus approaches in UNICEF's Strategic Plan

At the highest level, the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021,³¹ serves as the organization's current policy framework. The Strategic Plan is anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and designed to ensure progress toward the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (Agenda 2030). It comprises five goal areas, which are supported by eight change strategies, four 'internal enablers' and two cross-cutting priorities – gender and humanitarian action.³² The Strategic Plan recognizes the role of UNICEF's development work in reducing needs and vulnerabilities and mitigating future shocks; and the role of its humanitarian work in building resilience and strengthening systems in emergencies.

The notion of LHD programming is one supporting element of change strategy 1: Programming excellence for at-scale results for children. The clearest articulations of the need for LHD programming are subsumed under the cross-cutting priority of humanitarian action. This section lists "Strengthening coherence and complementarity between humanitarian and development programming" as one sub-component, along with strengthening accountability to affected populations and the use of risk-informed programming. Overall, in its placement of LHD, the Strategic Plan risks reinforcing the misperception that LHD is a humanitarian issue.³³

³⁰ United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Procedure on the Regulatory Framework', UNICEF, New York, 2016.

³¹ United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021', UNICEF, New York, 2018.

³² The five goal areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 are: (1) Every child survives and thrives; (2) Every child learns; (3) Every child is protected from violence and exploitation; (4) Every child lives in a safe and clean environment; and (5) Every child has an equitable chance in life.

³³ UNICEF's previous Strategic Plan, 2014–2017, emphasized humanitarian planning as a core component of development programmes and LHD as a core component of resilience. Source: Executive Board updates on UNICEF humanitarian action with a focus on linking humanitarian and development programming (UNICEF/2019/EB/3).

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

The Strategic Plan also treats LHD as a means of strengthening results rather than an objective in its own right. However deliberate and appropriate this is, it has significant implications for its treatment in UNICEF's reporting and monitoring systems, as discussed in section 5. The Strategic Plan's treatment of peacebuilding is also indirect, with reference made to the contribution that "development makes to peacebuilding, sustaining peace and building resilience". As such, peacebuilding is seen as a contribution to the achievement of results, and ultimately to the realization of rights.

Overall, given LHD's positioning as a supporting element that is largely subsumed under humanitarian action, LHD is not afforded the highest level of strategic priority. Nor is it prominent in policy and guidance documents considered key by field staff, the exceptions being recent iterations of key policy, most notably the newly revised Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs). A number of findings stem from this placement and treatment of LHD at a strategic level.

UNICEF's commitment to engaging with the peacebuilding dimension of the nexus approach is unclear, as is the extent of its potential role. The Procedure does commit UNICEF to "where appropriate, address the causes of conflict and violence through appropriate peacebuilding approaches" but provides no further guidance. The peace component of the nexus approach

is noticeably absent in UNICEF's framing of the nexus approach as linking humanitarian and development programming.

Relevant LHD policies have been developed in particular areas. For example, in 2017, the UNICEF Supply Division developed a Humanitarian-Development Continuum as one of 10 global supply strategies that has been instrumental in guiding the supply component of emergency preparedness. In addition, 2019 programme guidance on strengthening shock-responsive social protection systems complements UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework (2019).³⁴

The LHD procedure and nexus approaches in broader UNICEF procedures and guidance

As above, procedures make up the second tier of UNICEF's regulatory framework. The production and issue of the LHD Procedure is, in and of itself, a statement of positive intent regarding LHD and provides one focus for this evaluation. In the same manner as the term 'nexus' refers to an expansive range of themes, the Procedure brings together a broad, interconnected range of policies, procedures and guidance. These commitments span the full spectrum of UNICEF's humanitarian and development work. The procedure specifically covers, but is not limited to, local capacity building and system strengthening;³⁵ improving emergency response³⁶ through preparedness; and ensuring

³⁴ United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework', UNICEF, 2019.

³⁵ This includes links to the Accountability to Affected Populations Framework (2018); and UNICEF benchmarking against the Core Humanitarian Standard (2018).

³⁶ This includes links to the Procedure on Preparedness for Emergency Response (2018); Implementation of the Post-2015 Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction Guidelines for Member States to Safeguard Children's Rights and Well-being (2016); and the Emergency Preparedness Platform (tool).

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

that all programming is risk-informed³⁷ and conflict-sensitive and based on robust conflict analysis (discussed in detail below).

The Procedure also makes reference to its intersection with the current Strategic Plan and relevant UNICEF Executive Board updates, as well as a range of supportive documents³⁸ and a number of United Nations-wide and global processes and commitments. This includes the need to work in conjunction with United Nations partners through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework as part of the United Nations development system, and in support of Agenda 2030. It references cluster coordination and United Nations humanitarian response plans, through which UNICEF is also linked to a number of additional normative frameworks related to humanitarian action.

The need to “safeguard operational independence and principled humanitarian action when linking humanitarian and development programmes” is not included in the main body of the Procedure, which includes the ‘elements’ (commitments); rather, this is mentioned under ‘risk management’.³⁹ Overall, there is a need to more directly acknowledge the tensions between commitments to humanitarian independence on the one hand and supporting the primary role of the state on the other. This topic is covered in detail in section 2.3.

Regarding the extent to which the Procedure references other UNICEF policy and guidance, it makes clear its intersection with the recently revised CCCs. The CCCs are another key pillar

of UNICEF’s policy framework and provide the core policy framework for humanitarian action. They are also clearly rooted in support for the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The new CCCs make a substantive reference to LHD and include a formal commitment to “foster coherence and complementarity between humanitarian and development programming”. They include a benchmark for success that includes risk-informed programming, system strengthening to reduce vulnerability and contributions to social cohesion and peace, where relevant and feasible. The CCCs provide a definition of LHD in the glossary:⁴⁰



“Linking humanitarian and development (for UNICEF): fostering the coherence and complementarity between humanitarian and development actions to strengthen systems that deliver essential services to the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. UNICEF humanitarian programmes address the urgent needs of children affected by crises in the short- and medium-term, while its development programmes contribute to reducing their needs, vulnerabilities and risks in a sustainable and longer-term manner. Both therefore contribute to delivering the Sustainable Development Goals for the world’s most disadvantaged children and are designed to strengthen policies and programmes related to climate change, disaster risk reduction and peacebuilding, with the aim to mitigate risks and build resilience for children and their communities”

³⁷ This includes links to the Guidance for Risk Informed Programming (GRIP) (2018); and Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding Guide (2016).

³⁸ This includes the General Checklist and Examples on Linking Development and Humanitarian Programming (2017); UNICEF’s study on linking humanitarian and development programming (2016) and UNICEF’s study on integrated programming in humanitarian action (2014).

³⁹ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action’, UNICEF, New York, 2020.

⁴⁰ ‘Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action’.

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

The CCCs have been part of a major policy effort to provide greater clarity, both conceptually and practically, on linking humanitarian and development programming, at the levels of policy, programming and operations. They mark an important step forward in advancing a more robust approach to LHD at UNICEF.

The Procedure also makes reference to the Programme Framework for Fragile Contexts (2018).⁴¹ Specifically aimed at UNICEF's development programming and framing strategies for LHD programming under the theme of 'fragility', it puts forward four priorities for action:

1. Invest in contextual analysis of multidimensional risks and adapting programmes;
2. Enhance programming strategies in fragile contexts;
3. Enhance partnerships for more effective results in fragile contexts;
4. Expand and adapt internal capacities, procedures and operational support in fragile contexts.

These priorities resonate very strongly with the ultimate findings of this evaluation.

UNICEF's Procedure on the Development, Review and Approval of Country Programme Documentation was due for renewal at the time of the research for this evaluation.⁴² The most recent version from 2017 predates the use of the term 'LHD' at UNICEF. The document, therefore, makes no reference to nexus

approaches⁴³ under the 23 various notes on accountability for country and regional offices. One of the 11 notes on accountability for headquarters divisions in the production and approval of CPDs notes the need to "[Strengthen] the development-humanitarian nexus in context and in the structure of CPDs, including L3 emergencies and crises predominated by humanitarian response plans (HRPs)". A more recent update to the guidance for the production of programme strategy notes does refer to nexus approaches. It makes specific reference to "complex protracted humanitarian emergencies and extreme climate events" and states that strategy notes "should have a clear discussion of the linkages between humanitarian and development linkages [sic]". It also states that country offices should clearly outline "approaches to humanitarian response [and] emergency preparedness, including upholding accountability to affected populations".

LHD does feature in UNICEF's newly established Programme Policy and Procedure platform, UNICEF's new gateway for programming guidance (launched in 2020). Evolving from its predecessor, the Programme Policy and Procedure Manual, this site re-imagines how to access, convey, utilize, and update UNICEF's guidance documents in a new interactive space. It allows UNICEF staff to search quickly for the guidance they need; provides immediate updating capacity for new documents and emerging issues; and through the comment box and contact links, allows direct connection to content owners for requests, support and dialogue on any topic.

⁴¹ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Programme Framework for Fragile Contexts', UNICEF, 2018.

⁴² UNICEF notes that a revision is underway at the time of publication.

⁴³ Using any previously common terminology.

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

The Programme Policy and Procedure platform does use the term nexus in a specific sub-section under principles and frameworks. It sets out UNICEF's commitments under the Procedure and describes strengthening humanitarian, development and peace linkages through interlinked programming modes utilizing local and international responses.

The mandatory nature of the Procedure notwithstanding, it is also unclear that it adds anything to UNICEF's previous commitments. A number of the actions listed in the Procedure are well established and understood as necessary to improve the effectiveness of programming – for example, strengthening AAP. The Procedure does not identify or stress how improving AAP is specifically related to LHD programming, as opposed to just good practice in humanitarian and development programming. The notion that the Procedure reframes existing commitments and practices is reflected heavily in interviews.

In terms of its overall scope, the LHD Procedure:

- States clearly that it is “applicable for all UNICEF offices – including country offices, regional offices and headquarters divisions” and that its components are mandatory in all programmes. Annex A to the Procedure lists 53 countries prioritized for support in the immediate term.⁴⁴
- Cements the notion that strengthening results through LHD is applicable across the whole spectrum of UNICEF's programmatic interventions; is applicable across all of its thematic areas of expertise; and intersects with all important cross-cutting themes.

From the outset, it is clear that encapsulating such an all-encompassing theme in a single procedure is essential, but communicating it successfully across the organization is a very significant challenge.

Nexus versus LHD terminology

As reflected in the Procedure, which forms one focus of this evaluation, UNICEF has purposefully adopted the term: ‘linking humanitarian and development programming’, as a more practical/operational term than ‘nexus’. Nexus, however, is an increasingly widely used term and referenced in multiple inter-agency commitments and frameworks. The Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review advocates for a comprehensive whole-of-system response; it “Recognizes the positive role that sustainable development can play in mitigating drivers of conflicts, disaster risks, humanitarian crises and complex emergencies, and also recognizes that a comprehensive whole-of-system response, including greater cooperation, coherence, coordination and complementarity among development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace, is fundamental to most efficiently and effectively addressing needs and attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.”⁴⁵ This language is mirrored in the Secretary-General's oath of office, which refers to the elements of the triple nexus as “three sides of the same triangle”. The World Bank/United Nations Pathways to Peace report and the United Nations New Ways of Working do not offer definitions of the nexus but are very clearly supportive of the notion of development, humanitarian and peace supportive

⁴⁴ It states: “With effect from the date of this procedure, over the next 24 months, the COs [country offices] listed in Annex A are prioritized for support to conduct risk assessments and make programme implementation adjustments so as to mitigate risk and build resilience.”

⁴⁵ United Nations General Assembly, ‘Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system’ A/RES/75/233, December 2020.

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

programming working in concert, with the additional dimension of stronger inter-agency collaboration. During the course of this evaluation, UNICEF formally adopted the OECD Development Assistance Committee recommendations on the nexus. The Development Assistance Committee definition is fully aligned with United Nations-led approaches and its definitions serve as system-wide benchmarks:

- “Nexus refers to the interlinkages between humanitarian, development and peace actions.”
- “Nexus approach refers to the aim of strengthening collaboration, coherence and complementarity. The approach seeks to capitalize on the comparative advantages of each pillar – to the extent of their relevance in the specific context – in order to reduce overall vulnerability and the number of unmet needs, strengthen risk management capacities and address root causes of conflict.”

2.2 Understanding and acceptance of the guidance

The Procedure itself recognizes that it is born out of “the need for UNICEF to better institutionalize and systematize linkages between humanitarian and development programming”. It is important to note that, in part, the priority given to systematization of a concept across UNICEF derives from the importance afforded to it in the Strategic Plan. Section 2.1 concludes that LHD is not a clearly defined, high-level priority in terms of its treatment in UNICEF’s current Strategic Plan and regulatory framework. Recognizing the potential influence of this treatment in the Strategic Plan, this sub-section goes on to consider the extent to which the communication, interpretation and acceptance of policy and guidance at the country level have supported the institutionalization of the Procedure.

For the purposes of this section, the evaluation team defines ‘institutionalization and systematization’ as the consistent integration of the Procedure’s component parts during the whole of UNICEF’s programmatic cycle, including in the development of new CPDs and during annual reviews. Later sections go on to look at other facets of institutionalization: the requisite support and integration of the concept of LHD in reporting and monitoring systems. This section also differentiates between institutionalization and contextualization of the Procedure. For the purposes of simplifying the analysis, contextualization is defined as something of a distinct step: the process of ensuring regional and country offices interpret and apply the Procedure in a way that helps prioritize its component parts for each operational context. This includes a full contextual analysis. The sub-section draws on evidence from the country case studies, survey responses and interviews and is organized around the key findings.



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0436720/Pedro

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

Institutionalization

The general concept of linking humanitarian and development programming is almost universally recognized across UNICEF. Familiarity with the concept, however, does not equate to familiarity with the Procedure. While it should be noted that survey respondents are heavily skewed towards contexts with large humanitarian programmes, survey responses demonstrated a perceived understanding of the concept of LHD. Over 60 per cent of respondents felt that they understood the concept, its objectives and how to implement it. In a significant number of interviews, UNICEF staff stated that, despite not being fully familiar with the Procedure, they were very familiar with the concept of LHD. A significant number noted that the Procedure offered “a validation of ways in which we were already working.” Implied in many interviews was the impression that the Procedure offered nothing substantively different, “we have been repackaging the concept over the years.” Although the Procedure covers a wide range of themes, interviewees had a tendency to reduce it to a single one of its component parts when describing it – often resilience or system strengthening if these had particular resonance in their country or region.

In interviews for the Ethiopia case study, staff noted the value of guidance, but recognized that familiarity with the topic made it less likely that it would be fully absorbed, noting, “the longer you have been with UNICEF, the less you rely on specific guidance.” Several also made the point that additional, practical guidance by thematic and sectoral experts was required to dispel the notion that LHD was simply “what we are already doing.” While there was familiarity with the Procedure in some parts of country offices, it was equally clear from interviews that the communication strategy or roll-out process around the Procedure was limited. This appears

to be in contrast with other themes that are given a higher priority at policy level. There is, for example, a roll-out strategy and process for the CCCs, and more clearly defined steps and actions for other procedures such as the Procedure on Preparedness for Emergency Response. Overall, staff in Ethiopia were of the opinion that the LHD Procedure should be promoted more systematically as part of its institutionalization.

While the evaluation team concluded that there is not a consistent and organization-wide understanding of the Procedure, it is clear that it has started to resonate in one key way. The Procedure has been incorporated into and used to support the development of the most recent CPDs and annual reviews (i.e., in accordance with the definition of institutionalization above). This has resulted in more concrete references to LHD approaches in new planning and programme design. Interviews with country office staff with either planning functions and/or directly associated with the implementation of the guidance spoke of its use and influence in shaping recently revised CPDs. One country office staff noted, “We are well acquainted with the Procedure and integrated it in our new CPD launched last year (2019–2024). Making it explicit in this way will have a tangible increase in linkages”.

Both country studies clearly support this finding. Ethiopia’s revised CPD explicitly references the humanitarian-development-peace nexus for the first time, noting it as a priority “strategic shift” recommended by recent evaluations and reviews. As described in later sections, however, peace-building has been less of an explicit focus. In Indonesia, the Procedure was seen as useful for a relatively concentrated group of senior staff in Jakarta who were directly accountable for country level strategy, planning and interfacing with the Government on emergency preparedness. One of this group stated that the Procedure had provided

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

a useful guide and had increased the rigour with which concepts such as preparedness and risk-informed programming were brought into the development of the new programme strategy notes and CPD. They also saw the Emergency Preparedness Platform and the minimum preparedness standards as helpful tools that had informed the development of the new CPD. This finding is also supported by the Global Evaluation of UNICEF's WASH Programming in Protracted Crises.⁴⁶ While it also notes the lack of clear definition for LHD, it finds that "UNICEF has been proactive and made progress in providing country offices with clarity around requirements and expectations of including LHD in programme planning and design during crises".

Contextualization

While it is clear that the Procedure is having traction during the development of CPDs, its implementation requires a significant amount of support. A clear finding of this evaluation is that support for contextualizing the guidance is as important as integrating the guidance into planning processes. This finding is also supported by both country case studies and other evaluations. In Ethiopia, one interviewee noted that they appreciated the guidance on LHD that was used in the CPD process and also stated that "more importantly there was closer involvement of the regional adviser", which was especially valuable. While the guidance was seen as useful to a subset of staff in UNICEF Indonesia (above), these individuals also noted the importance of support from CERP, the Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) and the East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office during the CPD preparation process. An interviewee from a different

country office noted that the role of the regional office was key, in that it provided an interface between headquarters and the field and acted as "a source of guidance on priorities".

Multiple interviews with country office and headquarters staff consistently reflected the need to translate the Procedure into a bottom-up approach given the vast range of contexts in which UNICEF works. One noted, "We cannot have one system approach"; another noted, "It would be helpful to use concrete case examples and real-life programming stories as the best way of communicating the concept of making it comprehensible". While using a variety of terms, multiple interviewees stated that "bottom-up" or "contextualized guidance" and/or "locally owned solutions" for LHD were required. Situational analysis is discussed further in section 4 on risk-informed programming.

In Indonesia, this particular challenge resonates with the need to interpret the Procedure appropriately for a large and established office in a middle-income country. UNICEF Indonesia's own experience of recurrent disaster responses built up over the previous two decades was seen as more influential than global guidance. The exception of technical areas that are genuinely unfamiliar was noted, and the example of cash transfers given.

A number of interviews with headquarters staff noted that procedures typically focus on the 'how' – the practical guidance that country office staff look for. They noted, however, that this was too broad and complex a topic to fit easily into a single procedure. Another noted that the principal intent of procedures was typically "enforcement", meaning that

⁴⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Evaluation of UNICEF's WASH Programming in Protracted Crises, 2014–2019: Results in development', UNICEF, May 2020.

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

they introduce mandatory components and require compliance. In this sense procedures were perceived as sometimes generating a “box-ticking response”. Again, the sheer volume and range of themes in this particular procedure was seen as problematic if not contextualized. This finding is also supported by the findings of UNICEF’s Humanitarian Review,⁴⁷ which is clear on the difference between the institutionalization of the guidance (i.e., the predictability of its application) and the contextualization of the Procedure at the country office level. It notes that the latter will be important to ensuring its overall effectiveness.

The need for local interpretation of guidance is supported by another finding of this evaluation; that the complexity and volume of guidance often appears overwhelming at the field level. One function of the Procedure is to absorb the key messages of the global frameworks and goals and simplify and consolidated them. However, given the large number of global initiatives, internal guidance and frameworks that country offices need to digest and apply, the risk of poor or inconsistent integration of policies and programming is inevitable. Numerous interviewees spoke of the sheer volume of guidance; one referred to a “cacophony” of intersecting frameworks to interpret and apply.

There is a problematic perception that the Procedure has limited applicability and/or practical value in middle-income countries and/or countries with stable development frameworks. Beyond the relatively small cadre of staff focused on risk and preparedness in Indonesia, UNICEF’s LHD guidance was seen as having limited relevance. It was perceived as being more suitable for countries in chronic crisis, those that are conflict affected, and/or those in lower-income settings. There was a perceived need to recognize and develop strategies and guidance for how to do LHD in middle-income and strong states: “It needs a different conversation about how to do LHD”, suggested one interviewee. Another UNICEF country office representative noted that he had first come across the Procedure in a former post: a large country office in a country with a stable development context. The interviewee admitted that they had not given it immediate attention, understanding that it was mainly applicable to humanitarian work. Subsequently they had recognized that it was “more important the other way around”, that is, to building resilience into development programming. Overall, in interviews, there was little mention or evidence of country teams drawing on or using other guidance. In particular, the UNICEF Programme Framework for Fragile Contexts was not frequently referenced, despite being an excellent resource.

⁴⁷ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Strengthening UNICEF’s Humanitarian Action – The Humanitarian Review: Findings and recommendations’ (unpublished), UNICEF, September 2020.

2.3 Reconciliation of UNICEF's development and humanitarian mandate and support to peacebuilding

This sub-section looks at the extent to which UNICEF achieves coherence between humanitarian action and development objectives. Section 2.3 concludes that the Procedure contains little mention of the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. It notes a lack of acknowledgement of tensions between commitments to humanitarian independence on the one hand, and supporting the primary role of the state to assist and protect citizens in times of crisis on the other.⁴⁸ This section begins

with a more detailed look at the topic in UNICEF's regulatory framework and draws on the country studies and interviews.

It should be acknowledged that this a fundamental dilemma for multi-mandated organizations such as UNICEF, and one that has been interrogated and debated ad infinitum. As the framing of coherence under the banner of 'nexus approaches' has solidified, so have concerns about the extent to which nexus approaches assume that development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actors can work together seamlessly. Slim (2017) cites "... three big gaps in current nexus policy. The first is protection. The second is its reach into needs beyond government-held areas. The third is clear recognition of the need for principled humanitarian action to address the first two gaps."⁴⁹



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0387399/Altaf Ahmad

⁴⁸ Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, 'Strengthening of the Coordination of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance of the United Nations', A/RES/46/182, 19 December 1991.

⁴⁹ Slim, H., 'Nexus Thinking in Humanitarian Policy: How does everything fit together on the ground?', 2017.

Mandate tensions in UNICEF policies, procedures and guidance

UNICEF's regulatory framework does, in a number of places, recognize potential tensions. A guidance note predating the Procedure acknowledges the issue of misalignment between programme planning and the priorities of government partners (among others) as a risk factor to be mitigated through a consultative process with government stakeholders "while respecting humanitarian principles" (2019).⁵⁰ The revised CCCs are clear on the need for the application of humanitarian principles, the need to safeguard operational independence and that they apply in all contexts: "Humanitarian principles guide UNICEF action in every context, conflict-affected or not." The Programme Framework for Fragile Contexts also contains clear guidance on the need for UNICEF to carefully navigate development commitments to working with states and humanitarian principles.⁵¹ This guidance was referenced infrequently in interviews, however. The Programme Policy and Procedure guidance makes no mention of humanitarian principles in the section on the humanitarian, development and peace link. The baseline review of country-level documents also finds little direct reference to humanitarian principles. Overall, there are inconsistencies in the way that tensions between humanitarian principles and development approaches are addressed in UNICEF policies and guidance.⁵²

Context-specific LHD constraints

While this debate mostly focuses on contexts where there are ongoing or cyclical conflicts, the importance of these questions for all of UNICEF's programming is clear. Most of UNICEF's humanitarian action takes place in complex/fragile environments that involve conflict or considerable socio-economic and political challenges. Armed conflict is not the only factor at play. Government suppression of specific groups, and/or attitudes towards national and/or international NGOs, and the risk of civil unrest, all complicate UNICEF's ability to apply its dual mandate coherently. The relationship between key donors and governments is also critical. Humanitarian funding is allocated, in theory at least, in accordance with humanitarian principles. The ease of linking apolitical humanitarian work and development programming is, in part, reliant on the availability of funding that supports the whole range of programming. In short, the possible tensions between UNICEF's humanitarian and development mandates and peace are highly specific to each country office's specific political and operational context.

The CCCs distinguish between different operating contexts when describing the challenges in LHD. The document notes the specific challenges of operating in United Nations integrated mission settings and in situations where the government is party to the conflict. In the latter context it notes that "it may neither be possible nor appropriate to engage in

⁵⁰ United Nations Children's Fund, 'General Checklist and Examples (applicable to all sectors) on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming', UNICEF, 2017.

⁵¹ It notes the need for context analysis to "inform the points of convergence for the two sets of principles guiding development and humanitarian work" and that for UNICEF, "Working with state institutions does not necessarily imply the need to ignore humanitarian principles but rather the need to take pragmatic, context-specific principled decisions to work with national structures and local institutions."

⁵² As a single point of comparison, WFP's draft strategy on the triple nexus commits it to "always maintain a principled approach" and has as a roadmap deliverable that "a detailed corporate guide (humanitarian versus development principles) will be developed for Country Offices."

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

development action". The special circumstances of country offices in countries with United Nations political and or peacekeeping missions are also noted.

A number of interviewees (particularly at headquarters level) stressed the need to recognize context and collectively offered a range of loose typologies. The first is a 'classic' strong state model with a clear development framework that gives UNICEF the opportunity to offer 'upstream' policy support and programming elements supportive of government initiatives: "health extension, system strengthening including disaster preparedness, social protection (Bolsa Familia in Latin America)". This is a model in which UNICEF builds effectively on existing and possibly long-standing relationships. Clear tensions still exist under this model in certain circumstances: contexts in which parts of the country are not under government control; parts of the population are subject to human rights abuses and/or denial of basic services; and in the lead up to and aftermath of deteriorations in political stability, where strong partnerships constrain independent thinking, analysis or advocacy. At the other end of the spectrum, is an international model with weak state functions. Under this model, UNICEF typically partners with international NGOs and local partners. The lack of central state systems to strengthen is a clear challenge; as is the extent to which building resilience in communities, civil society organizations (CSOs) and technical/ regional or municipal government is considered a development activity. This would include areas beyond government control in conflict contexts, which poses a clear challenge to the possibility of a nexus approach. A few hybrid models such as Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo were cited as environments in which the state subcontracts public services to

international NGOs and local partners and the United Nations is involved in implementation, coordination and policy direction.

The relationships of donor governments and crisis-affected states are also clearly relevant. Where key donors do not want to engage for political reasons, humanitarian funding instruments are often prevalent and LHD can be stymied by donor restrictions on engaging with states. If the CPD has to engage with a government that the donors do not want to engage with (e.g., in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela or Zimbabwe) and the Humanitarian Action for Children appeal is produced primarily for humanitarian donors, then UNICEF's development and humanitarian work are forced apart.

Tensions and humanitarian principles in country offices

The formative evaluation was designed with this issue in mind to undertake six in-depth country case studies that covered a range of these context types, as well regional variations (see *section 1.4*). Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, only two were undertaken. Neither Ethiopia nor Indonesia is representative of the more extreme challenges faced in contexts with active conflict or repressive regimes. Each, however, presents a nuanced picture of these challenges.

In general terms, the reconciliation of UNICEF's development and humanitarian mandates in Ethiopia has meant striking a balance in its partnership with the Government. This includes advocating for remaining a force for change by working closely with the Government, acting as what the Government has referred to as an 'honest or critical friend', while also maintaining the organization's independence as a humanitarian actor. This balance is seen as having facilitated large-scale

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

response efforts and service delivery to the population, as well as contributing to the construction of an international aid architecture into which major sums can be funnelled to meet surges in needs due to sudden shocks, save lives and preserve livelihoods.

As the risk of escalating civil conflict materializes, however, it is conceivable that UNICEF would find itself in a position where its independence and neutrality as a humanitarian actor would be compromised. While there was little evidence in programme documents that risks resulting from a lack of civil society partners were factored into planning and programme strategies, interviewees said that these risks were quietly considered and discussed within the country office. Evaluations and reviews undertaken in the run up to the new CPD flagged the need to strengthen advocacy with and for CSOs vis-à-vis the Government. The Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Ethiopia Country Programme underscored “the need for UNICEF to be a stronger voice and advocate for children and widen its partnerships in that regard... including with [the] UN, CSOs, and the media”.⁵³ That no mapping of CSOs currently exists shows that there is much work to be done in this regard.⁵⁴

Indonesia is a middle-income country with a long history of natural disasters and a significant legacy of conflict. This has led to government mistrust⁵⁵ of the international

system and strong government control over aid actors. UNICEF is regarded as a strong partner to the Government and as having played a supportive role to the Government in disaster response. The UNICEF staff and partners interviewed felt that this supportive role was also in line with humanitarian principles and that UNICEF could still operate independently and impartially if and when it needed to do so.

Interviews with regional office staff noted that in Indonesia, UNICEF was faced with the challenge of engaging with a Government of a middle-income country with significant capacities, resources and systems that can be sensitive to sovereignty but that does not always respond effectively. These issues represent the key constraints to implementing LHD in Indonesia. UNICEF needs to find ways to link humanitarian and development programming in a context where the Government is reluctant to allow international organizations to respond to natural disasters or engage with conflict risks. The East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office has been developing the concept of augmenting national capacities and focusing on ways that UNICEF can add value to nationally-led responses. In Indonesia, the case study found that given the history of conflict, tensions between this state-led focus and humanitarian principles in conflict situations appear under-analysed in planning and strategy documents.

⁵³ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Ethiopia Country Programme’, UNICEF, 2019. To this end, the evaluation recommended: “that UNICEF strengthen its partnerships with civil society organisations, to develop their capacity to hold the Government to account for quality service delivery, speak out on children’s rights, play a role and rapid emergency response, and help provide the missing community voice in UNICEF programmes. The first step is to map the relevant CSO actors”

⁵⁴ Subsequent to the research period for this evaluation, UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WFP, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and nearly 16,000 CSOs adopted a platform to support the inter-agency mapping of CSOs: the United Nations Partner Portal (www.unpartnerportal.org).

⁵⁵ The response to the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 led to the 2007 Disaster Management Law and the development of Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana, the Indonesian national disaster management agency. The response was widely received as having generated an aid circus in Aceh, in the sense that it involved a plethora of international organizations and huge coordination challenges.

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

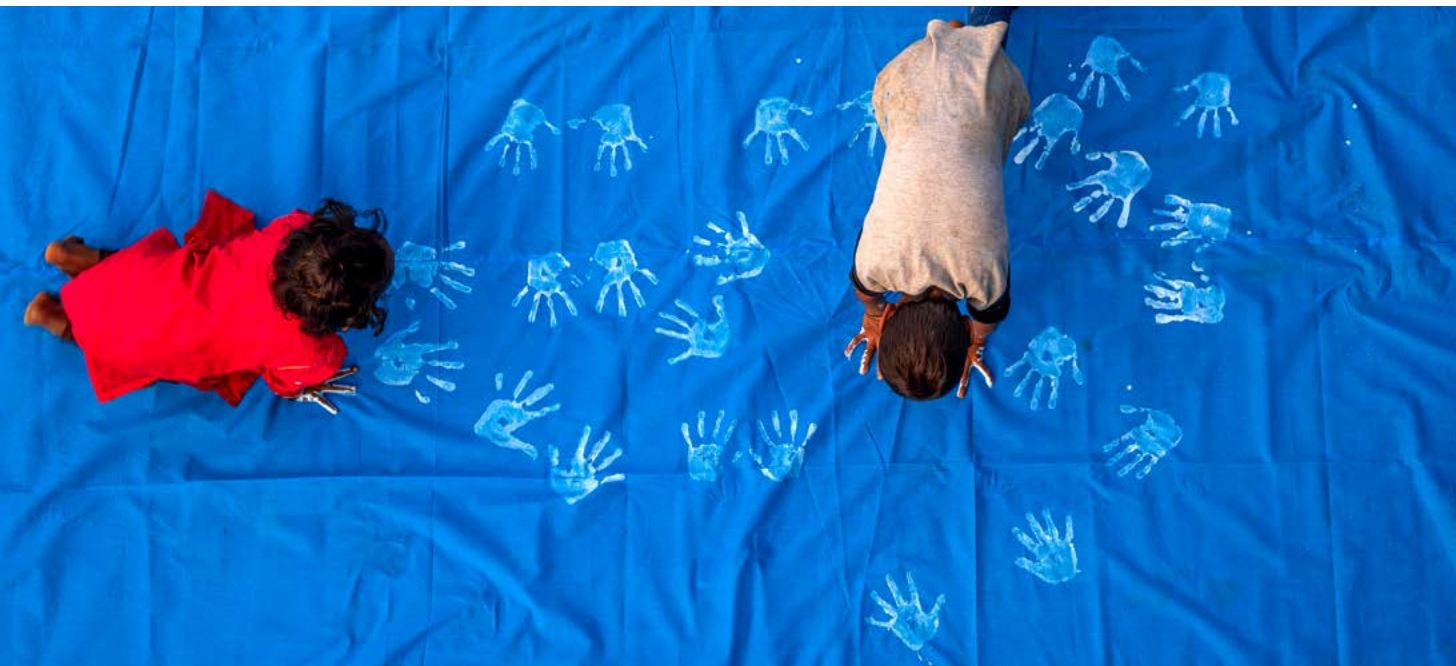


Photo: © UNICEF/UN0368267/Soni

In a number of operational contexts, tensions and dilemmas related to humanitarian principles have been a key focus. For example, the Evaluation of Coverage and Quality of UNICEF Humanitarian Response⁵⁶ found that in Afghanistan “based on a review of its country programme, UNICEF shifted its focus to prioritize a humanitarian response while seeking to find opportunities to build longer-term programme linkages. An approach that explicitly recognizes the humanitarian nature of needs offers an important lens through which to determine and design longer-term support based on humanitarian principles”.

The informal learning review of opportunities and challenges in humanitarian-development programming in the Middle East and North Africa region found that UNICEF did have principled and strategic approaches to working with governments that are parties to conflicts.⁵⁷ The review commended a “strategic approach, *based on a comprehensive risk assessment*, putting mitigating measures in place to minimise financial, reputational, programmatic and operational risks”. Risks have been mitigated by going, “as local as possible” and “keeping central government informed but working directly with local authorities”.⁵⁸ But in more development-focused contexts, knowledge of and attention to humanitarian principles was less evident.

⁵⁶ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Evaluation of Coverage and Quality of UNICEF Humanitarian Response in Complex and Humanitarian Emergencies’, UNICEF, 2019.

⁵⁷ Overseas Development Institute Humanitarian Policy Group, ‘Opportunities and Challenges in Humanitarian-Development Programming in the MENA region: An informal learning review for UNICEF MENARO’, ODI, 2020.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

Several interviewees from development-focused country offices also noted limited attention to humanitarian principles; little attention to the potential need for the government to act independently should conflict arise; and under-analysis of conflict risks. One country office interviewee noted, “we are in a development framework, we are planning for development and not looking at what could trigger a humanitarian situation”.

The Review of the UNICEF L2 Response in Venezuela notes that, prior to the current political and economic crisis, UNICEF Venezuela was small and focused on “upstream activities, public policy and fundraising”.⁵⁹ UNICEF and the United Nations were judged to have been ill-prepared and too slow to act as the situation deteriorated. This speaks to the challenge of moving swiftly from an upstream role to one focused on more direct, large-scale delivery through and with non-governmental partners. Given its history of support to the Government, the review notes that UNICEF Venezuela still “spends a significant amount of time managing the perceptions of others regarding its neutrality, ensuring that it is politically non-aligned and driven by... humanitarian principles”.

While no single fix can reduce the challenge of balancing this shift from upstream support to independent actor, the review suggests the need for “a system for more effective risk analysis and foresighting to inform decision-making”. From the regional perspective it also recommends “stepping up the capacity of the regional office to respond to emergencies”.

Afghanistan is often characterized as a complex, high-threat environment that predominantly relies on humanitarian funding streams. Afghanistan has a long history of humanitarian, peacebuilding and development interventions, and also of donor and United Nations-led efforts to achieve coherence between them as part of a broader state-building agenda. In this context, UNICEF has a long history of working with and through both national and international NGO partners. It also has a long history of partnership with the Government (including technical ministries and provincial and municipal structures). The Evaluation of UNICEF’s Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations in Afghanistan noted that: “Even though it has a dual mandate, UNICEF has not always capitalized on the potential convergence between UNICEF’s humanitarian and development portfolios. This has had a negative impact on the continuity and coherence of assistance to populations with both immediate and longer-term needs.”⁶⁰

The evaluation also recognizes the “difficult dilemmas” inherent in the partnership with the Government in this context given the risk of corruption and the need to meet time-sensitive deadlines. The evaluation concludes that this partnership has been managed on a “case by case” basis and that UNICEF has achieved “reasonable success”.

A range of other interviews at the country level demonstrated that the dilemma is keenly felt. One noted the extreme challenge in delivering on both pillars – partnering with the government on development and implementing

⁵⁹ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Review of the UNICEF L2 Response in Venezuela, Final Report’, UNICEF, July 2020.

⁶⁰ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Evaluation of UNICEF’s Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations: Afghanistan’, UNICEF, New York, 2020.

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

a humanitarian programme targeting a population excluded by the same government. In this instance, a joint advocacy strategy with other United Nations agencies was seen as the best possible solution, albeit one that still presents major ethical considerations. Other country office interviewees were able to point to purposeful examples of the linkage of humanitarian and development mandates. One spoke to the establishment of an internal task force on cash transfers. This approach includes a weekly discussion on “how these two pillars of the nexus are speaking to each other”. The same person referred to an integrated humanitarian and development plan to mitigate the effects of climate change and water crises.

Taken collectively, this evidence reinforces the need for country level contextualization. Coherence between UNICEF’s CPDs and Humanitarian Action for Children appeals is discussed in section 5. CPDs are the products of extensive planning exercises and act as a framework for results at the country level. They codify UNICEF’s relationship with each respective host government and ultimately serve as a contract with each respective government and with the UNICEF Executive Board. CPDs must also be aligned with the host government’s national development plan via the respective United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, which now has primacy. In rhythm and design, the Humanitarian Action for Children appeal complements the United Nations humanitarian response plan. Ultimately these humanitarian appeals are relatively light documents that are more geared towards the needs of humanitarian donors than to bigger planning or strategy purposes. At the country level, the

reconciliation of mandates has to occur in the internal planning processes that underpin the development of CPDs and Humanitarian Action for Children appeals (annual and rolling work plans, programme documents with CSOs and all major programming tools). It is important that reconciliation is based on detailed, accurate and ongoing contextual analysis, including conflict analysis, risk analysis and analysis of economic and social/political trends.

A number of additional key points emerge:

The South Asia Nexus Framework⁶¹ is a robust analysis of how to approach tensions between humanitarian principles and development in context. The framework also proposes a context typology distinguishing between approaches in quick and slow onset natural disaster, conflicts and displacement crises and in terms of the will and strength of the state. In diagrammatic form (*see Annex 3*) it suggests how under each type, national systems and structures can be reinforced rather than replaced.

Recent evaluations have noted problems with how UNICEF navigates tensions between humanitarian principles and state-focused development work. The Humanitarian Review notes that “UNICEF struggles to engage with ‘difficult’ governments, non-state armed groups and others who distrust the organization, yet this is increasingly important as complex, protracted crises proliferate”. As noted, the Humanitarian Review makes a clear statement that UNICEF should not be ‘linking for the sake of linking’ in certain contexts. This statement re-affirms the importance of respecting humanitarian principles in the application of UNICEF’s dual mandates through contextually appropriate

⁶¹ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘The Humanitarian/Development Nexus: A Framework for UNICEF’s South Asian Region’, (draft). February 2020.

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

approaches. It also demonstrates the limiting nature of the language of '*linking* humanitarian and development'. Elements of UNICEF's Procedure – including AAP, risk-informed programming, conflict analysis and system strengthening – remain mandatory and important under all circumstances, whether or not a development framework is possible.

2.4 Overarching findings

- 1. The concept of LHD has not been integrated into the current Strategic Plan at a very prominent level.** Within the Strategic Plan, the concept of LHD is subsumed under humanitarian programming and one of its change strategies. This is not to say that LHD has not been a priority for UNICEF; rather that it has been one of many priorities that compete in a system where resources and the political capital to drive change are limited. Given that a combination of significant 'downward' pressure from senior management and cross-organizational engagement is required to drive significant change, a first step would be to elevate LHD in the Strategic Plan.
- 2. LHD is not clearly defined in the LHD Procedure.** The sheer breadth of procedures and guidance linked to the Procedure in the absence of a clear policy statement inhibits a clear and consistent understanding. The peace component of the nexus approach is noticeably absent in UNICEF's framing of the nexus in the Procedure. The Procedure does commit UNICEF to "where appropriate, address the causes of conflict and violence through appropriate peacebuilding approaches" but provides no further guidance. Its mandatory nature notwithstanding, it is not clear that the Procedure provides a concretely different approach.
- 3. In policy, LHD is treated as a means to strengthen results, rather than as an objective in its own right.** However deliberate and appropriate this is, it has significant implications for its treatment in UNICEF's reporting and monitoring systems.
- 4. The treatment of LHD is most evident and comprehensive in the new CCCs.** This is a very positive step. While the CCCs are applicable in all UNICEF country offices, they are the core policy framework for UNICEF's humanitarian action. Having the most comprehensive treatment of the LHD concept in a largely humanitarian framework risks neglecting the LHD challenges that arise in development-focused countries. In interviews, there was little mention or evidence of country teams in development contexts drawing heavily on the CCCs or using the CCCs. In terms of guidance, newer guidance mentions the nexus more substantively, as does guidance on humanitarian programming.
- 5. The language of 'linking humanitarian and development programming' is at odds with the widespread adoption of the term 'nexus'.** It is possible to argue that the term 'linking' makes sense for UNICEF, but the language is ultimately limiting. In some contexts, there is no development framework with which to link, and in others there is no humanitarian action with which to link, but in both cases, elements of the LHD Procedure still apply. There is less familiarity with the newer term 'nexus' and a lack of clarity across the organization about the use and meaning of the term and what it implies for UNICEF's role in relation to the peace dimension.

2. DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

6. **The LHD Procedure does have traction, particularly as a useful tool during the development of new CPDs and annual plans.** This speaks to the degree to which the concept has been successfully institutionalized. Country offices are clear that it is essential to contextualize the concept, however, and that the support of regional offices and headquarters divisions, particularly CERP, will be vital in this process. Given that so many CPDs are due for refreshment in 2021, it is important that country offices are supported to embed nexus and LHD approaches into the planning and design of new CPDs.

7. **The Procedure and higher-level guidance do not explore the possible tensions between the components of UNICEF's dual mandate and offer no practical guidance as to how to bridge these components.** Within UNICEF's regulatory framework,⁶² the commitment to safeguard operational independence and principled humanitarian action when linking humanitarian and development programmes is stated most clearly in the revised CCCs released in 2020. This commitment is inconsistent in

other documents, including the Procedure, in which it is understated. The CCCs are a policy, and state that: "Humanitarian principles guide UNICEF action in every context, conflict-affected or not". This statement notwithstanding, the commitment should be made consistently across new iterations of policies, procedures and guidance. The South Asia Nexus Framework is an example of the necessary contextualization in that it offers the 'what', 'where' and 'why'. The LHD Procedure is clear on the need for situational analysis, including mandatory conflict analysis. Especially in the absence of detail, the need for country and regional offices to have or be able to access the capacity to undertake this analysis is clear.

8. Both the Indonesia and Ethiopia case studies noted a lack of attention to potential risks of socio-political disorder and/or conflict. **The need for ongoing and active analysis on this topic is clear, as is the need for this to be factored into risk analysis and future planning in a way that acknowledges the inherent sensitivity.**

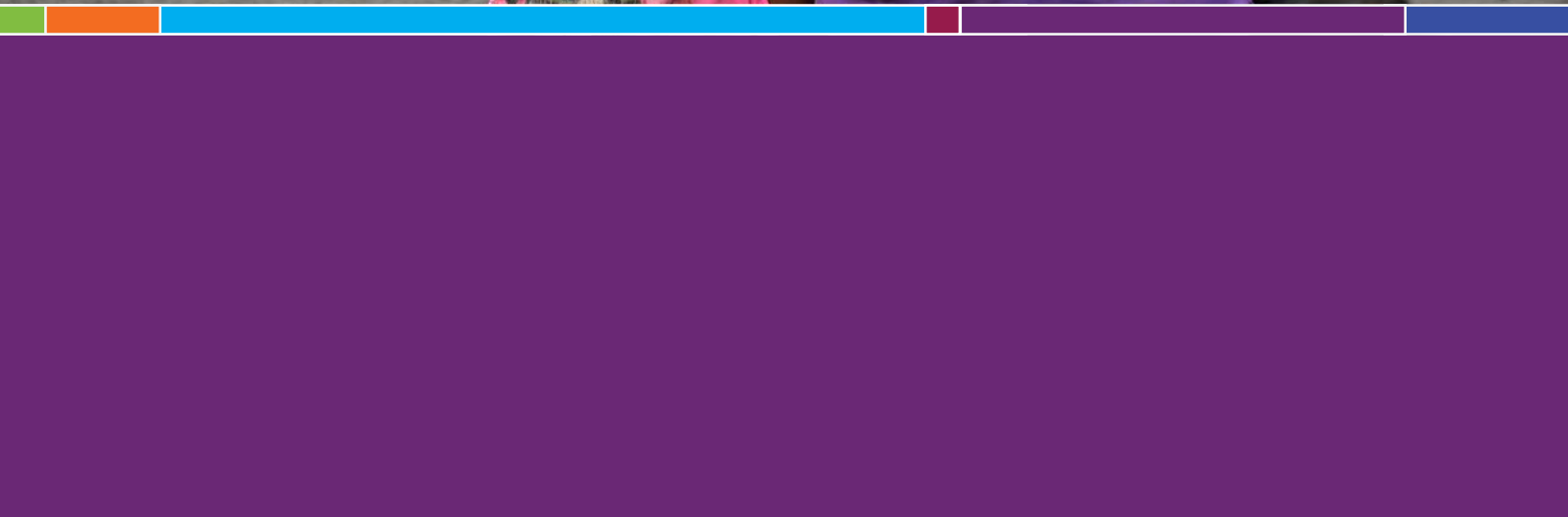
⁶² 'Regulatory framework' applies to the full set of UNICEF's policies, procedure and guidance.

3

PARTNERSHIPS AND THE NEXUS



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0335072/by Josh Este



Section 3 examines the intersection of nexus approaches with UNICEF's role as a partner and leader in development and humanitarian interventions, including its role as a cluster lead in humanitarian settings, and the extent to which UNICEF aligns with other coordination efforts in the humanitarian and development spheres.⁶³ It also assesses UNICEF's work in building civil society capacities through its local partnerships, and strengthening national systems through its work with governments.

The following questions will be answered across four sub-sections.

Section 3.1

- Do UNICEF's strategic plans and policies refer explicitly to building local capacity, including that of partners (governmental and non-governmental), individuals and communities, as well as strengthening or establishing systems?

Section 3.2

- To what extent is UNICEF working to build national capacities and systems through government partnerships?

Section 3.3

- To what extent is UNICEF advancing localization commitments in its partnerships?

Section 3.4

- How effectively is UNICEF coordinating with counterparts on the nexus?
- To what extent is UNICEF using its position, comparative advantages and dual mandate in humanitarian coordination bodies to strengthen the links between humanitarian and development planning and programming?
- To what extent is UNICEF playing an appropriate leadership role in respect to the nexus?

⁶³ This includes: Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) roles; the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals; the New Way of Working outlined in the World Humanitarian Summit; and the Agenda for Humanity and emphasis on collective outcomes.

● SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FINDINGS

The evaluation found clear and consistent policy commitments to linking humanitarian and development programming in coordination processes; to better supporting local humanitarian action; and to strengthening national and local systems and capacities for humanitarian responses that are linked to development.

These policy commitments are not translated consistently into improved practice, however. UNICEF's government partnerships have allowed for significant achievements in system-strengthening, but opportunities to strengthen civil society partnerships were partly hindered by rigid UNICEF systems, poor communication on nexus-related strategies and minimal inclusion of partners in the programme planning and design processes. The quality of the relationship between UNICEF and its local NGO partners could benefit from a more participatory and mutual decision-making approach, as opposed to what NGO partners described in interviews to be akin to a 'subcontracting' approach.

While UNICEF's coordinating role in the inter-agency space has helped advance the nexus within humanitarian clusters, creating the broader links between humanitarian and development actors and processes has been more challenging.



3.1 UNICEF policy, procedures and guidance: Coordination, system strengthening and capacity building

UNICEF has clear and coherent policy commitments related to building capacities and strengthening systems in ways that link humanitarian and development programming. These were evidenced in the document review and analysis.

The first element of the Procedure commits UNICEF to building local capacity, including that of individuals and communities, and strengthening or establishing systems from the onset of humanitarian action.

The Strategic Plan also cites the need to: “support policy, capacity development and systems strengthening at both national and subnational levels, *especially in humanitarian situations*, to enable more rapid scale-up and delivery of life-saving and child protective services, and to improve readiness to scale up cash transfers to families affected by emergencies”.

Other policies that demonstrate UNICEF’s strong commitments to system strengthening include the procedure for country and regional offices partnering with CSOs, and the Programme Framework for Fragile Contexts. The new CCCs stipulate that UNICEF’s humanitarian coordination responsibilities include developing strong links with development coordination processes and promoting the participation of local and national CSOs in cluster and sector coordination bodies. The CCCs also commit UNICEF to respond to emergencies, “in a way that strengthens existing national and local capacities and systems” and

each programme area has specific commitments to system strengthening. There is also a clear commitment under a localization heading for investing in the capacity of local actors and “recognizing, respecting and strengthening the leadership and coordination of humanitarian action by national and local authorities, CSOs, and communities”.

These policies and strategic commitments have a clear focus on the need to strengthen systems and build capacity in humanitarian situations. As noted in section 2, this risks reinforcing perceptions that LHD is a humanitarian issue and neglecting ways in which development-focused programming and country offices need to strengthen systems and build capacity to be prepared for crises.

UNICEF has been an active contributor to humanitarian coordination and reform initiatives related to the nexus such as the New Way of Working and the call for collective outcomes outlined in the World Humanitarian Summit and the Agenda for Humanity. UNICEF’s policy commitments are consistent with, and informed by, these global efforts.

3.2 National system strengthening

The system strengthening aspect of UNICEF’s humanitarian work was emphasized in survey and interview findings across country offices and was also strongly evidenced in the review of country documents. Thanks to its close working relationships with government partners, the perception is that UNICEF is very well positioned to effect policy change, strengthen systems and build national capacity to link humanitarian and development programming in areas affecting children and families.

3. PARTNERSHIPS AND THE NEXUS

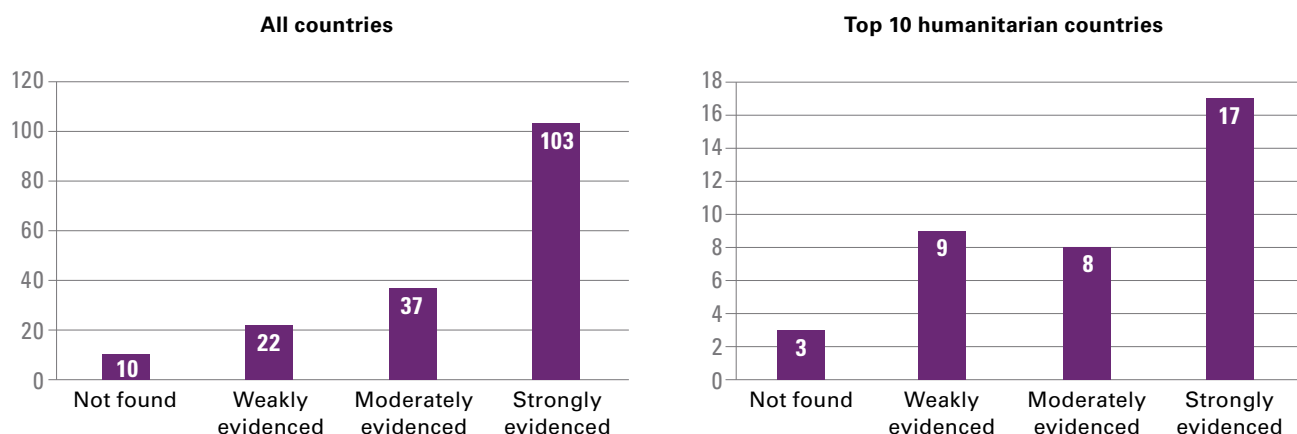
The review of core country office documents from 47 UNICEF country programmes (i.e., situation reports, situation analyses, country office annual reports, Humanitarian Action for Children appeals and CPDs) found that among the elements of the nexus, as defined in the Procedure, action was strongest in capacity building and system strengthening. The evaluation found that UNICEF’s strong partnerships with host governments and extensive partnership agreements with CSOs strengthen systems for preparedness and disaster response. System building/strengthening approaches are standard and consistent with the way that UNICEF approaches programming.

In Ethiopia, key informants stressed the system strengthening aspect of UNICEF’s humanitarian work, and this aspect was also strongly evidenced in the country documents reviewed. Examples included technical support on contingency planning provided to the National Disaster

Risk Management Commission. One widely agreed-upon gap, however, is capacity building at the community and civil society levels.

Since 2019, UNICEF Indonesia has renewed its focus on enhancing emergency preparedness and risk-informed programming across sectors, and integrating LHD into the new CPD. There is good evidence of efforts to strengthen disaster management institutions and build local capacities. The new CPD and Programme Strategy Note are in line with the Procedure’s commitments to building local capacity and strengthening systems and national institutions. The Programme Strategy Note features the humanitarian-development nexus as an overarching approach and notes that it includes, “Systems strengthening, capacity building for preparedness, negotiating multi-year flexible grants for emergency response and prioritizing other flexible funding for longer-term DRR and resilience building activities”.⁶⁴

Figure 2: Capacity building: Evidence of action in country documents



⁶⁴ United Nations Children’s Fund Indonesia, ‘Programme Strategy Note’ (draft), 2020.

In refugee-hosting settings such as Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Lebanon and Turkey, some humanitarian assistance is designed to have a dual purpose to benefit both crisis-affected people and communities at large. For example, in Bangladesh, a hospital newly built to treat COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses serves both Rohingya refugees and local Bangladeshis, thereby strengthening the local health system. Similarly, permanent school structures built in Ethiopia to meet the needs of refugees serve both refugee and local children; community centres in Turkey provide training and social services to Syrian refugees and Turkish families; and UNICEF's vocational training in Lebanon caters to both refugees and Lebanese youth affected by the current economic crisis. In several countries, UNICEF's support to remote learning systems in the context of COVID-19 will sustainably enhance national education systems.

3.3 Localization and capacity building

If UNICEF's government system strengthening challenges are mainly external, the obstacles to advancing nexus commitments in local partnerships and localization efforts have been primarily internal. Country and regional office interviewees consistently focused on government system strengthening. Efforts to build local civil society capacities or transform local partnerships in line with nexus commitments were less consistent and partners presented different views. In the Top 10 Review, although there was some evidence that UNICEF has intentionally sought to increase capacity for its national NGO partners, this did not come through strongly as a major area of action. In one setting, staff referred to working with CSOs

as a sub-optimal alternative to working with a strong government partner ("We don't think we will see a stable government in the next few years that we can invest our energies into, so we are focused on civil society.")

Adopting an either/or approach in terms of investing in government or civil society capacities, even if implicit, runs counter to the goals of the nexus. The same is true of emphasizing government partnerships. Should something happen that precludes or complicates cooperation with a government (such as the outbreak or escalation of armed conflict), strong civil society partners will be indispensable to the provision of humanitarian aid. Conversely, strengthening local organizations' capacities for independent response during a crisis helps seed resilience, build strong partners for future development efforts, and contribute to a healthy society. One local partner who expressed the sense that there was a zero-sum game between UNICEF's capacity building for government versus local NGOs made a plea for UNICEF to better "balance" these two objectives.

In terms of the specific localization goals of the nexus, which involve shifting more financing and decision-making to local actors, the evaluation found little evidence of action. Interviewees, while noting that UNICEF was "the most NGO-friendly of the lot" when compared with other United Nations agencies, nonetheless noted no significant changes in contract mechanisms, funding timeframes or other key aspects of partnerships. The 2019 review of UNICEF's localization efforts found that local actors were echoing the localization principles in calling for a shift in the quality of the relationship with UNICEF, asking to be considered more as decision-making partners and less as implementing partners

or subcontractors.⁶⁵ It recognized that UNICEF invests heavily in technical capacity-building with governments at the national and sub-national levels, as well as NGOs, but called for a more institutional systems approach beyond a traditional focus on workshops and training. Localization and capacity building are key pillars of the Humanitarian Development Continuum Global Supply Strategy.

This perspective was reinforced by interviewees who reported that partners did not always feel included in planning and programme design processes and that relationships were too contractual. The following example highlights the perception expressed by most: “Specifically in strategy planning and programming, we are not part of the process as implementing partners. We are only part of reviews meeting where UNICEF makes presentations on what they have done, and discussions on achievements and shortfalls are explained. There are no contributions from partners in the programme and project planning. The beneficiaries and communities are also not consulted or involved in [the] strategy and planning process”.⁶⁶

Current and former NGO partners of UNICEF interviewed for this review credited partnerships as helping to directly build the capacity of their organizations. The evaluation team also noted a lack of multi-year funding and cumbersome contracting and reporting procedures.

Across country office interviews, there was little indication that UNICEF’s Procedure or related policies were explicitly communicated to partners. One partner interviewee reported that UNICEF was encouraging linkages between humanitarian and development programming and efforts to strengthen systems and build capacities in programme design. So while it may not have been communicated as an overall approach, the constituent elements of the LHD Procedure (e.g., AAP, systems strengthening, preparedness and risk-informed programming) did feature into how UNICEF worked with partners and key stakeholders.

Interviewees in Kenya were more positive, noting that while UNICEF does not elaborate the LHD theory and policy to partners as a general concept, projects incorporate its elements, some of which are supported by guidance, and some of which are not. Partner interviewees affirmed that UNICEF always completes a capacity assessment and follows up on any identified gaps with training, which was confirmed by UNICEF’s goal to shift away “from service delivery to supporting capacity development and quality assurance”.⁶⁷ UNICEF-funded projects do not require conflict analysis to be factored into the design of a project, but “fair treatment of communities is encouraged”, signifying a possible gap in the understanding of what broad conflict analysis entails. Community engagement mechanisms vary depending on the programme sector, and are included in the initial capacity assessment of a partner;

⁶⁵ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘A Review of UNICEF’s Approach to Localization in Humanitarian Action’, Working Paper, UNICEF, 2019.

⁶⁶ This is contrary to the guidance provided to UNICEF staff and partners in the field in the Guidance for Civil Society Organizations on Partnership with UNICEF, which states: “The development of a proposed programme intervention (SSFA-TOR or Programme Document) should be a consultative and collaborative process between UNICEF and the CSO. During this step, UNICEF and the CSO meet, either face-to-face or virtually, to discuss and reach understanding on: articulating needs that consider consultation with target population, partnership principles, the overall partnership development process, required templates/forms, and high-level budget and supply considerations.”

⁶⁷ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Kenya Country Programme 2018–2022 Nutrition Programme Strategy’, UNICEF, 2018, p. 5.

however, UNICEF does not require or employ certain engagement tools. These engagement comments and the recommendation of ‘fair treatment’ in the place of conflict analysis, indicate an area where UNICEF can broaden its nexus principle-related communication.

3.4 Nexus coordination, communication and leadership

Broadly, UNICEF is successfully advancing the nexus through partnerships, as evidenced in the country case studies, document review, interviews and the survey. As one donor said “UNICEF is unique in that they straddle this divide in a way that other United Nations agencies do not. They are in a good position to bridge gaps”. In addition to strong government partnerships, UNICEF effectively uses its leadership or co-leadership of multiple sectors to promote inter-agency LHD strategies and is advancing the nexus through joint programming with other United Nations agencies.

Across interviews, UNICEF was seen as having a comparative advantage in LHD and nexus coordination through its strong dual mandate, cluster lead roles, sub-national presence and strong relationships and networks with governments. The challenge for UNICEF, and where it was sometimes perceived as falling short, was in maximizing these strengths through staff with strong coordination and leadership capacities who are able to work confidently across humanitarian and development programming. The Humanitarian Review called for greater investment in UNICEF’s coordination leadership role; “UNICEF has not always invested enough resources in prioritizing cluster coordination and relying too much on external surge staff members or UNICEF staff undertaking the cluster-lead function in addition to their regular UNICEF job.”



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0425420/Dejongh

While UNICEF has a strong and clear role in humanitarian coordination through its cluster leadership role, coordinating across the nexus increasingly implies broadening beyond traditional humanitarian stakeholders to bring in a wider range of actors – such as the World Bank – that are becoming increasingly involved in fragile and conflict-affected places, within the United Nations country team and in the context of United Nations development system reform. UNICEF could be doing more to strategically expand its leading role in humanitarian coordination to include new actors. Effective coordination with peacebuilding actors was noted as an area of comparative weakness. Numerous interviews talked about the strength of sectoral silos within UNICEF, which means that while coordination within sectors is often strong and tackles sector-specific LHD challenges, coordination across sectors and on multi-sectoral issues is less strong.

3. PARTNERSHIPS AND THE NEXUS

In Ethiopia, UNICEF was seen as playing a strong coordination and leadership role in nexus approaches. With its work across sectors, leadership or co-leadership of six clusters, and longstanding relationship with the Government, UNICEF plays a principal coordinating and convening role. UNICEF has started making LHD an explicit feature of its partnerships, and the concept is promoted in cluster and inter-agency collaboration. Despite survey evidence that staff perceived difficulties related to coordinating with development actors, development agency interviews were positive about UNICEF's efforts to link humanitarian and development operations in Ethiopia. This included participating in a New Way of Working discussion, which led to a joint analysis from United Nations agencies in 2018, culminating in a multi-year resilience strategy, which UNICEF co-coordinates with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), WFP, the World Bank and the African Development Bank. The Formative Evaluation of UNICEF Ethiopia Country Programme found that government ministries saw UNICEF as a pivotal partner with significant reach through its field offices. The evaluation called for a greater focus on partnerships with international financial institutions.

In Indonesia, UNICEF was seen as having played an effective role in coordinating emergency responses in 2018 and 2019, as well as during the COVID-19 response, in ways that appropriately supported Government-led efforts. In that supportive role, UNICEF encouraged efforts to link emergency responses to longer-term development. UNICEF's sub-national presence through field offices has enabled it to support government coordination at

the provincial and district levels, as well as nationally. In the response to earthquakes in Sulawesi and Lombok in 2018, UNICEF was seen as having played an effective coordination role. UNICEF's strong networks with key line ministries at the national, provincial and district levels provided valuable entry points for other partners on the ground to connect with the Government's disaster management system. Partners commended UNICEF for having a good sub-national presence and for maintaining this beyond the emergency phase into the recovery and development transition phases in Sulawesi. UNICEF acted as an intermediary with sub-national governments, helping local government actors prepare plans for transition and decide when to move to more development-oriented approaches.⁶⁸

The findings from the case study countries were consistent with evidence and positive examples from interviews with other country office staff and the document review. The South Asia Nexus Framework notes that in Bangladesh, UNICEF has played a leadership role within the current common country analysis/United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework exercise with respect to the nexus.⁶⁹ The Evaluation of UNICEF Contribution to Education in Humanitarian Situations⁷⁰ found that, "Stakeholders widely recognized the comparative advantage of UNICEF in supporting education policy development given their long established presence in-country, strong links with national ministries and the technical competencies within the organization". In Pakistan, UNICEF's leadership in water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and nutrition on LHD issues

⁶⁸ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Indonesia Consolidated Emergency Report 2019', UNICEF, 2020.

⁶⁹ The Humanitarian/Development Nexus: A Framework for UNICEF's South Asian Region.

⁷⁰ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Evaluation of the UNICEF Contribution to Education in Humanitarian Situations', UNICEF, 2020.

was highly praised by partners in interviews, and in Burkina Faso, UNICEF is leading the joint United Nations Programme on the Integrated Prevention and Treatment of Malnutrition, which has brought together United Nations agencies and NGOs around the nexus agenda.

In Kenya, implementing partners reported that UNICEF is seen as playing an appropriate institutional leadership role around the nexus, which is evident in its synchronization with governing bodies. The collaboration between UNICEF and the Kenyan Ministry of Education on educating refugees offers a clear example of institutional level programming bridging the nexus divide. One partner highlighted the institutionalization of emergency response planning for nutrition, as demonstrated by the drought/famine early warning systems, as a way of maintaining relationships with the same partners for both emergency and long-term development programming.

Some UNICEF country offices have invested in nexus-specific capacities to reinforce coordination with other actors across the nexus. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF has a senior nexus adviser to reinforce coordination with the deputy representative and the field offices (e.g., in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo for Goma, Beni, and Bukavu) and to enable the Country Office to take nexus-related coordination forward.

Efforts to improve coordination and leadership in the development sphere were seen as having a potential impact on promoting nexus approaches. These efforts included: the Joint Steering Committee to Advance Humanitarian and Development Collaboration; changes to the resident coordinator role; the reform of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework; and the Sendai Framework for

Disaster Risk Reduction. Guidance for the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework emphasizes how to support development-humanitarian-peace collaboration. Some interviewees, however, expressed concern that the new framework and process focused more on alignment with governments and gave more primacy to national development frameworks in ways that could be problematic for maintaining space for independent humanitarian action and nexus approaches. Some interviewees mentioned that UNICEF did not have a strong enough voice within the United Nations reform process and needed to invest more in collaboration and coordination across the United Nations system.

Challenges to advancing LHD/nexus commitments in coordination

UNICEF's coordination success is supported by its operational role, which, by virtue of UNICEF's cross-cutting mandate for children, requires working with a varied group of partners (government, development, humanitarian and international financial institutions). Interviewees and survey respondents underscored the importance of this role. Survey respondents selected "More proactive leadership on international coordination" as the chief opportunity for UNICEF to further advance its LHD commitments.

The breadth of UNICEF's coordination and operational commitments also poses challenges, however, and the critiques of UNICEF in this area largely stem from the organization's engagement across so many disparate areas. Some partners and counterparts expressed the sense that they were dealing with "several UNICEFs, not one". Donors and partners alike spoke about receiving mixed messages from different UNICEF senior staff

members from different sectoral standpoints, leading to ambiguity about plans and procedures and an overall lack of coherence.

While UNICEF has a strong and clear role in humanitarian coordination through its cluster leadership role, coordinating across the nexus increasingly implies broadening beyond traditional humanitarian stakeholders to bring in a wider range of actors – such as the World Bank – who are increasingly involved in fragile and conflict-affected places. UNICEF could be doing more to include new actors in its humanitarian coordination efforts. Effective coordination with peacebuilding actors was noted as an area of comparative weakness. Several interviewees reported that while coordination within sectors is often strong and tackles sector-specific LHD challenges, coordination across sectors and on multi-sectoral issues is not as strong.

In survey responses, UNICEF staff pointed to wider coordination challenges; coordination with both development and humanitarian partners ranked high on the list of obstacles to LHD programming. They noted that it can be difficult to secure buy-in at all levels and align priorities across the different systems and coordination mechanisms. In Myanmar, for example, this divide remains marked, despite UNICEF's efforts to raise development issues in humanitarian coordination meetings. While discussions on the nexus took place in both humanitarian clusters and development forums, UNICEF observed that, "... the discussions are done separately, and we don't seem to be able to bring the two sides together".

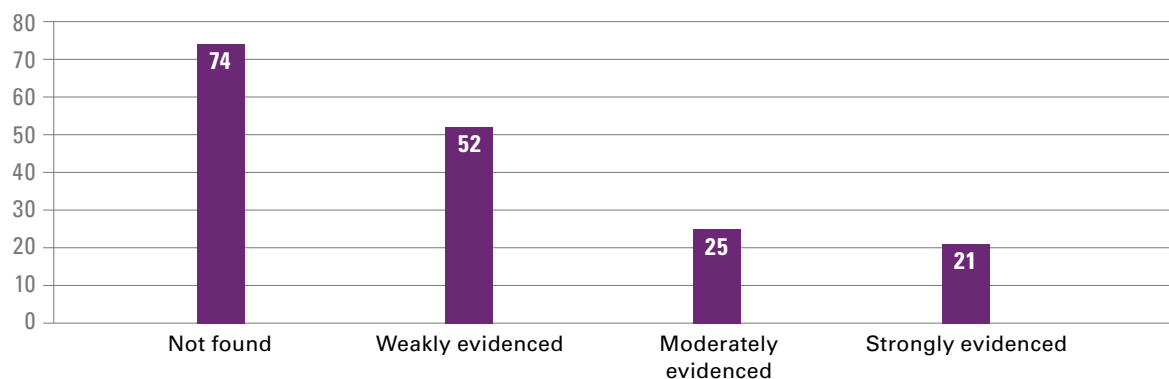
As outlined in the 'Update of UNICEF Humanitarian Action with a Focus on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming', UNICEF's approach to linking humanitarian and development programming follows several elements of risk-informed programming including "convergence of different sectoral programmes in geographical areas for populations of greatest vulnerability and lowest capacity."⁷¹ In some contexts, there is evidence that UNICEF has begun to pursue a 'convergence' of programming when it comes to the most vulnerable populations. In Ethiopia, "UNICEF has prioritised drought affected areas, providing assistance to people in need and hard-to-reach populations. This is being done through UNICEF's eight field offices, UNICEF-supported mobile teams, and by leveraging its cluster leadership role to prioritise partners resources and interventions."⁷²

At the same time, interviewees rarely highlighted convergence as a particular area of emphasis or opportunity for UNICEF in terms of LHD; and those that had opinions felt that there was still much to do in this area. An external informant noted a general "lack of geographic and demographic overlaps" in programming, saying, "Often development and emergency actors aren't working in the same place and even where they are, they are often working with different types of people, at different levels and with different organizations."

There was also little evidence of convergence in the core country documents, in part reflecting its relative newness as a strategy and the fact that it has not yet been employed in a systematic way in many country programmes.

⁷¹ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Update on UNICEF Humanitarian Action with a Focus on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming', UNICEF, 2019.

⁷² United Nations Children's Fund Ethiopia, 'Ethiopia Country Office Annual Report 2019', UNICEF, 2019.

Figure 3: Convergence: Evidence of action in country documents


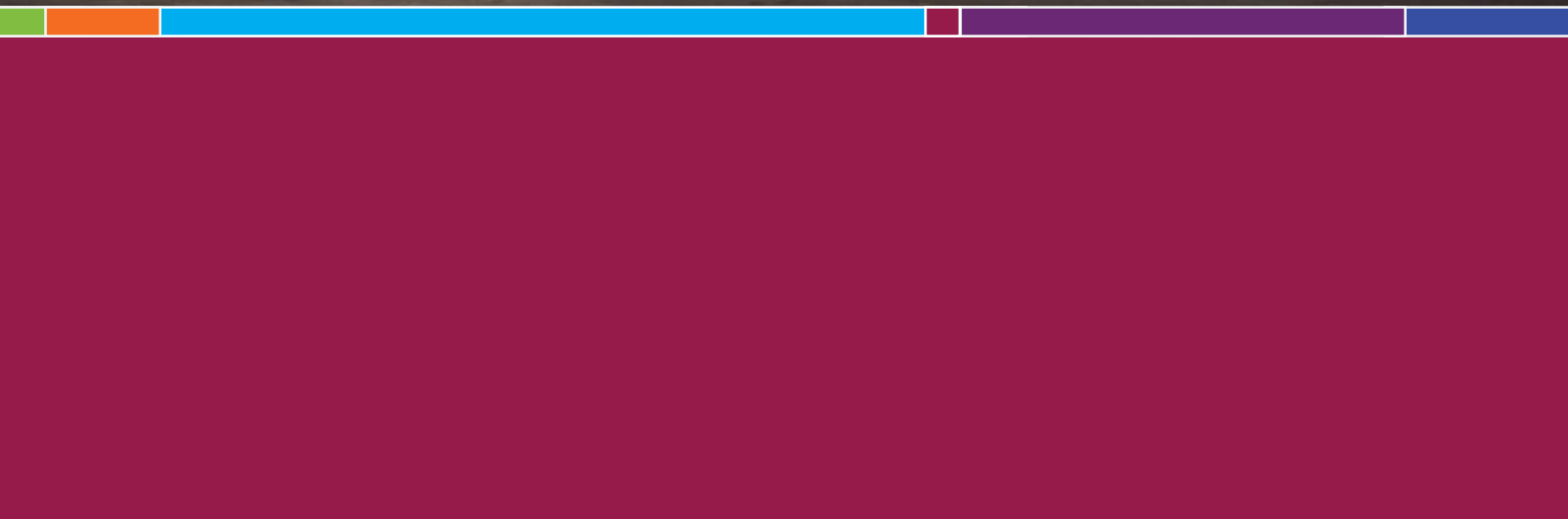
3.5 Overarching findings

- 1. A key strength is that across humanitarian and development programmes, system strengthening and capacity development are integral to UNICEF’s strategies and approaches.** These elements are more consistently focused on government systems. Some CSOs felt that they had benefited from capacity building; others felt differently. UNICEF needs to give more consistent attention to strengthening civil society systems and capacities in the context of the nexus to establish a more balanced approach and strengthen its partnerships with civil society actors.
- 2. In its cluster lead role, UNICEF is a key coordination agency in humanitarian settings and its dual mandate and sectoral strengths position it well to work towards coherent approaches within and across sectors.** This positioning would be enhanced if UNICEF were to invest further in the coordination and leadership capacities of its staff, and the ability of staff to work confidently across humanitarian and development programming. This would help maximize UNICEF’s leadership role in nexus-related programming.
- 3. While UNICEF coordination is effective within sectors it is less effective across sectors.** There is limited evidence that UNICEF is purposefully bringing together development and humanitarian programming in the same geographical areas/ populations (convergence approaches) and fostering strong linkages with peace-building efforts. There is also a clear need for stronger engagement with actors – such as the World Bank – that are strengthening their engagement in fragile and conflict contexts.
- 4. UNICEF needs leadership and capacities that will allow it to engage more effectively in strategic and principled partnerships across the nexus.** This includes capacities to analyse civil society actors and interpret the partnership landscape. Building relationships that go beyond sub-contracting arrangements and contribute to UNICEF’s strategic LHD goals will involve looking beyond a narrow capacity building focus and making investments in training for UNICEF management and senior programme staff.

4 PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0367717/Raab



UNICEF's LHD Procedure commits the organization to strengthen its work in the following areas: risk-informed programming, emergency preparedness, AAP, responsiveness to gender and disabilities, efforts to link humanitarian cash and social protection, and peacebuilding and social cohesion. Across five parts, this section explores the progress made on these commitments and seeks to answer the following questions:

Section 4.1

Emergency preparedness and risk-informed programming

- To what extent are UNICEF's strategic planning processes and programmes risk informed?
- To what extent does risk analysis provide a common platform for development and humanitarian planning and programming?
- How does UNICEF's emergency preparedness planning demonstrate a purposeful link between humanitarian and development?

Section 4.2

AAP

- Do UNICEF's strategic planning processes and programmes explicitly reflect the participation of affected populations?
- To what extent does the participation of affected populations and/or the strengthening of local systems and structures improve the linkages between humanitarian and development programming?

- Are the views of affected populations engrained (or referenced) in planning for humanitarian and development work and programming in each area?

Section 4.3

Gender and disability responsiveness

- Are UNICEF's plans, planning processes and programmes responsive to gender and inclusivity?

Section 4.4

Humanitarian cash and social protection

- To what extent does UNICEF's planning for emergency cash transfers and efforts to strengthen social protection systems purposefully link humanitarian and development programming?

Section 4.5

Peacebuilding and social cohesion

- Are UNICEF's plans, planning processes and programmes explicitly conflict sensitive?

● SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FINDINGS

Across the commitments listed in the Procedure, while progress is being made and strong guidance has been developed, these efforts are not consistently translating into effective action in crisis-affected contexts. The clearest progress has been in the embedding of risk-informed programming approaches into country planning processes.

AAP is still not systematically integrated into UNICEF humanitarian planning and programming. While staff recognize the importance of AAP, it is not comprehensively embedded into key country documents, and recent evaluations have highlighted the weakness of AAP mechanisms within sectors and country programmes. Existing Programme Policy and Procedure guidance does recognize the need to connect development and humanitarian approaches to accountability but there is little evidence that this is happening in practice. The basics of good humanitarian AAP practice need to be in place before this can happen.

UNICEF has clear policy and guidance on gender responsiveness, inclusivity and disability sensitivity. In practice, however, this guidance has not consistently resulted in strong gender and disability responsive programming in humanitarian contexts, protracted crises and contexts affected by fragility and conflict. Disability sensitivity was noted as a newer area that UNICEF is increasingly focusing on, and for which new training and guidance is currently being rolled out. Inclusion and engagement of children and youth are central to UNICEF's approach.

UNICEF's dual mandate, strong body of guidance and firm policy commitments have positioned it to effectively link humanitarian cash and social protection approaches in fragile and conflict-affected places. UNICEF is advancing this agenda in several country contexts and the COVID-19 response has given the organization new impetus to strengthen and expand social assistance in times of crisis.

There has been a great deal of uncertainty and a lack of consensus in regard to UNICEF's role in peacebuilding. In general, peacebuilding and social cohesion are treated lightly in the LHD Procedure; and in general, they are not well articulated in UNICEF's planning processes and programmes, and they are underprioritized in UNICEF's human resource management. There are strong examples of country offices taking this work forward, however, as well as signs of improvement in policy, guidance and support to field offices.



4.1 Emergency preparedness and risk-informed programming

Risk-informed programming is a key pillar in the LHD Procedure. The pillar indicates that country offices should conduct risk assessments and make programme adjustments to mitigate risk and build resilience. Programming milestones – such as situation analyses, mid-term reviews, strategic moments of reflection, sector reviews, programme strategy notes and CPDs – must be based on robust risk analysis. According to the Procedure, risk-informed programming is meant to “close the gap between humanitarian and development work by providing a common basis for targeting vulnerable children and communities, allowing development programmes to focus on mitigating risks as well as inequities and humanitarian programmes to focus on building capacities over the long term”.

In recent years, UNICEF has invested in a number of tools and processes to support strong risk analysis, risk-informed programming and emergency preparedness:

- **UNICEF’s Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming** is a package of general and sector-specific modules that provides a methodology for conducting child-centred risk analysis and leading a collaborative process with multiple child rights stakeholders. It is meant to be applied at all stages of the country programme cycle with a particular focus on application during the design of new UNICEF country programmes of cooperation.
- **UNICEF’s Emergency Preparedness Platform** is an online tool for implementing the organization’s Procedure on Preparedness for Emergency Response (issued in December 2017 and effective 30 March 2018). Teams

are able to use the Emergency Preparedness Platform to analyse risks, self-assess, monitor their operational preparedness and identify high-return actions to get ready for immediate response.

The revised CCCs⁷³ also refer to the Procedure on Preparedness for Emergency Response, which requires all country offices to complete/ review a four-step preparedness planning process at least every 12 months using the Emergency Preparedness Platform. This allows UNICEF to work with its partners to design and implement programmes that are results-based; that contribute to collective outcomes; and that are founded on evidence, analysis and needs assessments. This reflects a clear commitment to risk-informed programming in UNICEF policy, guidance and processes, and in rolling out and embedding the guidance and policy commitments in country planning and programming processes.



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0351940/Ochoa

⁷³ ‘Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action’, p. 30.

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

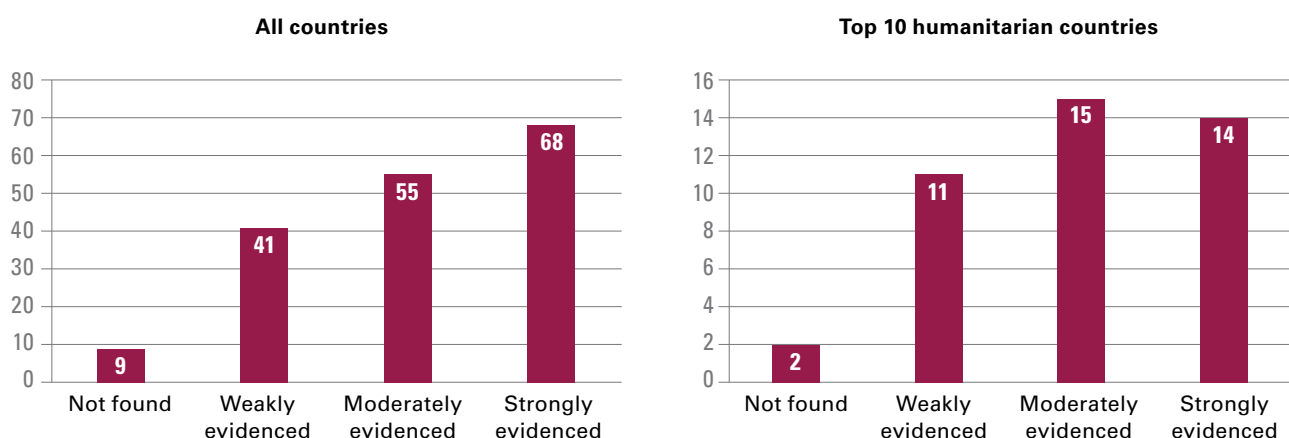
Risk-informed programming and emergency preparedness in practice

The Indonesia and Ethiopia case studies and the Top 10 Review countries reflect the increased use and awareness of the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming and the Emergency Preparedness Platform, especially in the preparation of CPDs and annual reviews. In the Top 10 Review, solid progress was noted in the integration of risk-informed programming, particularly during strategic planning stages. Apart from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Yemen, all other countries in the Top 10 Review have undergone a risk analysis focusing on children in the past three years. Staff expressed that they benefited from these comprehensive risk reviews during the country programme design process, which was supported by the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programmes, annual updates to the Emergency Preparedness Platform, and scenario-based contingency planning designed to foster resilience in the face of sudden shocks and support the continuity of services. “We are more risk-informed with the new CPD. A lot of effort was made with the last plan to ensure that our plans are informed by other work that we do. The past two years have laid a good foundation.”

The high marks given to risk-informed programming were more relevant in the context of more predictable crises such as cyclical droughts and floods, than in the context of more complex crises involving conflict and political fragility. The more extreme the environment, the less country offices benefited from risk-informed programming. In places such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Syrian Arab Republic, staff reported that nearly every possible risk was being realized in their context nearly all the time, and as a result, they did not experience the added value of the risk-informed programming process.

Access to good information is essential for risk-informed programming, and a key challenge for UNICEF is lack of data in countries with little capacity for data collection (e.g., in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan) or where there are government constraints to data collection (e.g., in Ethiopia and the Syrian Arab Republic). This was especially the case in regard to security risk and conflict analysis, which involves highly sensitive information.

Figure 4: Risk-informed programming: Evidence of action in country office documents



Risk-informed programming evidence in country office documents

Middle East and North Africa 2020 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal:

“High- and medium-risk countries received timely support to carry out integrated and resilience-focused humanitarian programming and key preparedness actions to mitigate risks and implement scaled-up emergency response. For instance, this includes investing in building the capacities of local partners and national systems for enhanced resilience and sustainability of services within the framework of the Grand Bargain commitments.”

Ethiopia 2018 Country Office Annual Report:

“The research study titled ‘Generation El-Nino: The long-term impact on children’s well-being’ was recognized as one of the 12 best research papers by UNICEF’s global Office of Research – Innocenti. It led to important recommendations, including the development of a comprehensive strategy for building children’s resilience across sectors and strengthening institutional and strategic foundations for child-sensitive disaster risk management.”

Iraq 2018 Country Office Annual Report:

“Risk-informed emergency preparedness was strengthened through a dedicated UNICEF workshop on risk-informed programming in early 2019, based on existing Emergency Preparedness Platform scenarios: armed conflict, natural disaster, election-related violence and epidemics. At the end of 2019, the office decided to review the Emergency Preparedness Platform to include civil unrest, acknowledging the shifting context in central and southern Iraq in the final quarter of the year.”

Indonesia: The Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming and the Emergency Preparedness Platform

According to interviewees, historically, risk analysis has not been adequately integrated into UNICEF Indonesia’s strategy and approach. The new Country Programme Strategy, which began in 2021, aims to better integrate risk analysis into programme activity.

Interviewees found that in previous country programmes, risk planning activities and resulting documentation were overly academic, consultant-led exercises that were not well embedded in operational planning and were disconnected from core situation analysis. While helpful at a national level, it was not

clear that risk analysis had successfully filtered down to the field level and resulted in stronger preparedness across sectors. The 2019 risk assessment exercise was seen as helpful,⁷⁴ however, in that it successfully combined UNICEF’s existing data with the Government’s risk analysis database and facilitated comparisons with National Disaster Management Agency data.

Interviewees also noted that the 2018 Lombok and Sulawesi tsunami responses enhanced UNICEF’s appreciation of risk-informed programming and emergency preparedness as core functions of the country office. This was reflected in the inclusion of preparedness in the new CPD and programme strategy notes and an awareness of the importance of

⁷⁴ United Nations Children’s Fund Indonesia, ‘2019 Multi-Hazard Risk Analysis’, UNICEF, 2019.

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

integrating climate and environmental risks into development thinking and programming. Each of UNICEF Indonesia's sector programmes now has a disaster risk management component with related management-level accountability mechanisms; and the COVID-19 pandemic is reinforcing the importance of this agenda. The East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office is supporting UNICEF Indonesia to maintain the spirit of these documents and put risk planning into practice.

In regard to WASH sector programming, interviewees drew a stark contrast between the situation before 2018, when there had been a marked under-investment in preparedness, and the current situation. Over the past two years, UNICEF "built a fortress of preparedness", according to one interviewee. Climate change has proven to be a useful entry point for discussions with the Government about risk in development programming. UNICEF has added vital capacity with a WASH-in-emergencies coordinator and a national officer that has fostered stronger linkages with all five government ministries involved in the WASH response and helped establish an effective WASH coordination cluster for the COVID-19 response. Contingency arrangements established with the Indonesian Red Cross (Palang Merah Indonesia), Mercy Corps and MuslimAid have given these organizations the tools to support responses to small emergencies. UNICEF has also fostered connections with local markets for sourcing supplies given the difficulties experienced with international procurement in 2018.

Ethiopia: The Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming and the Emergency Preparedness Platform

In Ethiopia, while more work has been done on risk analysis and risk-informed programming in the context of the most recent CPD, the application of these elements is still relatively new, and success will need to be gauged over the next few years. Reflecting the relatively recent adoption of the Guidance, risk-informed programming is only weakly to moderately evidenced in core country documents. Informants agree that UNICEF has seen solid improvement in this area, however, saying "the past two years have laid a good foundation" and risk-informed programming "is central to the new CPD especially in certain technical areas like WASH". The newly finalized CPD incorporates regional and national risk analysis using the Emergency Preparedness Platform and a review of field-level capacities. Social cohesion and conflict risks were discussed as part of risk assessment in Ethiopia, but specific conflict analysis expertise is lacking.

Interviewees noted that the 2014–2015 drought response and more recent emergency responses have been stronger in these areas than the responses to past crises. One example was the recent cholera outbreak, where investments by UNICEF and the Government in preparedness and early response played a key role in reducing the vulnerability of children and their families to cholera. Reported cases were ultimately significantly lower than in 2018.⁷⁵ These approaches have also been embraced in the climate-resilient WASH strategy within the 'One WASH National Program' that UNICEF undertook with the Government and partners, which centres on removing populations from cycles of drought.

⁷⁵ UNICEF Ethiopia, 2019.

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

Another example is the dual-purposed community schools that were established as part of the education (development) programme and also serve returnee children. In the health sector, the UNICEF-supported health extension worker programme has been “an invaluable resource in emergencies”, in terms of responding to disease outbreaks, including COVID-19, and providing vaccinations.

Interviews with staff from other country offices demonstrated a growing awareness of risk-informed programming and examples of this work in social protection programmes, contingency planning, disaster risk management and risk analysis in strategic moments of reflection. One stressed that “Risk-informed programming is not a process and series of workshops run from headquarters or the regional office. It is a programmatic agenda with bearing on management models”.

While awareness of risk-informed programming is rising, country office interviewees also described challenges related to the static nature of risk analysis. In addition, the application of the Guidance was described as “overcomplicated”. The Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming is expansive (290 pages) and technical, with sector-specific guidance for each of UNICEF’s technical areas. Several interviewees cited it as a particular example of an “outdated” form of information transfer, noting that its length and density make it of limited practical value to country offices. Few country offices reported taking a dynamic approach to risk analysis “...it is not an easy task, nor is it a one-off task”. Their conclusion was that “risk-informed programming is being done in a procedural sense, but that it is less clear how systematically it is informing programming and leading to changes in approach”.

This was backed up by numerous evaluations. The Humanitarian Review echoed many of the perspectives summarized above, including the need to improve internal investment in risk assessment and its relevance to quickly changing contexts. The Global Evaluation of UNICEF WASH Programming in Protracted Crises cited difficulties linking analysis with programming and recommended transitioning from a linear risk analysis approach to one that can adjust to evolving contexts; bridge sector and humanitarian/development silos; integrate preparedness; and become integral to country office planning processes. The Evaluation of Coverage and Quality of UNICEF Humanitarian Response cited the need for dynamic and iterative analysis by UNICEF staff rather than by consultants.



Photo: © UNICEF/UNI394547/Dejongh

As noted in section 2, there are significant challenges when operating contexts shift from relatively stable development frameworks to more volatile political crises. This was reflected in the Review of the UNICEF L2 Response in Venezuela, which found that UNICEF was too slow to shift to an emergency footing. Country office senior staff reiterated this point: “When we are in a development framework, we are planning for development and not looking at what could trigger a humanitarian situation”. Another country office senior staff member noted that when UNICEF is working upstream with a strong government, there is a strong and appropriate focus on child rights alongside an effort to preserve strong relationships: “This comes at the expense of a realistic view of the socio-economic trends”, and issues that might cause a breakdown. According to the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming, a shock or stress “can come from almost anywhere” and while it might include natural phenomena it should also include “serious challenges to social cohesion”. However, the interviews and evaluations indicated weak political analyses and difficulty acting on those analyses when they challenge the status quo.

External partners perceived that UNICEF placed significantly more emphasis on risk-informed programming from the humanitarian side, noting challenges in engaging with risks and the nexus on the development side. Responses from humanitarian and development donors on UNICEF and partner risk analysis requirements varied significantly, demonstrating inconsistencies from opposite sides of the nexus.

4.2 Accountability to affected populations

AAP in policies, strategies and guidance

On a policy level, UNICEF demonstrates a commitment to AAP. In its Strategic Plan, UNICEF commits to “focus more systematically on community engagement and accountability to affected people and communities, including through communication for development and platforms for adolescent participation.” On the humanitarian side, the revised CCCs include an overarching commitment to AAP with clear benchmarks for participation, feedback that is acted upon and access to safe and confidential complaint mechanisms. On the development side, the Programme Policy and Procedure guidance stresses that the “principle of participation is an important consideration in programming” and that “accountability is a human rights principle with strong programme implications”. Participation is also clearly embedded in sector-specific and cross-cutting policies, guidance and tools. Training on AAP has begun in some regions and an AAP Handbook was published in 2020.⁷⁶ UNICEF is also committed to the Grand Bargain Participation Revolution and the Common Humanitarian Standard and is a co-chair to IASC Results Group 2 on Accountability and Inclusion.

These policy commitments do appear to have fostered a recognition among UNICEF staff of the importance of participation and accountability. For example, the informal learning review of opportunities and challenges in humanitarian-development programming in the Middle East and North Africa region

⁷⁶ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Accountability to Affected Populations: A handbook for UNICEF and partners’, UNICEF, 2020.

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

noted that, “all staff interviewed articulated the importance of engaging with affected populations, including children and young people to ensure the relevancy, effectiveness and efficiency of programmes”. Interviewees also recognized the need for and importance of accountability and participation mechanisms.

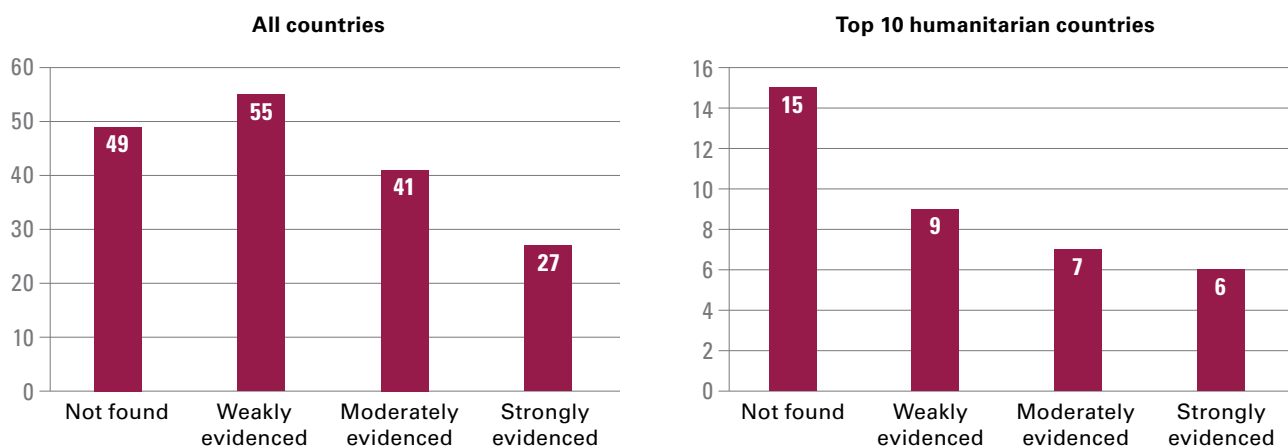
While UNICEF has been endeavouring to engage with communities and promote participation in both its humanitarian and development work for many years, this strong institutional commitment to AAP was solidified in 2018. Recognizing the need for stronger action on AAP and to tackle identified weaknesses, in 2018, the UNICEF AAP unit developed a roadmap and business case to drive more serious work on AAP commitments and generate more effective engagement from country and regional leadership. In 2019, the unit conducted a major benchmarking exercise of UNICEF’s work on AAP. As of 2021, the AAP unit is comprised

of five staff focused on implementing the roadmap and providing country and regional offices with technical support.

AAP in practice

Despite the progress described above, AAP remains limited in practice. UNICEF still lacks sufficient and adequate mechanisms for consulting people and generating feedback on programme design, implementation and monitoring. This finding is consistent with the case studies and interviews conducted for this evaluation. In the majority of country documents examined for the Top 10 Review, AAP was weakly evidenced or not included; and interviewees indicated that there was no comprehensive or systematic consultation with affected people in the countries reviewed. Evidence of AAP was weaker in the top 10 humanitarian response contexts than it was in a broader sample of UNICEF countries.

Figure 5: Evidence of AAP



4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

Recent evaluations reinforce these findings. The informal learning review of opportunities and challenges in humanitarian-development programming in the Middle East and North Africa region found that the practice of participatory approaches in the design, implementation and review of programmes was inconsistent and that engagement with children and young people is weak. The Humanitarian Review found that, “despite improvements in this area since 2018, AAP is still not central to UNICEF’s humanitarian work. Although UNICEF shares information effectively, other aspects of AAP need more work. UNICEF often only engages with affected populations once programmes are running. Where feedback mechanisms cover programmes, few systems ensure that feedback is acted upon.” The Evaluation of Coverage and Quality of UNICEF Humanitarian Response found that, “While UNICEF aspires to engage with communities in receipt of its assistance, it does not have a structured approach to accountability to affected people or a formal means of gauging community satisfaction with the coverage or quality of its programmes either directly or through its partners”.

The Global Evaluation of UNICEF WASH Programming in Protracted Crises found, “There is a nearly complete absence of comprehensive accountability and feedback mechanisms. Although UNICEF partners may encourage complaints, record them, and respond appropriately, UNICEF is not collating this data. As a result, there is no understanding at CO [country office] level of user feedback or partner performance in this area.” While UNICEF’s benchmarking against the Core Humanitarian Standard on Accountability and Quality can

be seen as a sign of strong commitment to AAP, the benchmarking report showed that the agency struggles to meet its commitments on complaints mechanisms and does not systematically ensure participation.⁷⁷

In Ethiopia, there is little evidence that UNICEF’s strategic planning and programming reflect the participation of affected populations. Beyond various small-scale community- and project-based feedback and complaint mechanisms and discrete projects such as the Social Accountability for Healthcare Quality Improvement Study,⁷⁸ AAP is underdeveloped in Ethiopia and UNICEF has no mechanism to systematically and comprehensively gather and reflect the views of affected people in its overall country strategy. In Ethiopia, AAP has often been conflated with programming related to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. There is little indication that UNICEF programme design incorporates direct input from affected populations themselves.

A critical dimension of UNICEF’s approach to AAP is the policies and practices of its implementing partners. Some interviewees noted that partner capacity assessments examine the extent to which partners respond to the needs of affected populations and facilitate follow up through monitoring and reporting. Interviewees also noted that there are opportunities for UNICEF to learn from partner organizations with strong AAP track records.

UNICEF is investing in new tools and innovative approaches to enable communication with affected populations. U-Report is a short message service (SMS) tool that can be used to collect data and share information. It began

⁷⁷ Humanitarian Quality Assurance Initiative, ‘UNICEF CHS Benchmarking Report’, HQAI, 1 October 2019.

⁷⁸ Pieterse, Pieterella, ‘Draft Social Accountability for Healthcare Quality Improvement Study’, UNICEF, 2019.

in a development setting in Uganda in 2011 but has been widely used in emergency settings. In Nigeria, UNICEF used U-Report to conduct rapid needs assessments; gather feedback and complaints on service delivery; strengthen coordination among response partners; and support performance monitoring.⁷⁹ During the response to COVID-19 and despite lockdowns, UNICEF Indonesia developed bi-directional channels for communications and feedback in the spirit of AAP. For example, communications with frontline delivery staff via U-Report indicated that service providers and children were in need of psychosocial support.

UNICEF has also invested in RapidPro, another SMS-based communications platform. In the Syrian Arab Republic, UNICEF has used RapidPro to communicate with social workers and 12,000 volunteer teachers on challenges in schools, payment difficulties and child protection issues. In Indonesia, UNICEF has used RapidPro as part of the COVID-19 response to communicate with both teachers and students on the efficacy of remote teaching. As noted in the Humanitarian Review, these tools are not one size fits all and cannot address all AAP needs but have effectively enabled dialogue and facilitated participation.

The lack of evidence that AAP policy commitments have translated into practice does not on its own indicate that UNICEF and partners are not undertaking strong AAP programming in development and humanitarian settings. However it does reflect that learning and practice from the field are not being clearly labelled as AAP, captured in reporting, and systematically implemented and monitored.

Linking humanitarian and development approaches to accountability

It is important to move beyond the discussion of whether UNICEF's humanitarian and development programming are accountable and participatory towards an exploration of the extent to which UNICEF is linking its AAP in humanitarian action with its approaches to participation in development programming. The evaluation has found clear disconnects in terms of language, approach and basic concepts.

AAP is largely seen as a humanitarian approach. The Humanitarian Review notes that "UNICEF needs to connect its AAP initiatives in humanitarian action to its development work. The organization can use its presence and AAP work before an emergency to ensure that its AAP interventions related to humanitarian action build on the strengths established by its development programming."

The current Programme Policy and Procedure guidance does recognize and discuss the interface between humanitarian AAP and accountability approaches in development programming. It notes, "Although the concept of AAP began in humanitarian settings, where the need was apparent, there's no reason why we shouldn't also be held equally accountable in development situations. In these settings, we tend to talk about 'social accountability' rather than 'AAP', but they have a lot in common" (see Table 1). However, there's little evidence that this guidance has translated into practical programming linkages at the country level.

⁷⁹ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Nigeria: 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan', OCHA, 2020.

Table 1: AAP or social accountability?

AAP	SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights-based: the right to be heard, the right to expression, the right to association, and the right to participate in decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights-based: the right to be heard, the right to expression, the right to association, and the right to participate in decision-making.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital or face-to-face interactions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital or face-to-face interactions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory approaches, information-sharing, complaint mechanisms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participatory approaches, information-sharing, complaint mechanisms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses largely on the relationship between aid providers and the people they seek to support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses largely on facilitating constructive engagement between citizens and governments.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short timeframes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longer timeframes.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humanitarian crisis, with agencies complementing or temporarily filling in for governments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development projects, with agencies scaffolding support to governments and/or local authorities before stepping back.

There was little evidence from the interviews that UNICEF is effectively connecting humanitarian AAP initiatives with development work. The different approaches to participation and accountability are largely siloed. Humanitarian AAP efforts tend to focus on direct channels for communication and feedback between aid agencies and crisis-affected populations. UNICEF's development programming focuses less on the direct delivery of services and more on partnering with governments to ensure that citizens have channels through which to demand their rights and hold governments to account.

The WASH sector in Burkina Faso provides an example of linking development and humanitarian accountabilities. UNICEF Burkina Faso facilitates collaboration between local authorities and community representatives on WASH sector investments. The resulting action plans address emergency activities, as well as the basic needs of host communities, sustainability and coordination. UNICEF also manages an accountability framework with an LHD-nexus dimension. UNICEF field offices collect information and data from beneficiary communities

which is then analysed and used to inform corrective actions. The central office then works closely with the Government to strengthen capacities for LHD at the national level.

UNICEF could do more to build on examples such as this one to connect development and humanitarian approaches to accountability. Humanitarian programming could focus more on government accountability channels and strengthening the ability of affected people to hold governments to account for their responsibility to assist and protect. Development programming could focus more on the resilience of citizen accountability channels during times of crisis (e.g., school and health committees). However, based on programme documents and interviews, it does not appear that the organization has explored these opportunities for linking development and humanitarian accountability approaches.

Efforts to improve coordination in the development sphere – for example, changes to the resident coordinator role, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework reform

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction – do affect how UNICEF engages with accountability. The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2030 agenda may increase the extent to which organizations like UNICEF are more accountable to hosts government development agendas. UNICEF will therefore need to pay particular attention to issues of exclusion and how to retain population-centred approaches to accountability in its planning in the context of more government-centred development agendas.

The structural challenge of UNICEF's fragmented humanitarian (AAP) and development (communication for development) work on accountability has created inconsistencies. Given the strength of UNICEF's communications for development work, the organization has a tendency to focus more on delivering messages to populations than ensuring accountability to crisis-affected people.



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0235163/LeMoyné

Coordination and collective partnership approaches to AAP

UNICEF has been an active player in efforts to promote more collective approaches to AAP in its role as cluster-lead agency for the WASH, Nutrition and Education clusters/sectors and the Child Protection Area of Responsibility, and more broadly. At the global level, UNICEF has played an active role in the Grand Bargain working group on the Participation Revolution and is a co-chair of the IASC Results Group 2 on Accountability and Inclusion. It has commissioned operational research on collective approaches to AAP in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Indonesia, Mozambique and Yemen, with a synthesis report forthcoming. At the country level, UNICEF has engaged in collective approaches in countries such as Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Philippines and Yemen. In promoting coordinated approaches to AAP, UNICEF has been working with Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities and Peer2Peer to develop and provide training on an AAP framework for humanitarian coordinators. This led to the development of the IASC Results Group 2 AAP framework.

UNICEF's approach to accountability is informed by the AAP policies and practices of its implementing partners. For example, some interviewees noted that partner capacity assessments examine the extent to which partners respond to the needs of affected populations and follow up on these needs in monitoring and reporting. UNICEF can learn from partner organizations that have particular strengths in AAP, while also better supporting local partners to build on their proximity to affected populations to establish more systematic approaches to accountability, in line with the localization agenda.

COVID-19

In the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, UNICEF leads the risk communication and community engagement pillar. This has entailed tracking and responding to misinformation and ensuring that families know how to protect themselves from COVID-19 and seek assistance. As of September 2020, UNICEF had reached 2.6 billion people with messaging on COVID-19 prevention and access to services; and 173.3 million people had been engaged through risk communication and community engagement actions, including in the most difficult humanitarian settings.⁸⁰

UNICEF has given special attention to integrating gender-based violence messages and scaling up prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse efforts in its community engagement efforts. This includes working to establish safe and accessible channels for children and adults to report sexual exploitation and abuse and strengthening referrals for services in accordance with gender-based violence and child protection referral pathways. For example, in Lebanon, UNICEF and partners established WhatsApp groups and gave out data bundles so that girls and women could receive information on COVID-19 and gender-based violence.

As the above example suggests, the initial focus in the COVID-19 response has largely been on providing information; AAP thinking and approaches have been less evident. UNICEF is trying to bring more AAP-focused thinking into its discussions on the COVID-19 response and promote greater linkages between AAP and risk communication and community engagement working groups at the country level.

4.3 Gender and disability in policy, guidance and strategy

UNICEF policy and practice guidance: Gender, disability and LHD

UNICEF's Programme Framework for Fragile Contexts calls on the organization to empower and support local youth-led initiatives and organizations and increase the resources available for addressing the needs and priorities of adolescents and youth affected by fragility, conflict and displacement.

Gender equality and empowerment of girls and women and inclusion of people with disabilities are cross-sectoral commitments in the revised CCCs that include considerations related to LHD programming. UNICEF's gender equality team sees these new commitments as a landmark. They have clear gender-specific and gender-integrated (across sectors) requirements and will impose an accountability framework for delivering on them. On the development side, the Programme Policy and Procedure guidance does have the following minimum standards for gender- and disability-responsive programming.

Gender

- Strengthen all multisectoral systems to deliver gender-responsive services across all sectors, especially for gender-based violence risk mitigation, prevention and survivor response, as gender-based violence is exacerbated in humanitarian settings.
- Empower and equip all adolescents to become agents of positive social change before, during and after crises, to address gender inequities and gaps.

⁸⁰ United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Global COVID-19 Mid-Term Situation Report No. 9 Feb – July 2020', UNICEF, August 2020.

- In contexts affected by conflict, fragility or major challenges to social cohesion, ensure that the situation of women and girls is systematically included in conflict analysis.

Disabilities

- Ensure that multi-hazard risk assessments of households, communities and service delivery systems include a child-sensitive analysis of disability inclusion and accessibility.
- Support national and local systems in consolidating and strengthening the various services established for children and persons with disabilities during the humanitarian response.

The LHD Procedure and the update to the Board⁸¹ do not sufficiently address gender. However, the OECD Development Assistance Committee nexus recommendation – which UNICEF has signed – includes several gender commitments. They are:

- Undertake joint risk-informed, gender-sensitive analysis of root causes and structural drivers of conflict;
- Put people at the centre, tackling exclusion and promoting gender equality;
- Address conflict risks by tackling exclusion, persecution and injustice, promoting gender equality wherever possible as standard good practice;
- Actively support the principles of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, including by ensuring a focus on gender equality and women's leadership across humanitarian, development and peace actions;

- Striving to ensure that humanitarian, development and peacebuilding is designed and delivered in a gender-sensitive way based on a suitable gender analysis and on an informed understanding of exploitation, abuse and do no harm.

UNICEF's Gender Action Plan, 2018–2021, is the organization's roadmap for promoting equality throughout its work. It briefly mentions working across development and humanitarian contexts to advance gender equality. However, the Evaluation of UNICEF's Gender Action Plans⁸² noted humanitarian action as a key gap:

Humanitarian action, which represents half of UNICEF programmatic spending, and is a cross-cutting area of the strategic plans, is mentioned in both GAPs [gender action plans] but lacks dedicated attention or specific strategies. This was reportedly a conscious choice at the time, given the complexities of defining 'what gender equality means' for UNICEF within humanitarian work, but was perceived as both an incongruence and a major risk by many UNICEF COs [country offices] addressing emergencies. Fieldwork in five countries and interviews with 20 COs and all seven ROs [regional offices] found gender equality awareness and approaches in humanitarian programming notably lacking, with few references beyond 'equal participation of men and women in programming'. Review of corporate documentation on humanitarian programming also reflected very limited attention to gender equality, although UNICEF had in early 2019 recruited an Emergency Response Team Specialist with gender expertise.

⁸¹ 'Update on UNICEF Humanitarian Action with a Focus on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming'.

⁸² United Nations Children's Fund, 'Realizing Potential: Evaluation of UNICEF's gender action plans', UNICEF, December 2019.

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

UNICEF is working to strengthen how it approaches gender and disability in the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming. A stand-alone module on gender is being finalized and will be added to the complete Guidance package in early 2021. The module also includes components on disabilities and adolescent development and participation.

There are clear commitments to disability inclusion in the CCCs and in the UNICEF Strategic Plan. The United Nations-wide Disability Inclusion Strategy (2019) was reported on for the first time in 2020. UNICEF is a co-chair of a reference group on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action and participated in the development of the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action (2019).

Gender responsiveness in practice

While commitments to gender equality and empowerment exist in UNICEF policies and strategies and are being taken forward in some programming at the country level, it is less clear how well these commitments are being systematically embedded in programming, monitored and evaluated. One interviewee noted, “We are getting better on paper. Less convinced in terms of outcomes”

The Evaluation of Coverage and Quality of UNICEF Humanitarian Response found that, “In practice, UNICEF does not have a consistent understanding of how to translate its equity principles into humanitarian practice. While data are frequently disaggregated by gender and age, and programmes often take account of these factors, there is a lack of broader vulnerability analysis in UNICEF programming. The Synthesis of Humanitarian Evaluations 2010–2016⁸³ found that in less than half of the evaluations, equity issues had not been satisfactorily integrated into responses. The Humanitarian Review and the informal learning review of opportunities and challenges in humanitarian-development programming in the Middle East and North Africa region did not analyse gender issues.

UNICEF has made a corporate commitment to spending at least 15 per cent of all funding on gender-responsive priorities. At the global level, the organization is reaching 14 per cent, though given that the indicator relies on country office self-reporting, there is variation in what is classified as gender-responsive. The fragile and conflict-affected countries that were a particular focus of this evaluation⁸⁴ spent a similar percentage, suggesting that UNICEF is successfully maintaining gender-responsive expenditure (according to self-reporting) in countries affected by conflict and fragility and with large emergency programmes.

Table 2: Gender expenditure in fragile and conflict-affected countries (US\$) and as a percentage of overall expenditure

2018		2019		2020*	
%	US\$	%	US\$	%	US\$
13.7%	504,020,514	13.4%	509,605,196	14.6%	379,846,227

* Figures are as of November 2020. Accounts will be closed in March 2021.

⁸³ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Synthesis of UNICEF Evaluations of Humanitarian Action 2010–2016’, UNICEF, 2017.

⁸⁴ These countries included: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Haiti, Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, Turkey and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

In emergencies, gender responsiveness has often focused on gender-based violence programming, where specific funding is sometimes available, but gaps are still evident. In the COVID-19 response, only 1 per cent of all COVID-19-related funding has been allocated to gender-responsive priorities.

Beyond work focused on gender-based violence, funding streams with a specific gender focus are limited and gender advisers struggle to get gender-responsive activities embedded within broader programming. Recognizing this, there is now more of a focus on embedding responsibilities for gender within and across sectors and not just relying on focal points and advisers.

As with AAP, attention is currently focused on whether UNICEF is paying sufficient attention to gender responsiveness in its humanitarian and development programming. The evaluation found little evidence that UNICEF is working to link its gender-sensitive humanitarian programming with its gender-sensitive development programming. In more development-oriented contexts, gender specialists and focal points are more focused on policy and advocacy issues in relation to gender and are sometimes not equipped to focus on gender in more delivery-oriented emergency programmes. Gender advisers are rarely well enough connected with emergency teams to ensure that emergency programming is gender responsive and linked to gender-responsive development programming. As one interviewee said, “I don’t think we are anywhere near understanding the intersection of our nexus work and gender”.

A mixed picture is found in technical sections. The Global Evaluation of UNICEF WASH Programming in Protracted Crises found key weaknesses in turning commitments in the WASH Strategic Plan into programming and

“significant shortfalls in understanding and addressing the needs of people with disabilities”. In contrast, the Evaluation of UNICEF Contribution to Education in Humanitarian Situations found that gender was consistently mainstreamed in needs assessments, planning and reporting and that staff were generally aware of and making an effort to address gender-related inequalities. Planning documents showed consistent examples of gender mainstreaming, notably in the enrolment and retention of girls in schools and attention to gender and disability in WASH and menstrual hygiene management in schools. The evaluation found good progress on children with disabilities in some countries such as Jordan but the need to strengthen capacities to incorporate disability inclusion in planning and reporting.

Given the evidence on gender responsiveness in humanitarian action, the headquarters-based gender equality team feels that UNICEF needs to focus on the basics when it comes to making the nexus gender responsive. For instance, interviewees pointed to a continuing lack of gender and age disaggregation in reporting on the COVID-19 response. It is challenging to consider how to link gender-responsive programming across the humanitarian and development spheres when the basics of humanitarian response are not in place. Along the gender continuum (from sensitivity to responsiveness to transformation) there is significant work to do to achieve responsiveness. The hope is that nexus programming will enable transformation by taking advantage of opportunities for women that can open up during crises (e.g., shifts in social norms or employment opportunities). UNICEF should be alert for investment opportunities that have transformative potential.



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0419746/AI-Safadi

In relation to risk-informed programming and preparedness, UNICEF's gender equality team has invested heavily in ensuring that the tools and processes (e.g., the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming and the Emergency Preparedness Platform) are gender responsive. However, questions remain as to how well that guidance is being implemented in practice. The plethora of frameworks and guidance make it hard for country offices to navigate multiple responsibilities and translate policy commitments and guidance into action. The gender equality team felt that UNICEF would benefit more from peer-to-peer learning and sharing and disseminating best practices than additional guidance.

In terms of partnerships, the revised CCCs commit UNICEF to working more with organizations led by women and youth – a goal that has the potential to make partnership

strategies and choices more gender responsible. The gender equality team is currently exploring how to monitor and measure this commitment effectively. Building networks, working more effectively in partnership with women-led organizations in development programming and strengthening those organizations while building their resilience and ability to respond to crisis will be key to developing more gender-responsive programming across the nexus. Interviewees also noted that UNICEF should learn from NGO partners. Plan International and Save the Children⁸⁵ were cited as being ahead of UNICEF in terms of gender-responsive action.

There are also key links between the AAP and localization agendas and gender-responsive nexus programming. UNICEF's commitment to giving women and girls a voice and more systematically including their views in

⁸⁵ While two international NGOs were noted in interviews, it is possible that national actors are equally as qualified in this area. The remote nature of the research for this evaluation did not allow for a significant depth of understanding of local capacities.

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

programme design and feedback processes cuts across development and humanitarian programming. However, as noted in section 4.2 on AAP, the practical implementation of AAP remains weak.

UNICEF's gender equality team has not yet explored how to make the organization's conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding work more gender responsive. The team recognizes the importance of this work but lacks the capacity to take it forward.

In both its humanitarian and development programming, UNICEF has areas where gender-specific programming is strong (e.g., child marriage initiatives); however gender responsiveness has not been integrated as well across technical sectors. The gender equality team is therefore focusing on prioritizing and targeting gender responsiveness within sectors, strengthening capacities on gender within sectors and expanding the skills of country leadership (representatives, deputy representative and sector chiefs) in this regard. The team is also increasing its country focus, moving from global level policy frameworks to country support.

Disability inclusion in practice

In the UNICEF Programme Division (PD), there is a disability section that covers disability inclusion in humanitarian and development programming. The section has two people (one in New York and one in Geneva) that focus on humanitarian action. In country and regional offices, there are disability focal points, though these focal points tend to focus on development. There are currently no activities aimed at linking UNICEF's development disability work with its humanitarian disability work, though discussions have begun.

In its humanitarian action, UNICEF has increased its focus on the inclusion of persons with disabilities. This is in part due to the

development of clear commitments to disability inclusion in the CCCs and the UNICEF Strategic Plan; the launch of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy in 2019, and its reporting requirements; as well as the IASC Guidelines on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action and rising donor interest. For example, by including disability as one of its core performance-based funding elements, the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office inspired UNICEF, as well as the wider United Nations system, to take this issue even more seriously.

While UNICEF is seen as further along in the process of mainstreaming disability inclusion in its programmes than some other United Nations agencies, taking the disability inclusion agenda forward remains challenging. Notably, disaggregated data on disability remains rare, and data and disability activities are often an afterthought and not well integrated into programme design and analysis. While UNICEF has made strides in data disaggregation, the participation of people with disabilities and partnering with organizations of people with disabilities, these strides need to be better translated across humanitarian action. For example, disability groups that UNICEF engages with in its development programmes could be better engaged during emergencies. While this is seen as a priority, it is not yet happening in practice.

At the inter-agency level, the reference group on persons with disabilities in humanitarian action is new and focused on getting basic coordination processes up and running at the global level and in emergencies. There are some disability working groups at the country level, for example in Mozambique, but disability is often dealt with as a subset of protection rather than as a programme element to be mainstreamed across sectors.

Human resources and capacities for gender responsiveness and disability inclusion

UNICEF's headquarters-based gender equality team is working to get more women into humanitarian leadership positions. The effort includes creating more flexible working arrangements and developing more family-friendly policies in both humanitarian and development contexts. The hope is that this will encourage more women to apply for humanitarian leadership positions and help staff work better across the nexus.

UNICEF is also strengthening capacities internally and externally for partners to make LHD programming more gender responsive. UNICEF is providing e-courses for staff and partners that include the IASC eLearning on Gender Equality in Humanitarian Action; the IASC Different Needs, Equal Opportunities e-course; and the Gender-Based Violence Risk Mitigation e-course. UNICEF also plans to develop an e-course that complements the gender equality in preparedness guidance and the CCC toolkit. An onboarding package, which is currently being developed, will orient all UNICEF staff on the organization's gender equality portfolio, key gender-related benchmarks. There is also a plan for targeting country office managers (i.e., representatives, deputy representatives and sector chiefs) with a range of dialogues on gender equality in action, including podcasts and leadership discussions.

UNICEF is also looking to integrate gender-responsive approaches into the humanitarian cash and shock-responsive social protection agenda, particularly in cash plus and complementary programming. For example, in Yemen, UNICEF is exploring how to be more gender responsive in its large-scale cash programme, including by training facilitators

to identify and refer cases of gender-based violence and support caregiving and parenting through linked mothers groups. UNICEF is leading research and learning around gender and social protection through the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti and the Transfer project. UNICEF Innocenti has begun a new four-year research programme called Gender-Responsive and Age-Sensitive Social Protection, which is examining how gender-responsive and age-sensitive social protection can sustainably reduce poverty and achieve gender equality.

In disability inclusion, there is a growing disability section that works across humanitarian and development programming and disability focal points at the country and regional levels. There is a need to both train and support disability focal points, who often have a development focus, to engage more on humanitarian issues; and to train and support humanitarian focal points to be more disability sensitive.

4.4 Humanitarian cash and social protection in UNICEF

In its Strategic Plan Goal Area 5 output indicator, the CCCs, and as part of the World Humanitarian Summit, UNICEF has made strong organizational commitments to prioritizing shock-responsive social protection. Programme guidance issued in 2019 on strengthening shock-responsive social protection systems complements UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework and its Humanitarian Cash Transfers Programmatic Guide (2019). In 2020, UNICEF rolled out a tool for assessing the readiness of social protection systems.

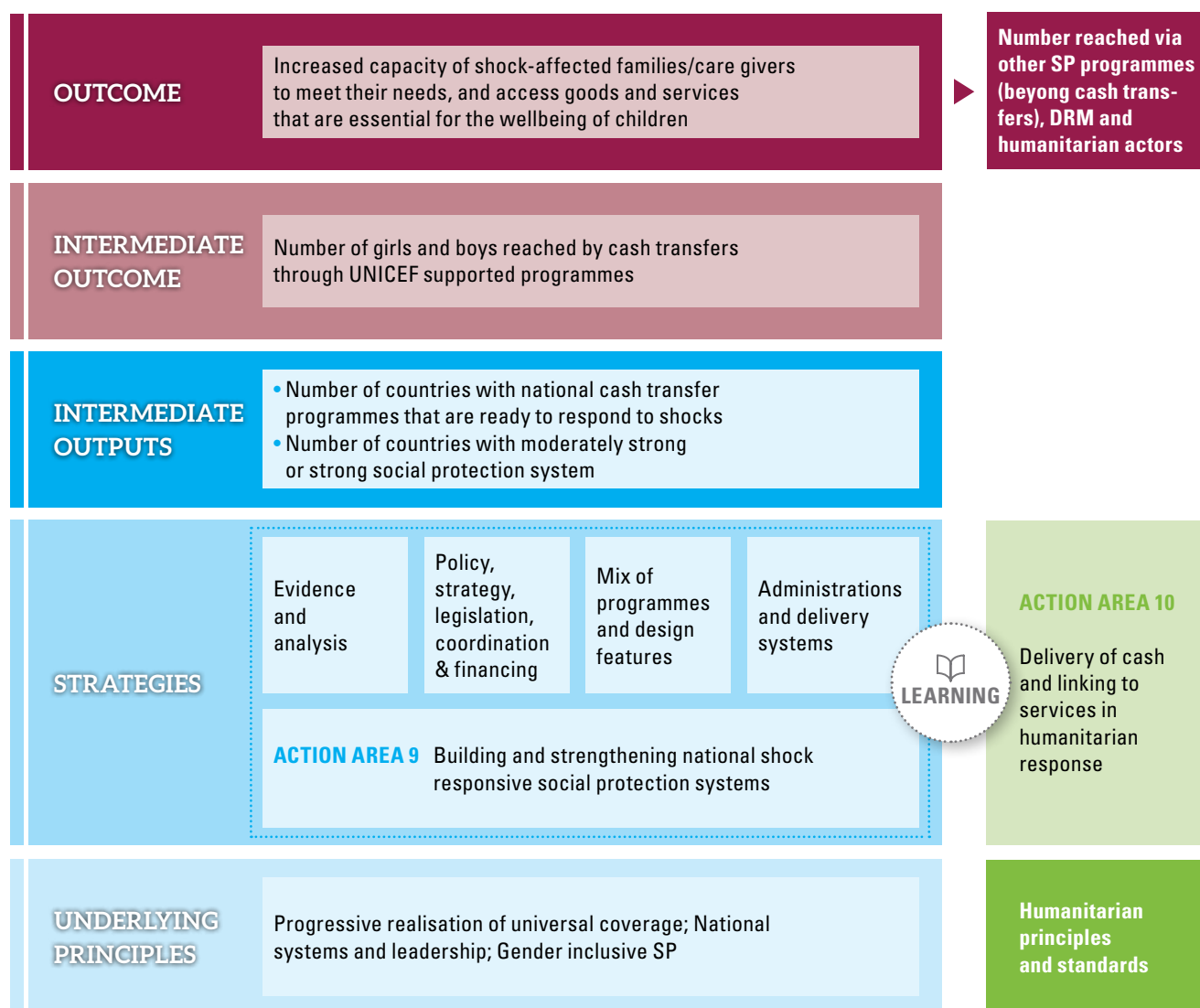
Given its longstanding support for social protection, emergency preparedness and response, UNICEF is well placed to work

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

effectively with national governments and development partners on this agenda. As part of the Grand Bargain, UNICEF committed to systematically implementing cash programmes in ways that build on and form the basis for sustainable social protection systems.

With its dual humanitarian-development mandate and sub-national presence, UNICEF has a comparative advantage and ability to contextualize and add value when it comes to development approaches to social protection in fragile situations.

Figure 6: UNICEF’s framework for shock-responsive social protection



4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework has a clear focus on social protection in humanitarian, fragile and risk-prone contexts. Of 10 action areas, two relate to strengthening the organization's social protection work to make national systems more shock responsive and to link humanitarian cash to social protection systems (Action Areas 9 and 10). The revised CCCs include a new section on social protection and commit UNICEF to doing more on social protection in humanitarian contexts. This includes working closely with governments to adapt and scale up existing social protection systems and designing and implementing parallel humanitarian cash transfers in ways that build nascent social protection systems.

This represents the integration of shock-responsive social protection – including associated commitments, benchmarks and indicators – into the CCC toolbox. The roll out plan will include webinars and learning materials that will enable country and regional office staff to implement the commitments on the ground. The benchmarks focus on supporting the maintenance of existing social protection systems and using humanitarian cash to strengthen nascent systems where possible. In another important milestone, the global COVID-19 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal (2020) included two indicators related to social protection.

An evaluation of UNICEF's work on social cash transfer programmes in emergencies is forthcoming.⁸⁶ Preliminary findings indicate that at the global level, UNICEF has been at the forefront of shock-responsive social protection, and at the country level, some offices have become early adopters of shock-responsive

social protection in ways that have shaped global efforts. However, it also notes weak operational capacities and systems for cash transfers in emergencies and the need to more clearly delineate UNICEF's comparative advantages vis-à-vis other United Nations agencies in shock-responsive social protection programming. It sees a substantial need for enhanced coordination and collaboration at the inter-agency level.

The 2019 Programme Guidance on strengthening shock-responsive social protection systems was rolled out through a series of webinars and a network of regional advisers. It serves as the basis for the shock-responsive social protection module of the TRANSFORM trainings⁸⁷ on social protection. UNICEF also co-leads the Grand Bargain sub-group on social protection and humanitarian cash, which is in the process of developing a series of case studies.

Shock-responsive social protection is included in the annex of the LHD Procedure and is seen as playing an important role in strengthening cross-cutting and cross-sectoral approaches and enabling UNICEF to better tackle issues of social inclusion, gender and disability. Shock-responsive social protection is also embedded in the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming and the Emergency Preparedness Platform, which includes minimum preparedness standards for assessing the readiness of social protection systems.

UNICEF has also played a leading role in research and analysis on social protection and linking social protection and humanitarian cash through the Office of Research – Innocenti, which has produced a large body of high quality

⁸⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Evaluation of Social Cash Transfer Programmes in Emergencies', UNICEF (forthcoming).

⁸⁷ TRANSFORM, <<https://transformsp.org/>>, accessed 15 February 2020.

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

work on social protection for advocacy and programming purposes. Examples include the development of a gender-responsive, age-sensitive conceptual framework for social protection;⁸⁸ a study on the Hajati cash transfer programme for refugees in Jordan that is being used to advocate for the use of cash transfers to support education;⁸⁹ and a report on shock-responsive social protection in the Middle East and North Africa region.⁹⁰

Evidence on the potential contribution of shock-responsive social protection to peace-building is weak, though UNICEF sees potential in this area. For example, in Brazil, social assistance is available to both citizens and non-citizens, including Venezuelan refugees. However, many Venezuelan migrants have not benefited from this assistance due to lack of information, lack of documentation and low motivation among social workers to enrol them. In response, UNICEF is working with local governments in target areas to connect Venezuelan migrants to social protection services.

While there has been a history of competition among United Nations agencies in regard to humanitarian cash and social protection programming, UNICEF is pursuing greater collaboration with sister agencies in these areas through the Common Cash System. In West Africa, for example, UNICEF and WFP have agreed on a joint approach to cash in which UNICEF will focus on scaling up government systems and WFP will deliver cash in conflict-affected areas through a parallel system.

In Yemen, the intensification of the humanitarian crisis led to the suspension of the Social Welfare Fund – the country’s national social protection system – leaving the population without any social protection support. With funding from the World Bank, UNICEF has disbursed unconditional cash transfers to the population through its Emergency Cash Transfer programme, with specific emergency top-ups provided in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with support from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. This programme has strong links to the country’s Social Welfare Fund – for example, it uses the pre-conflict beneficiary list and builds on the system’s own parameters – which has served to strengthen and preserve the Fund. When conditions are right, the programme will be integrated back into the Social Welfare Fund.

The COVID-19 pandemic has turbo-charged the shock-responsive social protection agenda; governments across the world are expanding and adjusting social protection responses. UNICEF has responded by supporting shock-responsive social protection in 114 countries in 2020, up from 40 countries in 2019. UNICEF is also supporting governments to scale-up assistance in countries such as Jordan, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger, Sri Lanka and Zambia. For example, in Jordan, in response to COVID-19, UNICEF is drafting of a shock-responsive social protection chapter that has been endorsed by the Cabinet and supporting the Government to resource and implement it.

⁸⁸ United Nations Children’s Fund Office of Research – Innocenti, ‘Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection: A conceptual framework’, UNICEF, 2020.

⁸⁹ United Nations Children’s Fund Office of Research – Innocenti, ‘The Difference a Dollar a Day Can Make: Lessons from UNICEF Jordan’s Hajati cash transfer programme’, UNICEF, 2020.

⁹⁰ Tebaldi, Raquel, ‘Building Shock-Responsive National Social Protection Systems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region)’, IPC-IG, UNDP and UNICEF, 2019.

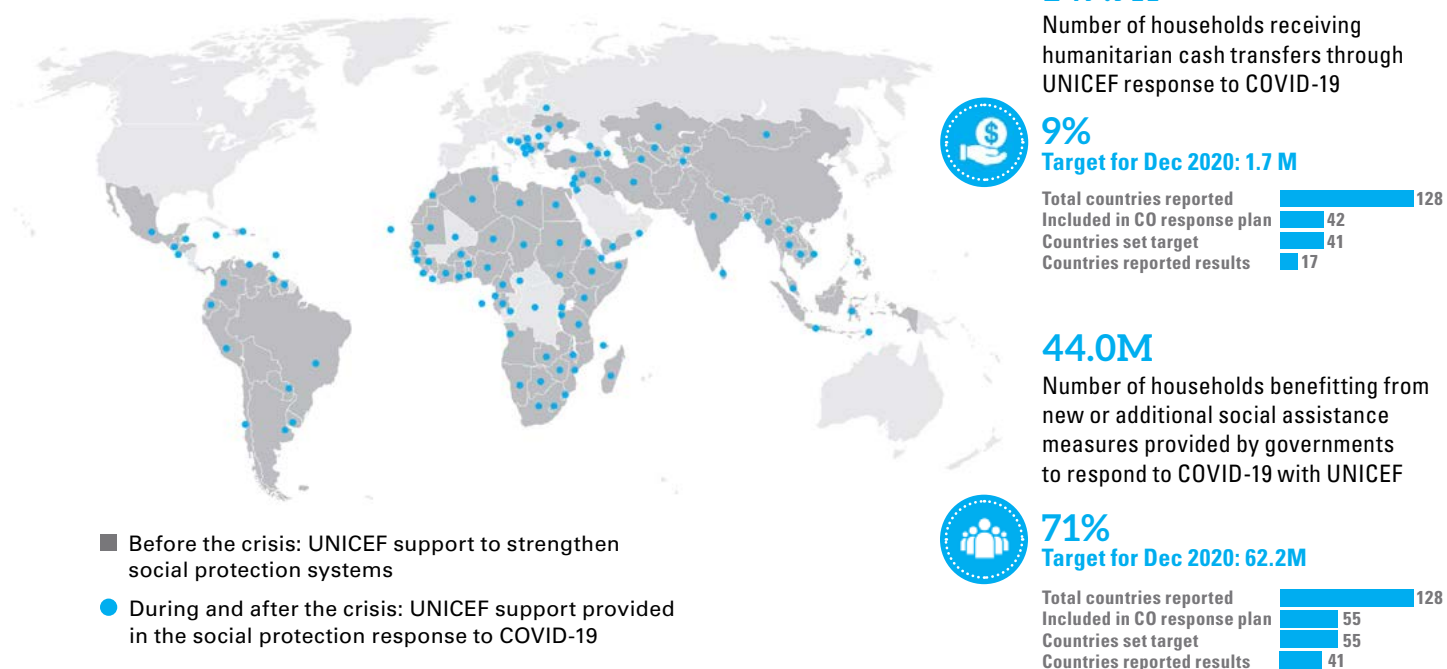
In some contexts, UNICEF is providing technical support and conducting advocacy; and in others, UNICEF is providing direct funding to governments to enable scale-up. However, the organization has struggled to integrate social protection into Humanitarian Action for Children appeals. This reflects the need for UNICEF’s humanitarian appeal process to adjust to enable stronger linkages between humanitarian and development programming, look beyond immediate responses and, in general, cover a broader scope.

UNICEF is increasingly looking at the role of social protection in context of migration and forced displacement. The cash transfer programmes in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, among others, are designed and implemented in ways that align with or influence the social protection system in these countries.

4.5 Peacebuilding/social cohesion

This section looks at the extent to which peacebuilding objectives are reflected in UNICEF’s analysis and planning processes. There has been a large degree of uncertainty and a lack of consensus about UNICEF’s role, if any, in relation to peacebuilding. Section 2 notes the light treatment of peacebuilding and social cohesion in the Procedure and its language. It is clear that in general, peacebuilding and conflict-sensitive programming are considered weak links in UNICEF’s planning processes and programming, and under-prioritized in UNICEF’s human resource management. Yet, despite this, there are numerous positive examples of this work at the country level, as well as signs of strengthened policies and guidance and support to these offices.

Figure 7: UNICEF’s support for social protection systems



Source: United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNICEF Global COVID-19 Situation Report No. 11.’, UNICEF, 2020. United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNICEF’s Social Protection Response to COVID-19’, UNICEF, 2020.

Results by August 2020. Results are for countries that have reported on specific indicators.

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

In Ethiopia, interviewees noted, “There’s not enough guidance on peacebuilding, how this is done proactively through programming”. Interviewees also expressed confusion, noting that the peacebuilding element seemed to have “dropped off the procedure, apart from the call for conflict analysis”. Similarly, UNICEF Ethiopia’s core documents reflected limited reference to peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity. More than one interviewee referred to peacebuilding as a weak area in LHD, with one noting, “In terms of the peacebuilding side of the nexus, we are less on top of it”. Moreover, respondents indicated that more than guidance, the country office needs skilled people with the expertise to operationalize and advance the peacebuilding agenda.

In Ethiopia, as in many countries, the term ‘peacebuilding’ must be avoided in discussions with government partners due to extreme sensitivity around political conflict and insecurity. Instead, UNICEF advocates for advancing “social cohesion through a child-focused lens”. For example, UNICEF Ethiopia brought together conflicting Oromo and Somali ethnic groups to cooperate on the implementation of the cholera response. While this represents an uncontroversial, even covert opportunity to advance social cohesion through other programme activities, it also reflects a lack of strategic coherence and direct accountability for results in regard to social cohesion activities.

In Indonesia, which also has a history of conflict and ethnic and communal tensions, conflict-related issues are less prominent in UNICEF planning documents and UNICEF programmes don’t have explicit peacebuilding objectives. As in the case of Ethiopia, this is partly due to difficulty raising conflict-related issues with the Government, which is sensitive to international engagement on conflict risks.

Interviewees – particularly in West Papua, where conflict has been recent – felt that UNICEF was well placed to analyse and mitigate tensions through its field office presence and strong understanding of the local context. Respondents also noted that UNICEF’s strong, long-standing and trusting relationship with the Government has facilitated work on sensitive issues and in sensitive areas. In Papua, UNICEF’s offices are located on government premises and all of its activities require government permission – both of which are seen as enabling factors. UNICEF in Papua also works closely with faith and other civil society leaders, which has helped maintain perceptions of neutrality. Respondents also felt UNICEF had the capacity to convene diverse groups around common interest partnerships.

In other countries, interviewees noted that their teams lacked the expertise to conduct and/or participate in conflict analysis, and that the regional office had not provided this support. More positive experiences were highlighted in contexts where peacebuilding and/or social cohesion were United Nations-wide priorities and joint strategies were in place. Under these circumstances, it was relatively straightforward for UNICEF to identify its comparative advantage and define a clear role. This resonated with interviews conducted at headquarters, which noted that conflict analysis and related strategies were typically conducted in a joint effort: “We are not producers of conflict analysis but users. We don’t want to duplicate, so we use UNCT [United Nations Country Team] analysis, but we know they tend to deprioritize things like the role of youth and impacts on children, so we need to better articulate and emphasize these issues.”

Several interviewees noted that education programming can serve as an entry point. In interviews across West Africa, a programme

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

in Guinea on peace education was brought up as a model. However, respondents also flagged the lack of consistent reference to peacebuilding and social cohesion in programmes and that when programmes did have elements of peacebuilding, these elements were poorly clarified and tracked.

In several countries, interviewees said that they worked through direct channels with the government, undertaking important advocacy that went unacknowledged in public strategy and programming documents. They also noted a lack of incentives for country offices to include such work in programmes and appeals. On the one hand, donors preferred programming with clear, tangible results; on the other hand, there was no clear stance from management on UNICEF's role.

Recent evaluations also point to the limitations of UNICEF's approach to peacebuilding. According to the Humanitarian Review, "UNICEF has not yet invested significantly in the third aspect of the triple nexus, peace and security", and "peacebuilding elements and conflict dynamics need to have a stronger presence in UNICEF's LHD programming". The Global Evaluation of UNICEF WASH Programming in Protracted Crises notes that "there were only isolated examples of WASH staff systematically undertaking (and updating) risk or conflict sensitivity assessments or adapting programming".

The Evaluation of UNICEF Contribution to Education in Humanitarian Situations found positive examples from the field, which are seen as exceptions in the "...absence of a strong corporate focus on peacebuilding". The evaluation also found that peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity were increasing built into corporate documents including the 'Peacebuilding and Conflict Sensitivity in UNICEF' technical note (2012), the 'Child-Friendly Schooling for Peacebuilding' study (2014) and the 'Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding' programming guide (2016).⁹¹ It also notes that peacebuilding has been integrated into the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming alongside other risks, citing an underlying argument that education plays a critical role in conflict contexts.⁹² The evaluation lists a number of positive examples from Liberia, Nepal, Somalia and South Sudan.

4.6 Overarching findings

1. **The LHD procedure commits UNICEF to strengthening its work in the areas of risk-informed programming, emergency preparedness, accountability to affected populations, gender and disability responsiveness, linking humanitarian cash and social protection and peacebuilding and social cohesion.** Across these commitments, while progress is being made and strong guidance has been developed, this is not consistently translating into effective action in crisis-affected contexts.

⁹¹ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding in UNICEF: Technical note', UNICEF, June 2012; United Nations Children's Fund, 'Child-Friendly Schooling for Peacebuilding', UNICEF, 2014; United Nations Children's Fund, 'Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding: Programming guide', UNICEF, November 2016.

⁹² The UNICEF guidance proposes entry points at both the policy and state levels, alongside community-level entry points. Key actions include equity and non-discrimination, community consultation, adaptation of policies, curricula and teaching methods and student-led initiatives.

4. PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

2. **The organization's commitments to risk-informed programming and preparedness are clear in policies, guidance and rollout.** Country offices receive strong support in these areas from regional offices and headquarters; and there is clear evidence that the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming is being used in CPDs and annual reviews. Several country offices noted a lack of analytical capacity for conflict risk and a somewhat static approach to risk analysis that have posed challenges in programming.
3. **AAP is still not systematically embedded in UNICEF's planning and programming in humanitarian action.** UNICEF needs to establish basic programmes that reflect its policy commitments in this area. A next step will be to link humanitarian approaches to accountability with development approaches to accountability and participation, in line with existing guidance.
4. **UNICEF has clear commitments and strong policies and guidance on gender, disability and inclusion and staff recognize the importance of gender and disability responsiveness.** While inclusion and engagement of children and youth is central to UNICEF's approach, policy commitments on gender and disabilities have not yet translated into consistent practice, including in LHD programming. There is little evidence that UNICEF is linking humanitarian and development approaches to gender and disability within its country programming.
5. **UNICEF has made strong policy commitments to supporting shock-responsive social protection, developed an effective body of guidance in this area and is in a strong position to work effectively with governments and development partners on this agenda.** This has the potential to be an important area for advancing LHD programming and nexus approaches, including in the context of COVID-19.
6. **There is continuing uncertainty among UNICEF staff on the organization's peacebuilding role.** Country offices generally lack skills and capacities for conflict analysis, conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding. While there are some examples of strong conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding approaches in country offices and projects, these are not yet feeding through into a more systematic and consistent approach to peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity across the organization. UNICEF could better embed conflict sensitivity in its approaches to risk-informed programming and preparedness in development contexts where there is a history or high risk of conflict.
7. **There is a risk that UNICEF is obfuscating dilemmas around its role in relation to peacebuilding by not acknowledging that they exist or not having explicit strategic approaches for tackling it.** By not explicitly highlighting its approach to peacebuilding in existing LHD policy, UNICEF risks failing to see or analyse conflict risks properly and being complicit in government denials or human rights abuses in places affected by conflict.

5 INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0392106/

In three parts, this section considers the intersection of nexus approaches with UNICEF's planning, monitoring and reporting cycles at all levels of the organization, and the internal systems and structures that support it. It also considers how UNICEF's internal financial systems support LHD, and the extent to which UNICEF is galvanizing partners to mobilize resources and utilize financing in a way that supports LHD. The sub-questions include:

Section 5.1

- Is delivery on nexus-related commitments being effectively measured, monitored and evaluated?
- Are systems for monitoring, evaluating, learning, reporting and managing information adequate and effective?
- Is UNICEF investing in learning and evidence that is starting to examine the impact of LHD programming?
- To what extent are country offices currently monitoring progress on LHD?
- Is there adequate development and humanitarian funding available for crisis-affected areas; does development funding have the appropriate level of flexibility (crisis modifiers)?
- Is there adequate multi-year humanitarian funding and funding for preparedness/ anticipatory action?
- Does the quality and quantity of funding available to UNICEF country offices support or hinder the organizations commitments to linking humanitarian and development programming (including the delivery of appropriate financing to partners)?

Section 5.2

- Is UNICEF successfully presenting its nexus programming to donors; is it leveraging the quantity and quality of funding required to facilitate coherent programming for children in the nexus?

Section 5.3

- Does UNICEF have adequate support for LHD in its staffing structures?

● SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FINDINGS

The siloed nature of UNICEF's reporting, financing and staffing approaches as they relate to either humanitarian or development activities, has challenged the organization's ability to link and foster coherence between related mechanisms and areas of work. In its reporting and financial systems, while staff have created workarounds for framing activities as supporting both humanitarian and development outputs, separate humanitarian and development indicators and markers are difficult to combine. Donor funding is also more often separated into these categories than fluid across both, which challenges resource mobilization for nexus-related activities.

The evaluation also found that UNICEF needs to strengthen the skills, capacities and mindsets of its staff to more effectively meet its LHD commitments and programme effectively across the nexus. That includes both strengthening staff capacities in key nexus-related areas such as peacebuilding, conflict sensitivity, AAP, gender and disabilities, and also cultivating staff with mixed mindsets – who can pivot between development and humanitarian approaches, including to support advocacy and resource mobilization.



5.1 Planning, monitoring and reporting

UNICEF's reporting mechanisms are designed to support the organization's programming goals. These goals are set forth in CPDs and office management plans and their contribution to implementation of the Strategic Plan is measured and quantified via the UNICEF results-based management system. Within the results-based management system, nexus approaches are tagged using the humanitarian marker – an approach that is inadequate for tracking nexus-related spending.

Currently, all country offices report their programming results through the online Results Assessment Module (RAM). Humanitarian programming funded through Humanitarian Action for Children appeal is reflected in biannual situation reports (often referred to as the humanitarian performance monitoring system).⁹³ In the immediate stages of an emergency response, a new set of indicators (usually short-term and output-oriented) is added to the humanitarian performance monitoring system, facilitating higher frequency reporting in situation reports than is possible in RAM.⁹⁴

This system – of having two separate channels for reporting results – is an inefficient by-product of the internal organizational silos reflected in the coding system. Under

every Goal Area in the Strategic Plan, there are indicators marked 'global', which are applicable to both humanitarian and development programmes; and there are indicators that are specific to humanitarian programming. Since 2014, every activity has required a humanitarian tag rating to communicate the proportion of activity (measured in cost) that is expected to contribute towards results defined as humanitarian.⁹⁵ This workaround allows an activity to be framed as supporting both humanitarian and development outputs.

Interviewees reported that it is challenging to add emergency results in VISION and then on the RAM system.⁹⁶ Country office staff typically focus on delivering results against their annual work plan targets, as defined in RAM. Interviewees noted that emergency programme results were often perceived by country office staff as risky to report in RAM for two reasons. First, these programmes often involve working with new partners in unstable environments and are potentially disruptive to positive 'scorecards' on their own performance (e.g., their rates of programme spending). Second, emergency programmes involve higher levels of scrutiny (i.e., from emergency donors and EMOPS) and require higher frequency reporting. Respondents also noted that rapid reporting on emergency programmes in RAM is not incentivized in staff performance frameworks.

⁹³ At the time of writing, a new, simplified RAM system that incorporates humanitarian reporting was said to be coming online.

⁹⁴ EMOPS provides a standard indicator set that maps onto the CCCs. Ultimately, results against indicators selected in the humanitarian programme management system are aggregated upward to the CCCs and those in RAM are aggregated upward to allow for reporting against the Strategic Plan.

⁹⁵ The humanitarian tag is a point scale in which a rating is given against a four-point scale. Where 'all' (100 per cent) of resources are expected to contribute to humanitarian results, a rating of '3' is applied. Where more than 50 per cent of resources are expected to contribute to humanitarian response results then a tag/rating of '2' is applied. A rating of '1' is applied for up to 50 per cent of resources and '0' for no resources.

⁹⁶ RAM copies the results structure entered into VISION and country offices are expected to add indicators, annual targets and geo-locations. This information is usually at the output level as activities (where the humanitarian tag resides) are not included in RAM.

5. INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

It is also widely understood that the indicators typically applied in humanitarian and development programming are challenging to combine. Development indicators are typically framed in terms of coverage (i.e., outcome level), whereas humanitarian indicators typically refer to outputs. Even though RAM system has no restrictions on indicator type, creating coherent indicator sets in the RAM was perceived as challenging. In addition, limited understanding of results-based management (i.e., principles and results and indicator hierarchies) and how coverage/output indicators ultimately feed into higher level outcome indicators creates confusion.

Interviewees from headquarters noted that an external push to be accountable for humanitarian funding streams, and the corresponding need for frequent updates (“the pressure of money”), had shaped these systems over time. Reporting on spreadsheets outside of RAM system for longer than is strictly necessary is seen as a means of retaining agility in humanitarian reporting. This is also driven by the perception that humanitarian results are temporary and need not be “institutionalized”. This sentiment is reinforced by emergency standard operating procedures, which are interpreted as encouraging offices to bypass corporate planning and reporting systems and processes.

The amount of care taken with the initial selection and coding of outputs in VISION and their transfer to RAM is critical to determining the quality of the results produced by the system. The codes associated with each output determine the menu of standard indicators presented as choices in RAM. A number of interviewees noted that in the initial entry of emergency programmes into RAM, there have been problems with both the quality

and consistency of the codes selected. In addition, use of the humanitarian marker was perceived to be inconsistent. Interviewees cited confusion on what constitutes ‘humanitarian’ when coding, “is it linked to the funding source, or is it about the nature of the situation, or about the type of intervention?”

Starting with separate planning processes challenges the subsequent integration of results. Several interviewees reported that planning for development and emergency work was done separately. Country office planners are responsible for operationalizing the CPD and the Humanitarian Action for Children appeal. While some separation of these processes is inevitable given the longer timeframe of the CPD, a complete absence of interoperability between these two frameworks is problematic, and runs directly counter to the goals of LHD. One emergency focal point noted, “I am working on monitoring HACs [Humanitarian Action for Children appeals] in complete isolation from the team that plans regular programming”.

In terms of reporting LHD-specific progress, Annex C to the LHD Procedure lists a selection of 24 RAM indicators “that can be used to review the quality of linkages of humanitarian and development programming”. The decision to use a set of existing indicators was made deliberately, largely because drawing on results that are already being collected via RAM would be less burdensome for country offices. However, the links between the proposed indicators and the Procedure are not always clear.

None of the indicators or guidance on how to apply the humanitarian tag make direct reference to LHD. This is logical given that LHD approaches are not programme goals in and of themselves. However, this reinforces the notion

that the Procedure asks for nothing other than existing commitments. The use of these indicators and the humanitarian marker are also relatively ineffective proxies.

This was reflected across the interviews and documents reviewed. The Global Evaluation of UNICEF WASH Programming in Protracted Crises notes that UNICEF “does not have the institutional culture to analyse and report on activities and barriers to transcending silos to activate an LHD approach”. The South Asia Nexus Framework proposes articulating a set of collective, measurable outcomes across the humanitarian and development spheres, “aligned with government, and explicitly discuss[ing] the short-, medium- and long-term vision for strengthening government systems to prepare, reduce vulnerability, respond and deliver”.⁹⁷ The Humanitarian Review suggests the possibility of “a single humanitarian and development results framework with a joint monitoring plan (or even a joint workplan)” and that the developing of such a planning framework would “significantly assist COs [country offices] in planning and monitoring LHD programming more effectively”. Ultimately the Humanitarian Review recommends that UNICEF should develop a joint results framework for humanitarian response plan/Humanitarian Action for Children and CPD results in all relevant countries.

In Indonesia, planning documents related to the new CPD cycle show evidence that UNICEF is investing in learning and evidence that, going forward, will include LHD dimensions. The new programme strategy notes include

LHD outputs related to nexus commitments across each of the six sector outcomes and the outcome on programme effectiveness, with plans to report annually on output indicators with targets during the annual work planning process. If carried out as planned, this should enable effective monitoring of nexus-related commitments. The new programme strategy is informed by a 2019 situation analysis of children and adolescents; a 2019 strategic moment of reflection; a 2019 multi-hazard risk analysis; and reviews and evaluations of gender, child survival and development, partnership strategies, WASH and field presence.

In Ethiopia, UNICEF had not yet established metrics to monitor and evaluate specific progress on the LHD-explicit commitments in the new programme cycle. However, the Top 10 Review was designed in part to set a baseline and design a methodology for measuring progress going forward.

Given the relative newness of the LHD Procedure it was too early to expect strong evidence that nexus-related commitments are being systematically measured, monitored and evaluated at the global and country levels. There has been substantive previous learning on LHD issues in UNICEF that can be built upon, notably the 2016 study on linking humanitarian and development programming,⁹⁸ a series of recent evaluations and the Humanitarian Review. This evaluation forms part of that process of learning. However, for the monitoring of nexus commitments to be more effective, the issues highlighted above need to be resolved.

⁹⁷ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘The Humanitarian/Development Nexus: A Framework for UNICEF’s South Asian Region’, (draft), February 2020.

⁹⁸ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNICEF Study on Linking Development and Humanitarian Programming’, UNICEF, 2016.

5.2 Financing and LHD

Financial reporting on UNICEF's integrated budget is handled through a separate yet integrated online system, referred to as VISION. In VISION, each result in the RAM system is given a rating against the humanitarian tag (described below) and against the COVID-19 and disability tags, which allow spending to be tracked and disaggregated. VISION is a crucial component of the system: Country offices are required to request approval for expenditure against the codes in this system (i.e., all activities must be present in VISION before any spending takes place). This includes emergency programming. In the early stages of emergencies, while reporting is only done through situation reports, a projection of the possible response, including funding lines that can be reallocated internally, must be set up in VISION. Interviewees from headquarters and the field reported that the ultimate integration from VISION to RAM was challenging.

UNICEF's financial tracking differentiates emergency funding (other resources-emergency) from regular resources and other regular resources funds, which can also be used for humanitarian activities. To more accurately reflect the composition of country funding portfolios that refer to results defined as 'development' and 'humanitarian', it breaks down funding totals according to the country office's application of the humanitarian tag. The Procedure, which instructs staff on the use of the marker, makes no reference to LHD or the nexus. Rather, it states, "The humanitarian marker serves to rate the proportion of resources planned to be allocated for a given output that will contribute to delivering humanitarian results in line the Core Commitments for Children (CCCs) in humanitarian action and guidance on Defining the Scope of

UNICEF Humanitarian Action. This allows outputs to be framed anticipating that some results may be achieved as part of humanitarian response while others may be achieved as part of development programming."

There is no direct correlation, therefore, to the Procedure or to any nexus-related definition. It is unclear, for example, whether emergency preparedness activities undertaken with development funding would consistently receive a marker other than zero. Nor is it clear that humanitarian action undertaken with resources from a humanitarian donor but clearly designed to strengthen community resilience or government health structures (especially in a geographical area disconnected from ongoing support to health systems) would consistently receive a marker other than '3' (or principal). Interviewees noted that, where donors designated funding specifically for resilience approaches, there was a lack of clarity as to how to tag this in VISION. Overall, it is clear that this financial reporting system is designed to interpret and support a binary system (i.e., one in which funding is either humanitarian or development). Where there is a grey area and results can be seen as applying to both humanitarian and development results, the aim of the system is not to interpret whether UNICEF is making progress towards LHD, but rather what proportion of results can be allocated to each binary tag.

Overall, and in keeping with these observations, interviewees did not believe that UNICEF's financial systems lend themselves to supporting humanitarian and development linkages. One country office interviewee explained the issue through the lens of nutrition. They noted that treatment for the management of severe acute malnutrition had typically been treated as a humanitarian intervention, but that these results

5. INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

now need to be placed within the country office’s development approach because they are explicitly part of a system strengthening approach: “Splitting reporting... between humanitarian SAM [severe acute malnutrition] treatment results and development SAM treatment results doesn’t really make sense – but our systems and funding stipulate that it needs to be done”. Another noted, “it gives us a clearer statement of what we do with emergency funding, the division is reinforced, but with what real gain?” Another said that when donors frame their resources as “resilience-building”, and this is not a demarcation in the system, “We still have the parameters of these two distinct brackets in what we are allowed to spend on and how we report”. A small number disagreed however, and stated that, given experience, systems were adaptable.

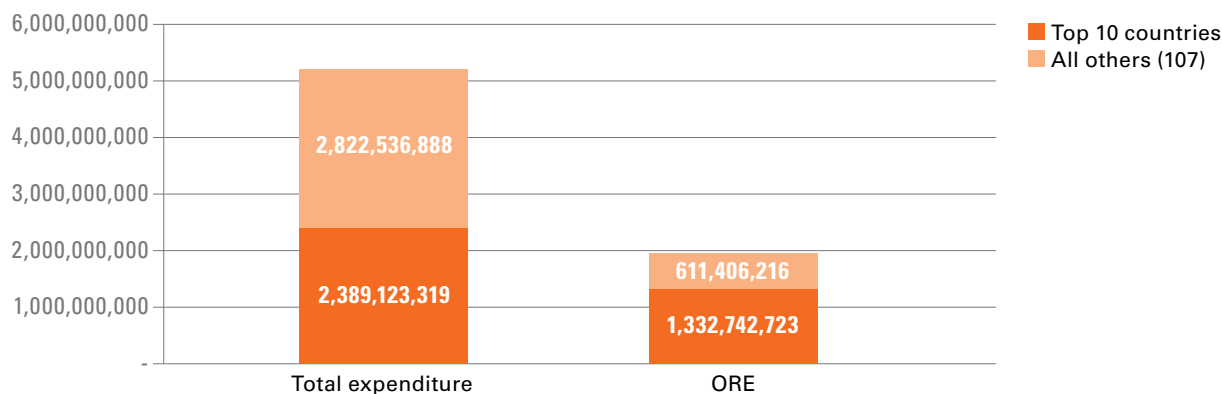
The evaluation team examined the composition of programme expenditure data and queried funding issues in interviews and in the

survey of UNICEF staff. Noting that the humanitarian marker is a somewhat unsatisfactory proxy, the funding analysis looks at expenditures in all UNICEF countries in 2018 and 2019. Expenditure is broken down using the humanitarian marker to calculate each country’s total humanitarian spending.

The financial analysis yielded the following findings:

1. **Resources are concentrated in countries with large-scale humanitarian responses.** UNICEF funding is concentrated in a relatively small number of countries experiencing conflict-driven humanitarian crises. Out of the 117 countries where UNICEF has programmes, the top 10 emergency countries accounted for 69 per cent of other resources-emergency expenditure and nearly half (46 per cent) of total country-based expenditure.⁹⁹

Figure 8: Country expenditure 2019 (US\$)



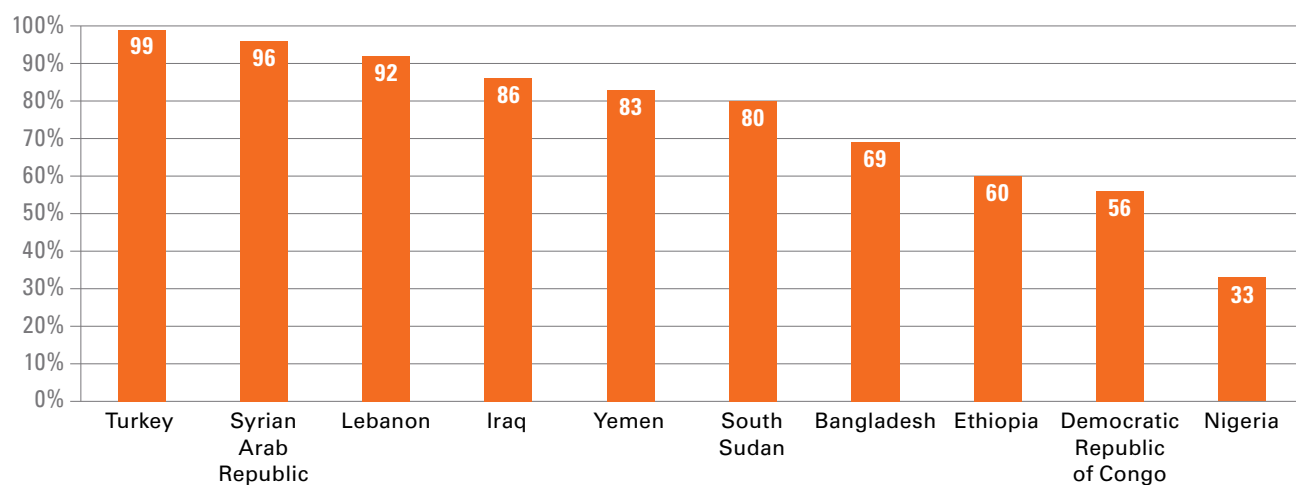
⁹⁹ It is important to note the effect of donor earmarking on these figures.

2. **The majority of resources in countries with large humanitarian programmes are rated as 'principal'.** Interviewees emphasized that a relatively small amount of UNICEF's resources is currently made available for programming in the nexus. Apart from Bangladesh, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Nigeria, which have large ongoing development programmes, more than three quarters of total spending is humanitarian in the top 10 humanitarian countries. For Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey, humanitarian spending is over 90 per cent.

While there are limits to what can be inferred from the use of the humanitarian tag given the expenditure composition, it would appear that UNICEF has been unsuccessful in its stated objective of mobilizing more LHD-friendly flexible funds from donors for LHD programming.

Because most donor funding that UNICEF receives is siloed in either development or emergency channels, funding LHD requires either adding crisis modifiers to development funding or including rehabilitation/resilience-oriented activities under humanitarian funding. As noted in section 2, it is important to consider context and the relationship between the principal donors and the host government. In countries such as Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, where traditional humanitarian donor governments will not engage in development or system strengthening frameworks with incumbent regimes, humanitarian instruments will likely remain the preferred modality. Countries such as Afghanistan, however, are distinctly different. Where donor governments are actively engaged in state-building, system strengthening is actively encouraged, whether or not funding flows directly through the government. This fact was widely recognized by interviewees.

Figure 9: Percentage of expenditure that is humanitarian in top 10 countries



5. INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

In addition, there is a long-standing funding dilemma in large-scale humanitarian responses with a limited pool of financial resources. The demands of multiple acute areas of need mean that constantly changing priorities compete with durable solutions that require longer timeframes. Although instances of multi-year funding have increased, in the top 10 humanitarian responses, most international contributions are 12-month project-based grants. Because humanitarian funding is the most inflexible in terms of activities and timeframes, countries with the highest percentages of humanitarian spending have the least amount of leeway. These are also the countries where development actors are less active and UNICEF is unable to access funding from the World Bank or other international financial institutions.

In crisis contexts, UNICEF country offices are unable to offset the funding restrictions imposed by donors by receiving a greater

proportion of non-earmarked funding in allocations from headquarters, despite their disproportionate contribution to overall regular resources via overheads on their humanitarian grants. While the top 10 humanitarian countries accounted for 69 per cent of the total amount of other resources-emergency funding that was mobilized, their share of regular resources was only US\$229 million, or 22 per cent of the organization’s total regular resources.

In response to the survey question about the biggest obstacles to LHD, in every country except one, respondents selected “Shortage of funding for nexus activities, since urgent needs must be prioritized”. The second most common answer was “Separate funding streams for humanitarian and development”. In Turkey, the one exception, these two answers were reversed.

Figure 10: Biggest obstacles to LHD - survey responses



5. INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

Ethiopia is typical of those countries in which the demands of frequent localized emergencies compete with the need for longer-term, resilience-oriented programming with longer funding timeframes. Although examples of multi-year funding have increased, most international contributions to Ethiopia are provided in a short-term humanitarian timeframe.

According to UNICEF interviewees, none of UNICEF Ethiopia's funding was multi-year at the time of the interview, and most of UNICEF Ethiopia's funding entails the cumbersome grant management and compliance processes common of emergency funding, including the frequent need to apply for no-cost extensions.

UNICEF staff spoke of two advocacy targets to support the mobilization of sufficient resources for LHD: donors and UNICEF headquarters. Securing multi-year programme funding remains a challenge, even as some donors, notably the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, begin to lengthen the timeframes of some longer-term resilience, preparedness and other development-oriented programme funding. UNICEF Ethiopia has shared research with donors on the returns on investments in preparedness, but the donor response has so far been disappointing.

In interviews, UNICEF Ethiopia staff highlighted that not enough funding for LHD is being allocated based on context. One interviewee spoke of the need for "UNICEF to give more resources to preparedness," and suggested that the Emergency Preparedness Platform should be used as a global system for prioritizing high-risk areas and linking these to fundraising and allocation decisions. Writing in a comment, a survey respondent noted that an opportunity could be "using multi-donor and multi-year development

programme such as OWNPN [One WASH National Program] to respond to emergencies and to ensure conflict-sensitive programmes".

In Indonesia, staff noted the need for more multi-year humanitarian funding, as well as development funding for nexus approaches. Continued funding was needed for capacity strengthening with sub-national government partners. There was a range of views on financing for recent emergency responses. Some saw humanitarian funding for the 2018 Sulawesi and Lombok crises as too short-term. UNICEF managed to extend six-month funding for over a year, but without longer-term funding it was difficult to build strong humanitarian-development linkages. In the WASH sector, however, innovative financing was mobilized for the Lombok response. In one example, UNICEF supported the local government to access Islamic financing for water system rehabilitation. In general, however, lack of funding constrained recovery and transition programming. One interviewee noted, "From my experience the only thing guiding us was the availability of funding. During relief work there was lots of funding. In the transition to the regular programme, funding dwindled so various sections just had to stop and we were back to the level of programme prior to the earthquake". Interviewees did feel that there was some flexibility when it came to revising development programmes and partnerships to respond to crises, as was the case in the COVID-19 response. UNICEF has modified some of its ongoing contracts to channel interventions through existing programmes.

The financial reporting mechanisms for emergency funding were seen as more relevant to low-income and complex emergency countries, and not well adapted for Indonesia, a middle-income country where

5. INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

UNICEF is more focused on advocacy, policy influencing and building national capacities, and less focused on supply and distribution.

Across country offices, interviewees stressed that the short duration and lack of flexibility of humanitarian funds, and the lack of dedicated funds for nexus approaches, are significant challenges for LHD. The Top 10 Review highlighted frustration about the lack of longer-term funding sources. Some staff from the top 10 humanitarian contexts described the large amounts of humanitarian funding as both an opportunity and a curse. An opportunity because, in the words of one interviewee, “With a surge of funding you can accomplish a lot, and if you design your programmes with [a] long-term view, it can help development”. Seizing this opportunity, however, required “gymnastics”. Many interviewees indicated that the lack of multi-year funding and the separation of funding streams undermined the continuity of programming. One stated that often, “the technical teams in donors know exactly what we need, but they can’t make a difference”.

Country offices faced several issues. Countries that raise huge amounts of other resources-emergency funding find themselves with limited flexible resources to counterbalance those funds. Some staff members feel that this imbalance should be addressed with headquarters as well as with donors. The principal issue with other resources-emergency funding was not the absolute amount but the flexibility and predictability: “We may start the year without funding and receive much funding for different projects in the middle of the year with a short deadline for utilization, obliging us to redo our financial architecture. Sometimes the processes take time, and it is very challenging”.

Some country offices cited partial success, having presented the benefits of long-term programming to donors. One interviewee stated that they had simplified messages, focusing on a three-pillar approach: government ownership and systems strengthening for sustainability (first pillar); flexible emergency response (second pillar); and social cohesion and peacebuilding processes (third pillar), using UNICEF’s range of programming tools. Another cited difficulty explaining the nexus to donors and the possible gains in effectiveness and efficiency. The need for strong and sustained advocacy to donors was also cited. “UNICEF has to show... examples of how the LHD-nexus is working successfully”.

Some country office and headquarters staff understood that “workarounds” were possible. One noted, “I do not see a lot of pushback from the donors against the nexus. I never had a problem using money for one to the other. You tell them [donors] your programme needs and they figure out how to fund it”. Another noted: “Short duration of funding can become an obstacle to LHD but hasn’t been a real problem here... the design phase of programming is the most important for LHD.” In this view, strong leadership and excellent relationships with donors at the country level could resolve the issue. Large programmes requiring significant investments in more expensive sectors were still seen as problematic in the absence of larger funds.

Many of these challenges mirror wider issues, and systemic financing challenges have proven to be particularly intransigent. Limited humanitarian resources will always be targeted to the most acute, life-saving needs. To date, advocacy for multi-year funding and preparedness has not resulted in wholesale change. The need to address acute needs through nexus

approaches that contribute to system building using constrained budget lines will continue. Core resources will always be limited, and different methods of distribution may be able to address imbalances to a limited extent.

5.3 Human resources, supply and LHD

Effective programming that links humanitarian and development approaches and meets the commitments that UNICEF has made in the Procedure implies the need to strengthen the skills, capacities and mindsets of UNICEF staff in roles supporting the nexus.

Interviewees expressed that UNICEF needs staff with a mix of humanitarian, development and peace skills, particularly at the senior management level in country offices. They often noted the need for more “mixed mindsets”. This means people able to pivot between development and humanitarian approaches with expertise that spans not only the different types of programming but also advocacy and resource mobilization.

This issue was also highlighted in recent evaluations and reviews. The Humanitarian Review emphasized the need to invest in quality leadership to make UNICEF’s humanitarian responses more predictable, effective and high-quality; and the need to cultivate country office leadership with a mixture of humanitarian and development skills. It further noted that incorporating “humanitarian action needs in its approach to HR [human resources] would enable a more balanced approach to UNICEF’s dual mandate”. The Review of the UNICEF L2 Response in Venezuela also noted

the importance of having senior managers with humanitarian experience and prioritizing humanitarian experience in recruitment overall.

In addition, UNICEF country offices were consistently seen by interviewees as lacking certain skills, notably capacities in conflict analysis, design and the implementation of conflict-sensitive programming and tools to navigate a principled role for UNICEF in relation to peacebuilding. Capacity is also needed to undertake a broader set of context and risk analyses and build networks for political and socio-economic analyses, including as part of the broader United Nations reform agenda.

Skills and capacities to take forward nexus-related commitments to AAP, gender and disability were also found to be lacking. It appears that UNICEF lacks a clear strategy or approach for developing and rolling out the capacities needed to implement the Procedure, particularly given the importance of investing in cross-cutting skills and capacities for conflict sensitivity, AAP, gender and disability. There is a clear need to review training, capacity strengthening, mentoring, coaching and other forms of skills development for staff and partners to understand capacity gaps in regard to nexus commitments.

Nigeria provides an instructive example. Before the current conflict-driven crisis in the north-east unfolded, UNICEF Nigeria was entrenched in development-oriented modes of operating. Like most agencies in Nigeria, UNICEF was slow to shift to emergency response at the onset of the crisis in 2016. As this and other examples illustrate, a key to the LHD mindset is for staff to not only ask, “how can we maintain development programming in the midst of a humanitarian

response?” but also, “how can we use the humanitarian response to lay the groundwork for future development progress?”

In 2017, the UNICEF Supply Division developed a humanitarian continuum strategy on how the division approaches LHD challenges. One area of focus was supporting more resilient and robust supply chains. The Supply Division is also aiming to conduct more cohesive work with governments to strengthen national systems and local procurement.

Beginning in 2015, the Supply Division has also held intensive, week-long biannual trainings with country and regional office staff. Participants are supported to develop an emergency supply and logistics preparedness plan that feeds into the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming and the Emergency Preparedness Platform and that focuses on local procurement and systems. This has enabled more focused work with country offices and has enhanced supply preparedness. To strengthen accountability to local populations, the Supply Division is establishing systems for generating feedback on products and goods and developing an application that will be used for communication and feedback.

There is room for improving the synergies between the Supply Division and CPD planning processes by breaking down the vertical divides within UNICEF and getting the Supply Division more involved in risk-informed country office development planning processes. That would help UNICEF pivot to emergency response. Currently, many country offices lack capacity in the area of supply. This is particularly the case in development contexts where staff are focused on upstream policy influence.

5.4 Overarching findings

1. **Challenges reporting on, financing and staffing nexus approaches are rooted in the bifurcated nature of humanitarian and development work, which UNICEF has internalized in its structures.** The organization’s reporting and financing systems—and to some extent staff skillsets and mind sets—have been tailored and trained to deal with both sides of the binary, rather than foster connectivity and coherence between them.
2. **A lack of funding for linking activities and nexus approaches has been a significant (often the most significant) constraint to undertaking this work.** At the country level, there have been calls to conduct more concerted advocacy with donors; to make a more fundamental shift towards alternative revenue streams that are moving into this space; and to make more regular resources available for this purpose.
3. **As LHD has not been placed at a high level of strategic priority within UNICEF, there has been a lack of leadership from senior management on pursuing LHD, and an overall inertia when it comes to reforming systems and structures to advance this agenda.** To a large extent, reporting processes continue to reflect the separate funding realities of humanitarian and development programmes, which still dominate international aid. LHD is a priority, but it is one of many priorities that compete in a system where resources and political capital are limited. The inefficiencies inherent in separate planning and reporting systems and the necessary/constant workarounds are clear across the organization.

6

COVID-19 AND THE NEXUS



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0414841/Naftalin

This section examines how UNICEF has taken forward its commitments to LHD programming in its global response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Shortly after the onset of the pandemic, changes were made to the evaluation objectives, noting that a number of themes that were already at the core of the evaluation appeared to have particular relevance to the COVID-19 response. In particular, the evaluation team considered several areas at the intersection of the COVID-19 response and the original research framework. This evaluation has neither the scope nor the remit to evaluate UNICEF's overall COVID-19 response. Rather, the aim of this part of the evaluation was to consider: in real time, the ways in which UNICEF has sought to link humanitarian and development approaches and capacities in its response to COVID-19; how UNICEF's approach to the nexus can be made more relevant to respond to COVID-19.

In interviews, case studies and the document review, the evaluation team looked for evidence of how LHD commitments to AAP, localization, gender responsiveness, preparedness and risk-informed programming were being taken forward in the COVID-19 response. This section draws heavily on the experiences of the Ethiopia and Indonesia country offices. It also includes responses to COVID-19-related questions in regional and country level interviews. Interviews took place relatively early in the COVID-19 response as events and activities were unfolding (and continue to do so) during the research period.

Section 6.1

- How have nexus issues been addressed in the overall COVID-19 response architecture?

Section 6.2

- How has UNICEF incorporated LHD issues into its own strategy, guidance and planning for COVID-19?

Section 6.3

- How have UNICEF country offices sought to link humanitarian and development approaches in evolving responses to COVID-19?

Section 6.4

- What has been UNICEF's approach to partnerships and supporting local and national actors in its COVID-19 response?

Section 6.5

- How have LHD challenges been tackled in UNICEF's internal systems?



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0367292/Diarassouba

The evaluation examined the following specific areas:

- **Partnership/support to government-led responses:** The evaluation considered the extent to which UNICEF has supported state-led responses; adhered to the United Nations' commitments to recognize that the state has the primary responsibility for assisting and protecting their own citizens; and adapted its engagement with other partners. It also explored the extent to which UNICEF-supported structures and processes were deployed to prepare for the outbreak and focus assistance on the most vulnerable.
- **Cash and shock-responsive social assistance:** There has been a significant expansion of social assistance responses to attempt to alleviate the economic and livelihood consequences of COVID-19 restrictions.¹⁰⁰ The evaluation examined ways in which UNICEF is working across development-focused social protection and humanitarian cash responses to support these efforts.
- **Public health and sectoral responses:** The evaluation considered the extent to which UNICEF's public health response and sectoral responses in education, health and protection have attempted to link humanitarian and development programming by focusing on both immediate emergency interventions and short- and medium-term system strengthening to bolster existing efforts and expand services to address the additional consequences of the pandemic.
- **UNICEF internal systems and structures:** The evaluation explored the extent to which UNICEF's support systems (i.e., its financial, human resources and logistics systems) have had the requisite agility and flexibility to mobilize sufficient humanitarian and development skills, capacities and resources across the organization to respond to COVID-19.

¹⁰⁰ Lilly, Damian, 'What Happened to the Nexus Approach in the COVID-19 Response', Global Observatory, 19 June 2020.

● SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FINDINGS

UNICEF's response to COVID-19 requires an emergency response and the adaptation of development support.¹⁰¹ However, neither the structure of the response, nor the documentation of the response, make significant reference to LHD and the nexus.

While the initial emergency response to COVID-19 was appropriate, as the response continues, UNICEF will need to adapt its long-term development programming and bring together emergency and development skills and capacities across the organization. This is needed at a broad strategic level, as well as at the country level, to guide the efforts of country offices staff adapt development programming approaches to the pandemic and maintain funding for both wider development and ongoing emergency response.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

6.1 LHD in the overall COVID-19 response architecture

There have been calls for the COVID-19 response to lead to fundamental changes in how humanitarian assistance and humanitarian architecture are approached, and to serve as a platform for accelerating more direct and consistent support to local actors. The evaluation looked at the extent to which the pandemic has led to change within UNICEF and the humanitarian system.

The global humanitarian response to the pandemic has been based on three overlapping United Nations-led plans: the Global Humanitarian Response Plan,¹⁰² the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan¹⁰³ and the United Nations Socio-Economic Framework.¹⁰⁴ In addition, United Nations agencies have launched their own separate appeals. These are presented as a coherent and coordinated multilateral response to the health, humanitarian and development consequences of COVID-19.

However, Lilly (2020) argues that this represents a missed opportunity for a more holistic response. The funding mechanisms for the COVID-19 response have been organized around traditional humanitarian and development lines and so far, the humanitarian appeal has been much better funded (US\$2 billion of the US\$8 billion appeal) than the multi-partner trust fund for socio-economic consequences (US\$55 million of a US\$2 billion appeal).¹⁰⁵ Assessments, particularly of the

socio-economic impacts of the crisis, have been fragmented in what interviewees describe as a proliferation of tools and approaches.

Key planning and appeal documents do include high-level statements of intent around the nexus. An IASC (2020) document called for “ensuring that we make use of all the means at our disposal and that humanitarian, development and peace actions are delivered in a complementary, mutually reinforcing and simultaneous manner, to provide immediate life-saving assistance, while also addressing longer-term impacts.”¹⁰⁶ The May update to the Global Humanitarian Response Plan calls for the “coherent and concurrent engagement of humanitarian, development and peace actors” and argues that the overlapping objectives and areas of focus of the Global Humanitarian Response Plan, the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan and the United Nations Socio-Economic Framework offer the possibility of a “coordinated and collaborative response.”¹⁰⁷ The United Nations Socio-Economic Framework makes little mention of LHD or nexus issues but does talk about the United Nations development system “switching to emergency mode” and adjusting a significant proportion of the United Nations’ existing US\$17.8 billion development portfolio for COVID-19 related needs.

Any detail beyond these high-level statements of intent, however, was lacking at the time of writing. For instance, the August 2020 Global Humanitarian Response Plan progress report and a United Nations brief from June 2020 on

¹⁰² Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, ‘Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19 – May Update’, OCHA, May 2020.

¹⁰³ World Health Organization, ‘2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV): Strategic preparedness and response plan’, WHO, 4 February 2020.

¹⁰⁴ United Nations, ‘A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19’, UN, April 2020.

¹⁰⁵ As of July 2020.

¹⁰⁶ Inter-Agency Standing Committee, ‘Commitments into Action: A holistic and coherent response to COVID-19 across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus’, May 2020.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19 – May Update’.

putting the United Nations Socio-Economic Framework into action do not mention LHD or the nexus.¹⁰⁸ However, without using the term nexus or LHD, there are clear areas where LHD is taking place in practice, notably in efforts to support governments to reinforce and scale up social protection systems and strengthen basic service delivery and in sector-specific areas such as child protection and education. The June 2020 brief on the United Nations Socio-Economic Framework illustrates the different timetables of humanitarian and development actors within United Nations country teams “now in the process of preparing COVID-19 response plans to support national recovery efforts” with a few having become available. For the most part, what currently exists, are largely aspirational high-level commitments to coordination and collaboration between siloed plans and appeals. It is too early to make evaluative judgements, including from ongoing real-time evaluations, on the success of LHD efforts in actual responses, however.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of state-led responses. The scale of the pandemic and the necessary scale of national responses has reinforced the need for government-led action and the marginal importance of humanitarian assistance. While lockdowns and restrictions on travel have reinforced calls for humanitarian action to become more localized, in practice there is little evidence (or it is too early to say) that financing

for the COVID-19 response is flowing more directly to national actors or that international aid actors are more directly supporting local and national actors.

Social assistance responses have expanded significantly to alleviate the economic and livelihood consequences of COVID-19 restrictions.¹⁰⁹ UNICEF has been working across development-focused social protection and humanitarian cash responses to support these efforts.¹¹⁰

6.2 LHD in UNICEF guidance and planning on COVID-19

Given the unprecedented global scale of the COVID-19 pandemic and related suffering, UNICEF has needed to respond with full force. This was demonstrated when the UNICEF Executive Director activated the Level 3 Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure.¹¹¹ In mobilizing the entire organization to respond to the pandemic, UNICEF has needed to work across its development and humanitarian mandates.

In April 2020, UNICEF issued a guidance note on programming approaches and priorities to prevent, mitigate and address the immediate health and socio-economic impacts of COVID-19, which included several commitments relevant to LHD and the nexus.¹¹² A section on system strengthening noted that, “as a core element of linking humanitarian

¹⁰⁸ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, ‘Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19 Progress Report: Second edition’, UN, 31 August 2020; and United Nations Development Programme, ‘Brief #2 Putting the UN Framework for Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights’, UNDP, June 2020.

¹⁰⁹ Gentilini, Ugo, et al., ‘Social Protection and Jobs Responses to COVID-19: A real-time review of country measures’, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2020.

¹¹⁰ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNICEF Social Protection Response to COVID-19: Technical note’, UNICEF, 2020.

¹¹¹ UNICEF activated its Level 3 Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure in mid-April for six months, in line with an IASC system-wide activation.

¹¹² United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Guidance Note on Programming Approaches and Priorities to Prevent, Mitigate and Address Immediate Health and Socio-Economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic on Children’, UNICEF, 12 April 2020.

6. COVID-19 AND THE NEXUS

and development programmes, UNICEF will focus on strengthening systems”, working closely with national and local governments, including through their planning, budgeting, implementation, coordination and reporting mechanisms wherever possible and investing in participatory community approaches. It also called for its responses to be conflict-sensitive and risk-informed. It noted the critical importance of flexible and adaptive programming and that UNICEF was enabling country offices to re-programme flexible funding using simplified operating procedures and has issued guidance on supporting greater flexibility for implementing partners. This guidance note provides a good starting point for considering how UNICEF’s approach to the nexus can be applied in the response to COVID-19.

UNICEF has made an effort to mobilize capacities and resources across the organization to respond effectively to COVID-19. Giving EMOPS the role of coordinating UNICEF’s response was seen as both pragmatic and effective. A background paper submitted to the Executive Board¹¹³, which has a section on adapting UNICEF’s COVID-19 response, notes that, “the crisis has highlighted and strengthened the links between humanitarian and development programming”. It does not, however, provide any further detail on how that is taking place. UNICEF has issued guidance on how to include and strengthen AAP in COVID-19 preparedness and response plans and how to address conflict sensitivity, social cohesion and peacebuilding in the COVID-19 response.

While the global COVID-19 Humanitarian Action for Children¹¹⁴ appeal makes no mention of LHD programming or the nexus, the appeal’s strategic priority 2 does talk about engaging in “short term and medium term health systems strengthening”, and working with governments to support the continuity of education, social protection, child protection, mental health and psychosocial support and gender-based violence services and strengthening shock-responsive social protection systems.

A major focus of UNICEF’s COVID-19 supply response has been sourcing personal protective equipment, diagnostics and oxygen therapy. Critical to this response has been the establishment of regional warehouse hubs for easier receipt of supplies and distribution to countries. Between April and June, UNICEF fulfilled US\$440 million warehouse replenishment orders. A no-regrets policy



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0389261/Panjwani

¹¹³ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNICEF Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Background paper for the Executive Board’, UNICEF, June 2020.

¹¹⁴ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Indonesia COVID-19 Response Situation Report’, UNICEF, May 2020.

allowed UNICEF to acquire COVID-19 supplies before orders were confirmed and country office funds were in place. The supply experience has generated important lessons on LDH related to preparedness, particularly in development-oriented countries and regarding country offices' risk appetite for investments in pre-positioning emergency supplies.

As of July 2020, UNICEF had reached 2.6 billion people with public health messaging on COVID-19 prevention and access to services through risk communication and community engagement actions conducted with authorities. UNICEF has also supported infection and prevention control by ensuring access to WASH services; and facilitated the continuity of health, HIV, education, WASH, child protection, gender-based violence, social protection and other social services to respond to the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic. Some interviewees suggested that there had been a disproportionate focus on the short-term supply of equipment in terms of funding and attention at the expense of interventions aimed at systems support.

6.3 LHD commitments in country office responses to COVID-19

UNICEF's core technical sectors of health, nutrition, WASH and child protection are critical to its response to COVID-19. The organization's reach, sub-national presence and partnerships with governments and local organizations have been vital to preventing health systems from becoming overwhelmed. UNICEF's expertise in health promotion and water and sanitation has

also been critical to public health responses. Its child protection experience has helped states, civil society actors and communities confront rising cases of domestic violence and abuse due to lockdowns and heightened stress, hardship and levels of destitution.

In Indonesia, UNICEF has responded in line with the regional response strategy, which explicitly aims to link humanitarian and development approaches. As of 20 May 2020, Indonesia had recorded over 18,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and nearly 13,000 deaths, making it one of the worst-affected countries in the region.¹¹⁵ The strategy emphasized addressing immediate needs, including enhancing preventive and preparedness measures to contain, mitigate and respond to the health and socio-economic impacts and provide medium- to longer-term interventions through sectoral responses. A May situation report on UNICEF Indonesia's COVID-19 response noted that UNICEF had received 72 per cent of the initial US\$16.3 million appeal, and as of June, the appeal was more than 100 per cent funded (including commitments).¹¹⁶

Crucial to this fundraising success was the early development of an Indonesia-specific COVID-19 response plan. The response plan uses a 'respond, recovery and restore' framework that tailors interventions to the various stages of the outbreak. Restore efforts include interventions designed to address COVID-19-related health and nutrition gaps; sustain prevention programmes; and respond to child-centred vulnerabilities that extend beyond 2020. The East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office has highlighted the response plan as a good practice

¹¹⁵ United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Global COVID-19 Mid-Term Update No. 9 Feb-July 2020', UNICEF, 2 August 2020.

¹¹⁶ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Indonesia COVID-19 Response Situation Report', UNICEF, May 2020; United Nations Children's Fund, 'Indonesia COVID-19 Response Situation Report', UNICEF, June 2020.

6. COVID-19 AND THE NEXUS

and an effective fundraising tool. Country office interviewees noted that the response engaged and affected the entire office and country programme, in contrast to responses to location-specific crises. It helped that donors were already engaged in talks about the new country programme when the pandemic hit.

In Indonesia, LHD discussions had previously focused almost entirely on natural hazards. In the case of the COVID-19 response, there were no explicit discussions about LHD or nexus-related work. However, the response drew on the capacities of humanitarian and development teams in ways that were completely comingled and, in practical terms, represented a mainstreaming of disaster risk management approaches across the country office and its technical sectors.

As research for the Ethiopia case study began, cases of COVID-19 had just reached double digits. The Government declared a national emergency on 8 April and plans were quickly

set in motion to use the safety net system to reach current and additional vulnerable populations. As was the case in Indonesia, UNICEF Ethiopia's risk analysis prior to the recently revised CPD had not included this type of pandemic risk. However, staff said that the risk analysis and Emergency Preparedness Platform were still helpful in that all programme sections had articulated potential risks, some of which were relevant to the impacts of the pandemic. As a result, country office staff did not feel completely unprepared. As one interviewee said, "a lot of work that was done in advance of COVID-19 had set us up for what we are doing now. We are not asking 'how do we start?' We can talk strongly about the socio-economic projections of COVID-19 in nutrition, for example". With the global Level 3 emergency declaration, UNICEF Ethiopia was able to conduct a programme criticality exercise around risk, first internally and then with the inter-agency community.



Photo: © UNICEF/UN0446684/Tadesse

This exercise directed attention and resources to the most critical interventions (e.g., other deadly disease outbreaks) while identifying activities that could be safely delayed. It also allowed UNICEF Ethiopia to prioritize the allocation of protective equipment, which was critical to UNICEF and partners. UNICEF staff spoke of COVID-19 as an unprecedented situation, which entailed “a lot of learning by doing”. Both UNICEF and external interviewees noted that the organization was more flexible than other agencies and that they felt supported by the substantial guidance from headquarters about how to repurpose their resources to support Government-led COVID-19 response initiatives. UNICEF Ethiopia also pushed for a sector-wide approach to ensure the continuity of the health care system, and provide health care workers with the personal protective equipment they needed to deliver on their critical mandates. This was described as an example of LHD in action. In responding to COVID-19, “we need to protect the system as a whole”.

6.4 LHD in partnerships and support to local, sub-national and national actors

The impacts of COVID-19 are both global and national in scale and thus require both government and society-wide responses. Humanitarian responses cannot take place separately from the governments leading national efforts. How UNICEF relates to states in the COVID-19 response is therefore critical to its LHD programming efforts in fragile and conflict-affected contexts with varying levels of state capacity and governance types. UNICEF has needed to be supportive of state-led responses and sensitive to the United Nations’ commitment recognize the state’s primary responsibility to assist and protect its citizens;

while also mobilizing whole of society and private sector capacities and advocating for populations excluded or marginalized from state-led responses. Many country office and headquarters interviewees noted that UNICEF’s support for government-led responses is an example of the organization working to a key strength. In some countries, COVID-19 created space for highlighting issues of equity with governments and presented opportunities to move into new areas of programming and dialogue with governments.

Partnerships have been central to UNICEF Indonesia’s COVID-19 response. Interviewees perceived these partnerships as largely successful thanks to good networks, trust and engagement with the National Disaster Management Agency and other government partners in previous emergency responses. Early in the COVID-19 response, UNICEF utilized its networks and relationships with the Government to advocate with the President for an earlier response to the pandemic in the face of initial government denials and scepticism. The fact that UNICEF has relationships with multiple ministries across different sectors and a presence at the sub-national level helped the organization utilize multiple levers to encourage the Government to take the pandemic seriously. UNICEF Indonesia had a two-pronged partnership strategy that recognized and supported the role of civil society in complementing and amplifying support for the Government.

UNICEF staff have been embedded in the Government-led task force on COVID-19; played a leading role in risk communication and community engagement and led the development of the Government’s COVID-19 website. Field office staff have provided embedded support to provincial COVID-19 task forces across a variety of sectors. These

6. COVID-19 AND THE NEXUS

secondments into key Government-led task forces at the national and sub-national levels have played an important role in supporting national responses, strengthening coordination in key sectors and leading the risk communication and community engagement aspects of the response. Drawing on these partnerships, UNICEF Indonesia has also been able to play an important role in supporting the Government's analytical capacities for the response. In the health and nutrition sectors, UNICEF has supported systematic mobile assessments of all health facilities and has tracked steep falls in immunization rates. Interviewees noted how "first rate" data and analysis have demonstrated UNICEF's added value in the response, which has been valued by the Government, and "opened doors". For example, within two weeks of the start of the response, UNICEF had created a data visualization of all hospitals in the country and carried out remote assessments of all health facilities. UNICEF's support at the national and subnational levels has contributed to health sector preparedness and response to the outbreak and measures to address disruptions in essential health service delivery.

At the time of writing, UNICEF Indonesia was beginning to look beyond the immediate response and consider how its programmes would need to change over the next two years, asking questions such as what should be dropped, deferred, re-programmed and/or added. This is a local application of an organization-wide process. UNICEF Indonesia is trying to avoid establishing a separate COVID-19 programme in favour of mainstreaming the response to COVID-19 across its regular programme. This appears to be a clear example of nexus programming: working at the national and field levels to

support the Government to move from short-term emergency response to medium- and longer-term planning. For example, the UNICEF field office in Papua has been supporting the planning ministry on COVID-19-related budget re-allocations, health system preparedness and epidemiological modelling.

In Ethiopia, interviewees spoke about partnership (much of the response was undertaken with and through the Government) and opportunities, particularly UNICEF's policy influence with the Government. Child protection was considered a pressing issue in Ethiopia's COVID-19 response, and an opportunity for system strengthening. UNICEF child protection staff flagged the risk of child separation early on and pressed the Government for a policy on not separating children from parents and putting them in separate institutions. UNICEF wrote guidelines to prevent, mitigate and address child protection risks during COVID-19 and provided technical notes and guidance on child protection, gender-based violence, case management and mental health and psychosocial support. UNICEF worked closely with the Ministry of Health, providing job descriptions for new staff and templates for standard operating procedures.

Ethiopia is facing severe health sector challenges. UNICEF estimates that COVID-19 will cause a 25 to 30 per cent increase in the number of children who are severely malnourished and is advocating for locally produced supplemental feeding. Eighty per cent of health facilities lack water. Integrated measles and polio vaccination campaigns have been delayed due to COVID-19-related movement restrictions, preventing the vaccination of 17 million children. UNICEF is helping the Government

6. COVID-19 AND THE NEXUS

outfit vaccination teams with personal protective equipment and plans to restart the campaign in hotspot areas as soon as possible.

In April 2020, UNICEF Ethiopia reported that its WASH interventions had “reached 825,000 people, including urban safety net beneficiaries, with critical hygiene materials and COVID-19 prevention material in eleven cities across Ethiopia”.¹¹⁷ UNICEF supported communities with water containers and soap and provided educational messages on hand-washing. In addition to the safety net, UNICEF’s large health extension worker network was extremely valuable. UNICEF used these workers to provide risk communication on physical distancing and hand hygiene, and WHO employed the network for house-to-house disease surveillance and contact tracing.



Photo: © UNICEF/UNI353778/Diarassouba

Across country offices, interviewees gave examples of how their COVID-19 responses had aligned with and supported government strategies. In settings where UNICEF had previously been working with NGO partners, including international NGOs (predominately humanitarian settings), many of these arrangements were amended for the COVID-19 response. In interviews, UNICEF staff made multiple references to the withdrawal of international NGO partners in the immediate term, though it is impossible to quantify this exodus. A few country office respondents referred to the COVID-19 response as having led to a “forced acceleration” of the use of local partners and national and local staff. One or two country office interviewees made reference to the Procedure’s commitment to building local capacity.

UNICEF issued guidance allowing greater flexibility for implementing partners.¹¹⁸ This additional flexibility has been positively received by country office staff. In Indonesia, staff noted that there was useful COVID-19 programming guidance covering issues such as how to adapt diligence requirements for partners. An interviewee from another country office noted that the guidance from UNICEF’s Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring (DAPM) and EMOPS related to the adaptation of partnership agreements had been useful. The partners interviewed for this evaluation – though relatively few in number – were positive about the flexibility. However, several partners also noted that funding had been slow to arrive. Ultimately, the number and timing of partner interviews make it impossible to form any judgement on the impact of this flexibility at the country level.

¹¹⁷ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Ethiopia COVID-19 Response Situation Report’, UNICEF, April 2020.

¹¹⁸ ‘Guidance Note on Programming Approaches and Priorities to Prevent, Mitigate and Address Immediate Health and Socio-Economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic on Children’.

Private sector partnerships have also been a feature of the COVID-19 response in Indonesia. Partnerships with Facebook and telecommunications companies have been used to analyse data on people's movements to triangulate with case numbers and target responses. UNICEF Indonesia built on a global MagicBox initiative¹¹⁹ and has been able to capture data at the village level in real time. With Facebook, UNICEF has monitored rumours and misinformation and addressed these in its risk communications work. Important academic partnerships have also been developed around data and analysis.

6.5 LHD and UNICEF's internal systems in the COVID-19 response

The extent to which the COVID-19 response has been a case study for LHD programming was raised in interviews. Two clear sets of opinions crystalized. On the one hand, the COVID-19 response represented a perfect opportunity to study UNICEF's ability to purposefully link and work across its modes of operation. On the other hand, a smaller number of interviewees felt that UNICEF's response demonstrated that the term 'nexus' is unnecessary and overly abstract. In this view, UNICEF was predominantly responding through governments and local structures, perhaps working in emergency mode, but in such a way that was coherent and appropriate vis-à-vis its aims as a development agency.

Senior staff in headquarters pointed to the unique nature of COVID-19 as a crisis that affected every country office and headquarters simultaneously (the only other possible example

being HIV). A nexus approach was seen as applicable in the sense that an immediate, public health response had to be undertaken simultaneously with a response to the severe and long-lasting socio-economic consequences. UNICEF needed to balance support to immediate public health responses with simultaneous responses tackling both immediate social and economic impacts and changes to country programmes to address the medium- and long-term consequences of the pandemic.

Appointing the EMOPS Director as Global Emergency Coordinator and assigning EMOPS the role of coordinating the response was considered pragmatic and ultimately effective. Given the centrality of supply issues in the response, the Director of the Supply Division was actively engaged in jointly coordinating the response with EMOPS. UNICEF's humanitarian instruments were seen as the vehicle on which the rest of the organization launched the response; not because the entire response was viewed as humanitarian, but because EMOPS' staff and systems were seen as "field facing and agile". Several respondents noted that the entire organization should be equally nimble, particularly given the potential for future global crises.

Efforts to integrate PD and EMOPS internally were seen as inadequate under some circumstances and doubly so in the context of COVID-19. One emergency focal point in PD stated, "It's like we go into every fight with one hand behind our back. Not because one hand is stronger than the other, but because one is better trained". There was an overall sense that UNICEF was moving towards balancing the response: "now we are looking at how to throw

¹¹⁹ United Nations Children's Fund, 'Effects of Physical Distancing Measures', UNICEF, 2020.

6. COVID-19 AND THE NEXUS

our weight fully behind the resumption of health services. We recognize that children are (largely) not dying of COVID-19 but because they are not being vaccinated or can't access nutrition support". There was recognition that UNICEF and the broader United Nations system quickly transitioned from treating the pandemic as primarily a health emergency to an emergency.

UNICEF's support systems across its human resources, finance, supply and reporting functions were flexible in practice and demonstrated considerable creativity, which enabled an effective response. The human resources function coped despite of the lack of international surge support, though this reflects the need to invest in mixed profiles and local capacities. The COVID-19 response has also demonstrated the utility of reporting systems that better integrate LHD.

The COVID-19 response was required in every country in which UNICEF works, irrespective of the country's previous types of programming, the size of the office or the scale of its operations. There was also universal recognition that the COVID-19 response took place at the same time as its staff and partners were coping with the restrictions and consequences of COVID-19 in their own countries and families. Across countries, interviewees reported distinctly different experiences in this respect. In one country office with a significant humanitarian programme, mobile technology supported remote working and national and international staff were used to this mode of operation: "our productivity levels certainly went up not down". In smaller country offices with more development-focused programmes, interviewees reported the opposite experience: "our staff do not have emergency experience... worrying about themselves and their families, maintaining focus on the response was hard". Another noted: "maintaining momentum and staff focus is much harder with COVID-19. If you get 40 per cent of staff capacity you're doing well". The switch to remote working was noted as both novel and impactful. "COVID is a very special case. In Ebola, you could sit down and debrief at the end of the day. COVID has kept us apart – we can't strategize in the optimal way".

With regard to financing systems, staff noted that the policy of "no regrets in reprogramming regular resources", and the message that offices could be flexible in their use of resources were important and allowed UNICEF to build trust with communities and governments. Interviewees noted the useful adjustment and simplification of policies and procedures, including those for partnerships, to enable COVID-19 responses.



Photo: © UNICEF/UNI174926/Singh

At global, regional and country levels, a key challenge going forward will be determining how to move away from emergency response and integrate COVID-19 into long-term programme work. For example, in Indonesia interviewees noted that the “biggest issue with COVID funding is timings and validity of grants”. While much of the funding for the COVID-19 response will run out in 2020, this is a long-haul emergency and there are concerns about whether regular development funding will hold up in the face of recession and crisis.

Gender, disability and COVID-19

In July 2020, UNICEF conducted an assessment of gender sensitivity in the COVID-19 response.¹²⁰ It found significant gaps in data and reporting in areas such as sex- and age-disaggregation, and that gender-related expenditure was significantly below the 15 per cent benchmark at 8.9 per cent. UNICEF has been engaged in inter-agency coordination at all levels, including carrying out joint gender analyses and developing technical guidance.

There have been good examples of nexus/LHD programming in COVID-19 responses at the country level. For example, in Mozambique, existing gender-based violence service providers went online and provided hotlines and remote counselling and alerted people as to where to get support. In Jordan, an existing initiative on education for out-of-school girls pivoted in partnership with Mercy Corps to provide tablets and house-to-house support to ensure that girls continue learning. UNICEF has also developed specific guidance on disability in the context of the COVID-19 response and the

disability section has focused on addressing disability in UNICEF guidance and plans across sectors and in monitoring frameworks.

Monitoring, reporting and COVID-19

The COVID-19 crisis has triggered a series of discussions on LHD within UNICEF. The original global COVID-19 response was LHD oriented and incorporated ideas of transition. However, in 2020, interviewees perceived that the COVID-19 response was reported on as an emergency response. In 2021, UNICEF has tried to both integrate COVID-19 into national Humanitarian Action for Children appeals and integrate some aspects into regular development programmes.

In general, the COVID-19 response has forced UNICEF to take a more integrated approach to reporting that cuts across humanitarian and development siloes. Interviewees suggested that EMOPS and development programmes could coordinate their reporting systems more closely. For UNICEF, reporting on COVID-19 represents the quintessential nexus / LHD challenge. Given that the COVID-19 response cuts across humanitarian and development divides, it has required the organization to mount an emergency response and adapt and re-prioritize its development programming. Reporting on this creates challenges as noted by one interviewee:

“As an organization, we need to show what we are doing for the COVID-19 response. This means we need in VISION to demarcate COVID funding from other funding, so we create tags at funds allocation and activity spending levels. But there is a conceptual issue: It is not clear if doing our normal programming (e.g., health

¹²⁰ United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Five Actions for Gender Equality in the COVID-19 Response: UNICEF technical note’, UNICEF, 2020.

6. COVID-19 AND THE NEXUS

care) but with a COVID lens is still regular programming, or COVID programming. Plus some of the funding for COVID activities is re-programmed from development, some is from humanitarian, and some is new money. Therefore, it is not always clear how we tag an intervention that is ambiguous in terms of whether it is COVID or non-COVID, and is funded from multiple sources. We are being forced to create a number of demarcations for COVID – I think it is also true with humanitarian action and development and we have created systems to distinguish these which may be important, but don't always help us to easily navigate the nexus and be flexible in approach.”

These experiences – of maintaining flexibility and agility in responding to COVID-19 across the organization's humanitarian and development programmes, while accountably reporting to donors – should provide lessons for UNICEF on how to incorporate nexus thinking into more flexible and less siloed reporting and management systems. The aim should be to improve UNICEF's ability to programme and report effectively across development and humanitarian modalities.

6.6 Overarching findings

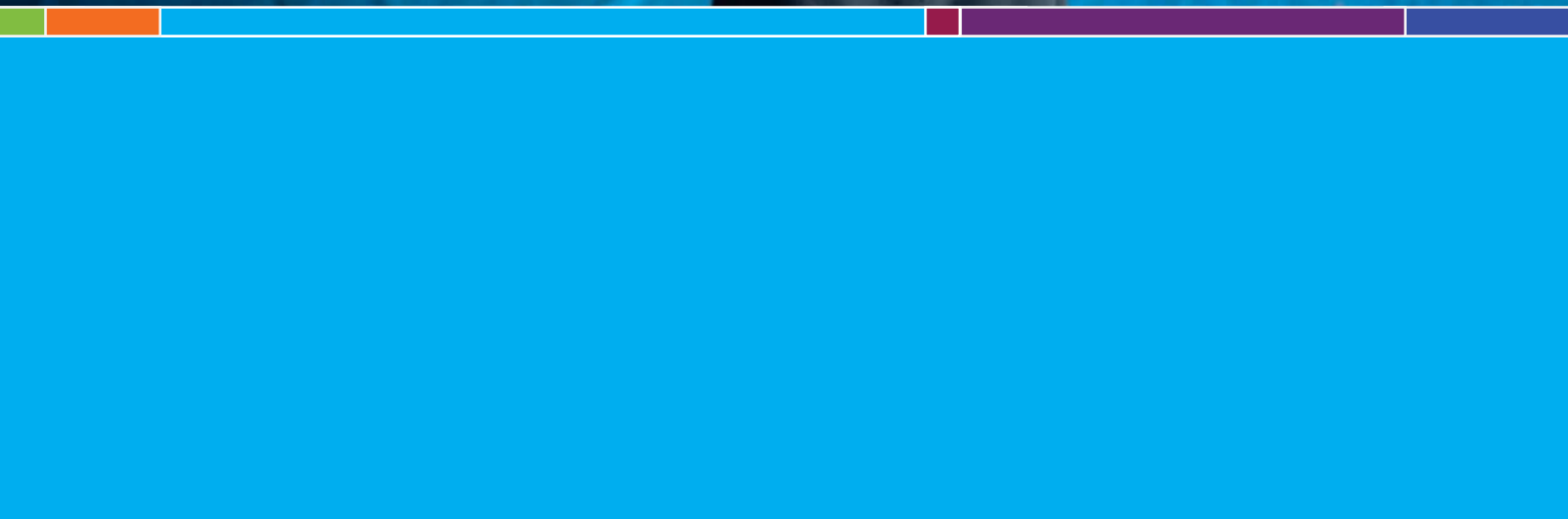
1. **An explicit nexus approach has been largely absent from the architecture and structure of the global COVID-19 response.** This has reinforced a siloed approach and led to under-funding of responses to the social and economic impacts of COVID-19.
2. **In many countries, UNICEF is successfully and appropriately working with and through states to strengthen state-led responses to COVID-19.** In doing this, UNICEF's strong relationships and networks with government line ministries across multiple sectors and its sub-national presence are an advantage.
3. **While UNICEF's switch to emergency mode in its initial response to COVID-19 was appropriate, as the response continues, greater attention will need to be given to how to adapt UNICEF's long-term development programming and bring together emergency and development skills and capacities across the organization.** This is recognized in broad strategy terms but more detailed support needs to be provided to country offices to guide their efforts to adapt development programming approaches to the pandemic.
4. **There is a need to more fully integrate COVID-19 adaptations into CPDs and maintain funding for both wider development and ongoing emergency responses.** There is scope for COVID-19 to accelerate progress on shock-responsive social protection and strengthen local and national capacities for disaster risk management. Innovations developed to enable reporting on COVID-19 present opportunities to more successfully integrate approaches to reporting on humanitarian and development within UNICEF systems.

7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Photo:© UNICEF/UN0410904/Ayene



Overall, UNICEF has made significant progress in advancing the nexus in its programming. Most notably, in 2019, the publication of the mandatory Procedure on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming, which brings together existing strands of humanitarian and development programming, marked an important milestone for the organization. In 2020, the revision of the CCCs shifted the organization's attention to issues raised by LHD programming. UNICEF's adoption of the OECD Development Assistance Committee Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus and its common definitions is another important step forward. Many country offices have seen improvements in their programme planning, and as a result, have created the basis for better outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.

There are several areas that could be strengthened, however, including: UNICEF's general approach to the nexus; the nexus' placement within UNICEF's policy framework; the organizational systems needed to support more coherent programming; and some of elements of UNICEF programming. UNICEF needs to do more to institutionalize and contextualize the nexus within and across the organization for more effective implementation at the country level.

The recommendations of this evaluation are organized around five themes. They are designed to help UNICEF further strengthen its nexus work to ensure better results for children.

● THEME 1: DEFINITION AND COHERENCE

UNICEF's overall approach to the humanitarian, development and peace nexus is inadequate. The current framing of 'linking' humanitarian and development programming neglects the peacebuilding dimension and reinforces the notion that these are two discrete ways to programme. This notion is, in part, a reflection of the heavily bifurcated assistance architecture that has developed over time. External humanitarian and development aid structures remain separate, as do modes of operation in some contexts. However, it is essential that UNICEF embrace the approach outlined in the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review which emphasizes "greater cooperation, coherence, coordination and complementarity among development, disaster risk reduction, humanitarian action and sustaining peace"¹²¹ across its internal systems and structures for planning, reporting and financial management, rather than reinforcing two siloed modes of programming.

The concept of LHD has not been prominently integrated into the UNICEF Strategic Plan. Within the Strategic Plan, LHD is subsumed under humanitarian programming and one of its change strategies. This is not to say that LHD has not been a priority for UNICEF; rather it has been one of many priorities which compete in a system where resources and the political capital to drive change are limited. The siloed structures and systems internal and external to UNICEF that serve the bifurcated aid system are entrenched.

A combination of significant downward commitment from senior management and cross-UNICEF engagement is required to drive significant change. A first step in this direction is elevating the issue in the Strategic Plan.

The Procedure and higher-level guidance avoid discussion of possible tensions between the components of UNICEF's multiple mandates, including peace, and offer no practical guidance on how to bridge the elements. In particular, the peace dimension is noticeably absent from the Procedure. The need to "safeguard operational independence and principled humanitarian action when linking humanitarian and development programmes" is understated in the Procedure. The Procedure does not acknowledge the tensions between commitments to humanitarian independence on the one hand, and supporting the primary role of the state on the other. For UNICEF, transitioning from the implementation of a development framework to operating as an independent humanitarian actor remains a challenge.

The Procedure has had traction within UNICEF, particularly in supporting the development of recent CPDs and annual reviews, which show marked improvement since the Procedure's publication. However, the evaluation found a lack of consistent and organization-wide understanding of the nexus and the Procedure's requirements, partly due to the lack of a defined process for rolling the Procedure out and communicating it effectively to country offices.

¹²¹ United Nations General Assembly, 'Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system' A/RES/75/233, December 2020.

Recommendations

1. Adopt the approach and language of the nexus in keeping with the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy. Rather than 'linking', emphasis should be on strengthening cooperation, coherence, coordination and complementarity internally across UNICEF's planning, programming and reporting, and externally through United Nations-wide mechanisms.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

2. Ensure that this new approach and language are integrated fully and prominently into the next Strategic Plan. All programme policies, procedures and guidance should clearly state the requirement for coherent, collaborative and complementary approaches to the fullest extent possible in all of UNICEF's programming. While this integration is being completed, a second iteration of the Procedure is warranted, in line with normal revision schedules.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS, PD and the Deputy Executive Director, Programmes.

3. As part of this process, ensure that a clear statement of UNICEF's role and contribution in relation to the peace dimension of the nexus and the centrality of humanitarian principles is integrated into the next Strategic Plan and all programme policy, procedures and guidance, including the revised Procedure.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS and PD.

4. Ensure that all major programming tools, including new CPDs and annual and rolling work plans, reflect an explicit, coherent and collaborative approach across humanitarian and development programming, including contributions to peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

Responsibility: DAPM, PD, EMOPS and regional offices.

5. Create and implement a communication and roll-out strategy and process for the revised Procedure.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS and PD.

● THEME 2: PARTNERSHIPS AND THE NEXUS

Across humanitarian and development programmes, UNICEF's strategies and approaches are built around system strengthening and capacity development. While this represents a core strength, this work focuses primarily on national and sub-national government systems. UNICEF needs to give more attention to strengthening civil society approaches in the context of the nexus, in line with its partnership commitments. Although UNICEF works with civil society through partnership agreements, in practice these relationships are often overly transactional; partners see UNICEF as a donor that sub-contracts them for various projects.

In its cluster lead role, UNICEF is a key coordination agency in humanitarian settings and its dual mandate and sectoral strengths position it to work proactively towards coherent approaches within and across its specialist sectors. However, the organization needs to invest further in staff with strong coordination and leadership capacities who are able to work confidently across humanitarian and development programming. This would maximize UNICEF's leadership role in nexus-related programming. While coordination is effective within sectors, it is less effective across sectors. UNICEF needs to more explicitly promote the geographical convergence of humanitarian and development approaches; forge stronger linkages with peacebuilding actors; and engage more systematically with partners working in fragile and conflict contexts, such as the World Bank.

Engaging in strategic and principled partnerships in ways that promote coherence between humanitarian and development programming, including contributions to peacebuilding and sustaining peace requires:

- Within UNICEF: leadership, skills and capacities for analysing various actors; skills for managing long-term change processes; change management skills as countries transition to and from states of crisis; and core funding to support such skills.
- Outside of UNICEF (partners): country support for focusing more on ministries and local government units responsible for disaster risk reduction; and skills for enhancing the leadership of community groups to pursue resilient development approaches.

UNICEF must invest in these skills and capacities. The organization must also build strong partnerships with civil society organizations that are true to the spirit of partnership cooperation agreements. That means ensuring that UNICEF is perceived as a partner and not a donor, and contributing to UNICEF's strategic LHD goals by moving beyond a narrow capacity building focus and investing in staff capacities.

Recommendations

1. Review and strengthen how UNICEF approaches its civil society partnerships, in line with its localization commitments. In doing this, emphasize achieving better results for children through more coherent and collaborative nexus approaches. Where UNICEF has flexible and multi-year funding, pass this on to partners.

Responsibility: EMOPS, PD, DAPM, the Public Partnerships Division and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

2. Invest in training and support to ensure that UNICEF staff in leadership, senior programme and coordination roles (within sectors, and across headquarters and regional and country offices) can coordinate confidently across humanitarian, development and peacebuilding programming. This includes building skills for: better managing transitions; better supporting ministries, local government units responsible for disaster risk reduction; and better supporting sector ministries on preparedness. UNICEF staff should be able to coordinate across modes of programming and programme sectors, integrating any new learning effort into the new overarching Rights and Results Based Management training.

Responsibility: DAPM, Division of Human Resources, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

● THEME 3: PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

The Procedure commits UNICEF to strengthening its work on risk-informed programming; emergency preparedness; accountability to affected populations; gender and disability responsiveness; linking humanitarian cash and social protection; conflict sensitivity; and peacebuilding and social cohesion. Across these commitments, while UNICEF is making progress and developing strong guidance, the guidance is not consistently translating into effective action at the country level.

There is evidence that the institutionalization of risk-informed programming is improving, meaning that the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming is being applied more consistently. More can be done, however, to ensure that in countries, the Guidance is appropriately contextualized, dynamic and iterative,

with an explicitly practical focus (i.e., that translates more easily into a foundation for achieving results for children). There remains a deficit of analytical capacity for comprehensive risk and contextual analysis, including conflict analysis (*see theme 4 below*). Regional offices and PD also have a role in prioritizing/contextualizing the Guidance for application at the regional level.

While UNICEF's approaches to conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding are limited, practices and systems do exist at the country level and can be scaled up and replicated. There is a lack of consistent understanding at the country level, a lack of capacity for conflict analysis and the roll-out of the guidance/policy attention has been limited.

Recommendations

1. Develop and implement a strategy to strengthen the application of the Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming at the country level. Ensure that its application is dynamic, iterative and directly linked to existing programming and managing systems. Regional offices and PD should play a stronger role in interpreting and contextualizing the Guidance for application at the country level.

Responsibility: PD (including CERP), DAPM, EMOPS and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

2. Embed AAP more systematically in planning and programming for humanitarian action, in line with guidance and Core Humanitarian Standard on Accountability and Quality commitments. Create two-way linkages between humanitarian approaches to AAP and development approaches to social accountability and participation.

Responsibility: EMOPS, PD, DAPM and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

3. Take forward policy commitments to gender- and disability-responsive programming in humanitarian contexts. Drawing on gender and disability programmes in the development context, make humanitarian programmes more responsive to the rights of women and girls and those with disabilities.

Responsibility: PD, EMOPS and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

4. Develop and implement a strategy and invest further in the capacities and staff needed to strengthen UNICEF's approach to peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity and improve the treatment of peacebuilding and conflict sensitivity in the next Strategic Plan and the revised LHD Procedure, as well as its roll-out and associated guidance (i.e., UNICEF Programme Guidance for Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding and UNICEF Guidance for Conflict Analysis).

Responsibility: PD, EMOPS and DAPM and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

5. In addition to including conflict analysis in approaches to risk-informed programming, ensure that conflict sensitivity is consistently and continuously emphasised in planning and programme development and adjustment. This needs to be undertaken in a way that supports coherence and complementarity between humanitarian and development programming.

Responsibility: PD, EMOPS and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

● THEME 4: INTERNAL SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

UNICEF's support for systems and structures is designed to service bifurcated external systems that are not always supportive of nexus approaches. Workarounds have become institutionalized, which has led to inefficiencies. While UNICEF will need to continue to engage in processes such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework and humanitarian response planning process – which will likely remain aligned with CPDs and Humanitarian Action for Children appeals – greater alignment and coherence can still be forged in UNICEF's internal processes and systems.

In the current Strategic Plan, LHD is defined as a way of creating more effective programming, rather than as a goal in itself. This is deliberate and appropriate and in keeping with the norms of results-based management systems. The end result is that there is no effective method of estimating the extent to which nexus approaches are operationalized – use of data extrapolated from coding against the humanitarian marker as a proxy is inadequate and activities associated with nexus approaches are in a grey area. The tagging system does not interpret whether UNICEF is making progress towards LHD; but rather quantifies the contribution of activities to each mode

of programming. The indicator set appended to the Procedure is a similarly weak proxy. While consistently measuring and reporting against these indicators as a set would represent an improvement, the situation calls for more innovative solutions for quantifying the proactive application of nexus approaches.

Country offices continue to see the lack of flexible and appropriate financing for nexus approaches as the most significant obstacle to planning for and implementing these approaches. Given its dual mandate and prominent position in the international community, UNICEF can play a more prominent role in advocating for systemic change and new standards in support of nexus approaches. The organization has yet to fully exercise this authority.

There are weaknesses in the provision and allocation of the human resources needed to support nexus approaches. Capacity to undertake contextual analysis, including risk analysis, and socio-economic and conflict analysis is weak in regional and country offices.

The following recommendations are intended to encourage UNICEF to build on existing work streams and change processes to support nexus approaches.

Recommendations

1. At the country level, harmonize and combine work planning processes for humanitarian and development programming using stronger context and risk analysis, including conflict analysis. At the headquarters level, wherever possible, harmonize and combine the guidance on development and humanitarian programming and ensure that it is reflected in the Programme Policy and Procedure platform, UNICEF's gateway to programming guidance.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

2. At all levels (country, regional and headquarters), review programme performance management structures (monitoring, measurement and reporting) to support the implementation of a combined reporting system that brings headquarters reporting structures together (EMOPS, PD and DAPM).

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

3. In parallel with this review, develop an improved set of specific indicators to track the prevalence of nexus approaches. Develop a nexus marker, similar to the humanitarian marker, and provide robust and regular staff training to support its use.

Responsibility: DAPM, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

4. Drawing on stronger results-based planning (including multi-year) and reporting, take a leadership role in conducting advocacy to advance global humanitarian financing commitments and increase levels of quality funding (predictable, flexible and multi-year) that can support nexus approaches.

Responsibility: Office of the Executive Director, Public Partnerships Division, Private Fundraising and Partnerships Division, EMOPS, PD and regional and country offices (including through regional office and headquarters support).

5. Re-examine the system for designating and distributing funding streams (other resources-regular/other resources-emergency) and/or the budget allocation processes in support of nexus approaches. Investigate whether priority can/should be given to nexus approaches in the targeting of other resources-regular and other resources-emergency; and whether this designation remains relevant.

Responsibility: Deputy Executive Director, Programmes, Public Partnerships Division, PD and EMOPS.

6. Emphasize the recruitment of staff with mixed development, humanitarian and peace skills and capacities, especially at management levels. Invest in strengthening human resource capacities to undertake and /or support context and risk analysis (including conflict analysis) in country and regional offices as appropriate. Review training at all levels, including partner training, to ensure that nexus approaches are integrated.

Responsibility: Division of Human Resources, EMOPS, DAPM and PD.

● THEME 5: COVID-19 AND THE NEXUS

The system-wide COVID-19 response risks re-producing humanitarian and development siloes and missing opportunities to strategically link humanitarian and development programming. In its COVID-19 response, UNICEF has adapted its ways of working to respond to the pandemic in ways that create real opportunities for better linking programming for public health emergencies and development programming in its planning and reporting systems. Investing in both the immediate response (i.e., infection prevention and control) and alleviating the medium- to long-term socio-economic impacts has provided an important foundation for improving nexus programming. UNICEF can build on these foundations, as well as its work with and through states to strengthen state-led responses to the pandemic, which have relied on its strong relationships and networks with government line ministries across multiple sectors, as well as its sub-national presence.

Recommendations

1. Maximize learning and opportunities for linking humanitarian and development programming and contributions to peace and social cohesion provided by the COVID-19 response, including through more integrated planning and reporting systems, and simultaneous investment in short- and medium-term measures.

Responsibility: EMOPS, PD and DAPM.

2. Build on the momentum of the COVID-19 response to further support shock-responsive social protection and strengthen local and national capacities for disaster risk management.

Responsibility: PD and EMOPS.

REFERENCES

- Centre on International Cooperation, 'The Triple Nexus in Practice: Toward a new way of working in protracted and repeated crises', CIC, New York, 2019.
- Council of the European Union, 'Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development Nexus', 2017.
- Dadu-Brown, S., A. Dadu and M. Zaid, 'Exploring the Nexus between Humanitarian and Development Goals in Aleppo', IIED, December 2017.
- Dalrymple, S., 'Donors at the triple nexus: lessons from the United Kingdom', Development Initiatives, December 2019.
- Dalrymple, S. and A. Urquhart, 'Peace in the Triple Nexus: What challenges do donors face?', Development Initiatives, 18 December 2019.
- Delgado, C., 'World Food Programme's Contribution to Improving the Prospects for Peace, Preliminary report', SIPRI, 2019.
- Dolan, C. and J. Shoham, 'Humanitarian-Development Nexus: Nutrition programming and policy in Kenya', ENN, 2017.
- European Commission, 'A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action', EU, Brussels, 2017.
- European External Action Service, 'The EU Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises', 2017.
- Fast, L. 'Beyond Local and International: Humanitarian action at the margins', Humanitarian Policy Group, December 2019.
- Food and Agriculture Organization, Norwegian Refugee Council and United Nations Development Programme, *Financing the Nexus: Gaps and opportunities from a field perspective*, FAO, NRC and UNDP, 2019.
- Herbert, S. 'Lessons from Stabilization, State-Building and Development Programming in South Sudan', Governance and Social Development Resource Centre, January 2020.
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 'Commitments into Action: A holistic and coherent response to COVID-19 across the humanitarian-development-peace nexus', May 2020.
- Inter-Agency Standing Committee and United Nations Working Group on Transitions, 'Background Paper on Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus', 2016.
- International Committee of the Red Cross, 'ICRC Interim Position Paper on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus', 2018.
- International Council of Voluntary Agencies, 'Demystifying the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus - Topic 1: The "nexus" explained', ICVA, 2019.
- Itad, 'Evaluation of UNICEF's Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations, Nigeria Mission Evaluation Report', 2019.
- Medinilla, A. et al., 'Think Local. Governance, humanitarian aid, development and peace-building in Somalia', ECDPM, Discussion Paper No. 246, March 2019.

REFERENCES

- Mosello, B. and L. Ruttinger, 'Linking Adaptation and Peacebuilding: Lessons learned and the way forward', Climate Security Expert Network, 2019.
- Nordic Consulting Group, 'Evaluation of the Linkage of Humanitarian Aid and Development Cooperation at the SDC', NCG, 2018.
- Norwegian Refugee Council, 'Ukraine Country Study: Humanitarian financing task team output IV', NRC, 2019.
- O'Brien, C. et al., 'Shock-Responsive Social Protection Systems Research: Synthesis report', ODI, 2018.
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19 – May Update', OCHA, May 2020.
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Global Humanitarian Response Plan COVID-19 Progress Report: Second edition', OCHA, 31 August 2020.
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'New Way of Working', OCHA, 2017.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 'DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus', OECD, 2019.
- Overseas Development Institute Humanitarian Policy Group, 'Opportunities and Challenges in Humanitarian-Development Programming in the MENA region: An informal learning review for UNICEF MENARO' (internal), ODI, 2020.
- Oxfam, 'The Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. What does it mean for multi-mandated organizations?', Oxfam, June 2019.
- Papoulidis, J., 'Fixing Fragility: Why it's time to rewrite the rulebook', *The New Humanitarian*, 10 April 2019.
- Peters, K. et al., 'Double Vulnerability: The humanitarian implications of intersecting climate and conflict risk', ODI, ICRC and Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre, March 2019.
- Peters, K. and F. Pichon, 'Crisis Modifiers: A Solution for a more flexible development-humanitarian system – executive summary', BRACED, ODI, November 2017.
- Pieterse, Pieterella, 'Draft Social Accountability for Healthcare Quality Improvement Study', UNICEF, 2019.
- Red Cross European Union Office, 'The European Union Humanitarian-Development Nexus', 2018.
- Redvers, L., 'Searching for the Nexus: The view from the ground', *The New Humanitarian*, 24 September 2019.
- Schmitz Guinote, F., 'A Humanitarian-Development Nexus that Works', Humanitarian Law & Policy, 21 June 2018.
- Slim, H., 'Nexus Thinking in Humanitarian Policy: How does everything fit together on the ground?', 2017.
- Swithern, Sophia, 'Donors at the Triple Nexus: Lessons from Sweden', Development Initiatives, December 2019.
- Tebaldi, Raquel, 'Building Shock-Responsive National Social Protection Systems in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA region)', IPC-IG, UNDP and UNICEF, 2019.
- United Nations, 'A UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19', UN, April 2020.
- United Nations, World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2018.

REFERENCES

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Approaches to Providing Cash Based Assistance to Meet Needs of Children in Protracted Crises: Lessons from Turkey', UNICEF, 2019.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action', UNICEF, New York, 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Evaluation of Social Cash Transfer Programmes in Emergencies', UNICEF (forthcoming).

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Evaluation of UNICEF Contribution to Education in Humanitarian Settings', UNICEF, New York, 2019.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Evaluation of UNICEF's Coverage and Quality in Complex Humanitarian Situations: Afghanistan', UNICEF, New York, 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Gender Action Plan 2018–2021', UNICEF, New York, 2017.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Gender Section HQ Assessment of Gender-Sensitive COVID-19 Response', UNICEF, 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Global Evaluation of UNICEF's WASH Programming in Protracted Crises, 2014–2019: Results in development', UNICEF, May 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Guidance Note on Programming Approaches and Priorities to Prevent, Mitigate and Address Immediate Health and Socio-Economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Global Pandemic on Children', UNICEF, 12 April 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Humanitarian Cash Transfers Programmatic Guidance', UNICEF, n.d.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Integrated Social Protection Systems: Enhancing equity for children', UNICEF, 2012.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Programme Framework for Fragile Contexts', UNICEF, 2018.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Programme Guidance: Strengthening Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems', UNICEF, 2019.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Programme Policy and Procedure Manual', UNICEF, 2007.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Realizing Potential: Evaluation of UNICEF's gender action plans', UNICEF, December 2019.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Social Protection for Children and Families in the Context of Migration and Displacement during COVID-19', UNICEF, August 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Social Protection System Readiness Assessment Tool and User Guide Document', UNICEF (forthcoming).

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Strengthening UNICEF's Humanitarian Action – The Humanitarian Review: Findings and recommendations', UNICEF, September 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Global COVID-19 Mid-Term Update No. 9 Feb-July 2020', UNICEF, 2 August 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Procedure on the Regulatory Framework', UNICEF, New York, 2016.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Social Protection Response to COVID-19: Technical note', UNICEF, 2020.

REFERENCES

United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021', UNICEF, New York, 2018.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF's Global Social Protection Programme Framework', UNICEF, 2019.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Update on UNICEF Humanitarian Action with a Focus on Linking Humanitarian and Development Programming', UNICEF, 2019.

United Nations Children's Fund, 'Yemen Emergency Crisis Response Project Fifth Additional Financing (P172662). Social Impact Assessment (SIA) for Component 3 (Emergency Cash Transfer)', UNICEF, 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund Office of Research – Innocenti, 'Gender-Responsive Age-Sensitive Social Protection: A conceptual framework', UNICEF, 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund Office of Research – Innocenti, 'The Difference a Dollar a Day Can Make: Lessons from UNICEF Jordan's Hajati cash transfer programme', UNICEF, 2020.

United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Entity for Gender Equity and the Empowerment of Women, United Nations Development Programme and United Nations Population Fund, 'Joint Statement: One UN for family leave and childcare', UNICEF, UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA, June 2019.

United Nations Development Programme, 'Brief #2 Putting the UN Framework for Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19 into Action: Insights', UNDP, June 2020.

United Nations Development Programme, 'The Women, Peace and Security Agenda', UNDP, 2019.

Väänänen, E. et al., 'Linking Climate Risk Insurance with Shock-Responsive Social Protection', InsuResilience Global Partnership, 2019.

Watson, C. et al., 'Finance for Reducing Disaster Risk: 10 things to know', ODI, UNDP, March 2015.

World Food Programme, 'WFP and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus', Discussion Paper: WFP Executive Board June 2018 – Side Event on the Triple Nexus, 2018.

World Bank, 'World Bank Group Strategy for Fragility, Conflict and Violence 2020-2025', World Bank, 2020.

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Formative Evaluation of UNICEF's Work to Link Humanitarian and Development Programming

1. Introduction

This TOR describes the Evaluation Office's preliminary ideas about how to approach a formative evaluation of UNICEF's work to link its humanitarian and development programming. This will be a forward-looking exercise, designed to provide insights and recommendations for learning and improving UNICEF's work in this area.

The TOR outlines the purpose of the evaluation, its objectives and scope. It also suggests some potential evaluation questions, and the methods to be used to answer them. Finally, it describes the team composition.

2. Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of this evaluation is to improve UNICEF's work in this area. The lessons learned about what is working well are intended to be replicated and scaled up. The evaluation will also point out areas of weakness and suggestion ways that these might be addressed.

The secondary purposes are first to document how much progress UNICEF has made in this area. This information will become a key resource for future evaluative work by providing a sort of 'baseline' of the organization's progress. Second, this piece of work is intended to be of use to the international development and humanitarian community as it considers how best to link humanitarian and development programming and address similar challenges UNICEF may be facing.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- Assess the quality of UNICEF's approach to bridging the humanitarian-development divide, as well as how well this approach fits with other commitments the organization has made
- Assess to what extent UNICEF's approach has been implemented at different levels of the organization
- Assess the effectiveness these measures in improved programming

3. Evaluation Scope

UNICEF – This evaluation is of the entire organization's work to bridge humanitarian and development programming. This means the evaluation cover headquarters divisions, regional offices, country offices and field offices.

Timeframe – The evaluation is forward looking. It will look primarily at recent developments and assess the *direction* of work in this area. Data collected will cover the period of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021 to the present.

Geography – The geographic scope matches that of the UNICEF Procedure on Linking Humanitarian and Development which is applicable to all UNICEF Country Offices but has a particular focus on 53 countries labelled as 'fragile'.

Annex 1 continued

Programming - The evaluation will cover UNICEF's work spanning from results on the ground to policy level. It will look at how UNICEF has bridged its humanitarian and development programming in all sectors as well as in all 'supporting functions' such as HR, supply, fundraising, communication, and advocacy. It will also cover UNICEF's engagement at the inter-agency level.

4. Potential Evaluation Questions

Definitions and Policy

1. Does UNICEF have a clear, common and well communicated definition and understanding of the nexus and related key terms?
2. Does UNICEF have a clear and coherent policy on the nexus (and related terms)?
3. Is policy related to the nexus being effectively communicated across the organization, rolled out at field level and communicated to partners and key stakeholders?

Coherence and Principles

4. Has UNICEF's policy and approach to the nexus considered how humanitarian, development and peacebuilding approaches and principles relate to each other and the extent to which overlapping principles are coherent?
5. Is UNICEF maintaining principled commitments to neutrality, impartiality and independence in ways that enable it to access populations on all sides of conflicts and maximize coverage of assistance?
6. Where there are trade-offs between development and humanitarian goals (for instance prioritizing urgent or long-term

needs when resources are scarce) are these explicitly analyzed, and decisions evidence based?

Strategy and Planning

7. What evidence is there of global policy commitments related to the nexus translating effectively into changes in approach at regional and country levels in planning and strategy documents and approaches in
 - a. programme and operational strategies (system strengthening, localization, social protection systems, people at the centre of the response)
 - b. 'enablers' (risk informed programming, preparedness and contingency planning)
 - c. inter-agency and system wide-strategies (leadership and coordination, coordinated needs assessment, multi-year response strategies, flexible finance)

Effectiveness

8. What evidence is there of concrete changes to programming approaches at field level in response to nexus and related commitments?
9. Does UNICEF development and humanitarian programming in crisis affected countries have:
 - a. programme and operational strategies (system strengthening, localization, social protection systems, people at the centre of the response)
 - b. 'enablers' (risk informed programming, preparedness and contingency planning)
 - c. inter-agency and system wide-strategies (leadership and coordination, coordinated needs assessment, multi-year response strategies, flexible finance)

Annex 1 continued**Efficiency**

10. Are an appropriate level of resources, skills and capacities being devoted at HQ, regional and country levels towards nexus related commitments?
11. What are the transaction costs of being engaged in nexus processes?
12. Is delivery on nexus related commitments being effectively measured, monitored and evaluated?

Resources

13. Is UNICEF successfully mobilizing sufficient resources to effectively deliver on nexus commitments?
14. Is UNICEF providing sufficient resources to those organizations it funds to enable them to deliver on nexus related objectives?
15. Does UNICEF have staff with the right skills and experience in place to deliver on nexus related commitments?

5. Approach and Methods

This evaluation will use a mixed-method approach, relying on both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The questions will be answered by looking at i) the global evidence base, ii) a light review of the ten largest emergencies by humanitarian expenditure and iii) a four in-depth country case studies.

During the inception period the evaluation team will determine the appropriate approach to answer each evaluation question. It is anticipated however, that this will include collecting and analyzing information from:

- relevant UNICEF procedures, policy statements, Executive Board presentations, the organization's commitments, the UNICEF Strategic Plan
- reviews and evaluations at all levels of the organization and other agencies/NGOs/partners
- various reporting data collected by UNICEF such as country office annual reports, including Strategic Monitoring Questions (SMQs), information available through UNICEF's Emergency Preparedness Platform.
- collecting information from interviews with staff at all levels of the organization and partners
- direct observation of programmes in the field

This exercise will run in parallel with a review managed by EMOPS which will map and assess how UNICEF is integrating its humanitarian and development work in the ten largest emergencies. The review will collect data from the top ten humanitarian emergencies and the evaluation team will assist with part of this work. For more information on how these two exercises will relate to each other please see "EMOPS EO Coordination on LHD Exercises"

6. Evaluation Management

The evaluation will be managed by the UNICEF Evaluation Office. The Evaluation Office will be advised by a reference group made up of UNICEF staff from various divisions and offices in the organization (EMOPS, PD, SD, COs etc.). Please see the terms of reference for the reference group for specific roles and responsibilities of the group.

◀ Annex 1 continued**7. Ethics**

The evaluation team will adhere to the UN Evaluation Group Ethical Guidelines,¹ and the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis.² This will mean, if necessary, undergoing the ethical review by an external ethical review board.

8. Team Composition & Required Qualifications

The review will be conducted by an external evaluation team of consultants and one UNICEF Evaluation Office staff member. The external consultants will consist of one team leader and two senior consultants. If necessary, a few additional consultants will be recruited in future to help with in-country data collection, will be recruited in the future.

The consultants will commit to working on this review full time from October 2019 to June 2020. The team leader and one senior consultant will be awarded a contract of 85 days. The second senior consultant will be awarded a contract for 70 days. The third consultant will be awarded a contract for 65 days. The three consultants will work closely with UNICEF evaluation staff and the entire team will be responsible for designing the evaluation, undertaking the data collection and analysis, conducting the debriefing session and recommendations workshop, as well as preparing the evaluation deliverables and reports.

Required Qualifications of external consultants

- extensive experience in emergency response and development programming
- extensive experience researching development, resilience, humanitarian action, trends in the international aid community
- knowledge of latest methods and approaches in evaluation, especially participatory methods and accountability to affected populations
- familiarity with UNICEF's emergency responses and development programming
- excellent oral and written communication skills
- knowledge of qualitative and quantitative methods
- experience with the ethics of evidence generation; experience collecting data from vulnerable groups; familiarity with ethical safeguards
- *For the position of team leader, experience in managing a research team*

¹ UNEG Ethical Guidelines, 2008. Available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

² UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis, 2015. https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF

Annex 2. List of interviewees

Name		Organization	Title
Abdi	Abdullahi M	Womankind Kenya Wokike	Executive Director
Abdel-Jalil	Youssef	UNICEF	Deputy Regional Director, LACRO
Abdulla Ibrahim	Amina	CONCERN WORLDWIDE	Country Director
Adam	Segolene	UNICEF	Chief, EMOPS
Addai	Eddie	UNICEF	UNICEF Representative to the AU & ECA
Aguero	Alejandro Escolona	UNICEF	Chief Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation, Haiti CO
Ahmed	Tameez	UNICEF	Chief of WASH, Nepal CO
Al-Musawi	Husam	UNICEF	Chief of Field Office, Iraq CO
Amani	Passy	UNICEF	Education Manager, Nigeria CO
Ambrosini	Miriam	TDH Italy (Education Cluster partner)	Country Representative
Amyot	Annick	Canada	Lead Analyst
Arnaud	Stephane	UNICEF	Chief of Supply & Procurement, Ethiopia CO
Azaryeva Valente	Anna	UNICEF	Programme Specialist, PD
Bainvl	Bertrand	UNICEF	Deputy Regional Director, MENA
Ban	Hyun Hee	UNICEF	Chief, Social Policy, Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation (SPPME), South Sudan CO
Barbelet	Veronique	HPG	Research Fellow
Barnes	Sara	Lutheran World Federation	Programme Representative
Behah	Amedou	UNICEF	Chief of WASH, Burkina Faso CO
Beigbeder	Edouard	UNICEF	Representative, DRC CO
Bondowe	Roots Muhindo Virihi	UNICEF	Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist, Mali CO
Borrel	Annalies	UNICEF	Senior Adviser, PD
Boutin	Genevieve	UNICEF	Deputy Director, PD
Brand	Yannick	UNICEF	Regional Emergency Adviser, MENA
Brown	Edward	World Vision International Ethiopia	Country Director
Budak	Adalet	Government	Head of Humanitarian and Social Development Department, South East Anatolia Administration (GAP)
Budiman	Nikolasia	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia	
Buono	Gianluca	UNICEF	Chief of Field Operations, Yemen CO
Calivis	Maria	UNICEF	Retiree
Carrera	Fernando	UNICEF	Chief of Social Policy, Indonesia CO

◀ Annex 2 continued

Name		Organization	Title
Chaiban	Ted	UNICEF	Regional Director, MENA
Clark	Trevor	UNICEF	Chief of Field Operations, Ethiopia CO
Colamarco	Victoria	UNICEF	Deputy Representative (Programme), Colombia CO
De Lys	Hervé Ludovic	UNICEF	Representative, Venezuela CO
Duamelle	Philippe	UNICEF	Representative, Yemen CO
Eijkenaar	Jan	UNICEF	Chief Humanitarian Evidence & Learning, EMOPS
Eikeland	Elin	Norway	Head of Cooperation
Eisenbarth	Natalie	USAID	
Elmi	Lucia	UNICEF	Special Representative, East Jerusalem
Equiza	Fran	UNICEF	Representative, CAR CO
Erkmen	Husseyin	Government	Deputy Mayor, Kilis Municipality
Evans-Gutierrez	Leonora	ITAD	
Foumbi	Joseph	UNICEF	Retiree
Ganesh	Vidhya	UNICEF	Director, DAPM
Gass	Robert	UNICEF	Deputy Representative, Indonesia CO
Gilgan	Megan	UNICEF	Deputy Director, Public Partnerships Division
Gough	Jean	UNICEF	Regional Director, ROSA
Goyol	Kitka	UNICEF	Chief of WASH, Ethiopia CO
Grieve	Tim	UNICEF	Senior WASH Adviser (Emergencies), PD
Guerrero Oteyza	Saul Ignacio	UNICEF	Senior Nutrition Adviser, PD
Guluma	Esther	UNICEF	Retiree
Haddad Mardini	Carla	UNICEF	Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships
Hahn	Jennifer	UNICEF	Donor Relations Specialist, Indonesia CO
Haiplik	Brenda	UNICEF	Chief of Education, Turkey CO
Hale	Harlan	USAID	Regional Adviser OFDA
Harysantoso	Try Laksono	UNICEF	Chief of Field Office, Indonesia CO
Hassan	Bashir Said	Save the Children	Child Protection Sub-cluster Coordinator
Hawkins	Peter	UNICEF	Representative, Nigeria CO
Hedges	James	UNICEF	Chief of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Zimbabwe CO
Heissler	Karin	UNICEF	Chief of Child Protection, Ethiopia CO
Henley	Louis	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia	Disaster Risk Management Adviser
Hicyilmaz	Merve	Ministry of Youth and Sports	Youth Programme Coordinator
Hirabayashi	Kunihiko Chris	UNICEF	Regional Adviser, Child Survival & Development, EAPRO
Hofmann	Charles Antoine	UNICEF	Senior Adviser, EMOPS

◀ Annex 2 continued

Name		Organization	Title
Holtsberg	Peter	WFP	Senior Programme Manager
Ironside	Pernille	UNICEF	Deputy Director, DAPM
Islam	Safiqul	BRAC	Director of Education
Islam	Ziaul	International Center for Dishara	Senior Program Coordinator, Covid-19 Isolation and Treatment Centre
Jackson	Alexandra	ICRC	Global Adviser on Child Protection
Janssen	Corien	IRC	Grants Coordinator
Jazairi	Leila	UNICEF	Humanitarian Affairs Specialist
Jenkins	Robert	UNICEF	Associate Director, Education
Kaloga	Inah Fatoumata	UNICEF	Chief of Child Protection, Nepal CO
Kamenga	Claudes	UNICEF	Representative, Papua New Guinea CO
Karanja	Simon	UNICEF	Nutrition Manager, Nigeria CO
Kardan	Andrew	UNICEF	Social Policy Specialist, Zimbabwe CO
Kavlak	Ibrahim Vurgun	Association for Solidarity with Asylum Seekers and Migrants (ASAM)	Director General
Khan	Afshan	UNICEF	Regional Director, ECARO
Khodr	Adele	UNICEF	Representative, Ethiopia CO
Koch	Vincent	Oxfam Bangladesh	Humanitarian Program Director
Kunugi	June	UNICEF	Representative, Myanmar CO
Kuuyuor	Titus	UNDP	Senior Resilience Adviser
Lange	Kirstin	UNICEF	Programme Specialist (Disability Inclusive Humanitarian Action)
Lasker	Romano	UNDP	Program Specialist Crisis and Fragility, Policy Engagement Team
Lawry-White	Simon	Vine Management Consulting Ltd	Director
Leger	Felix	ECHO	Technical Assistant, Health and Education
Leity	Grant	UNICEF	Deputy Director, EMOPS
Lilly	Damian		Consultant
Lowe	Michelle	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia	Counsellor for Human Development
Luchmann	Rudi	UNICEF	Chief, DAPM
Mahdi	Khouloud	ACF	Deputy Water Sector Coordinator
Manfield	Pete	UNICEF	Regional Emergency Adviser, ESARO
Marino	Katya	UNICEF	Deputy Representative, DRC CO
Marro	Antonio	UNICEF	Chief of Emergency, Haiti CO
Massey	Emma	DFID	Lead - DFID HARRIS programme
Maulin	Nicholas	ECHO	
Mawji	Shairose	UNICEF	Deputy Representative, Jordan CO

◀ Annex 2 continued

Name		Organization	Title
Mazhar	Yousuf	IMC	Senior Coordinator (WASH and Civil Engineering)
Mendonca	Veera	UNICEF	Deputy Representative, Bangladesh CO
Messina	Michele	UNICEF	Emergency Specialist, EMOPS
Milante	Gary	SIPRI	
Mishra	Usha	UNICEF	Chief of Social Policy, Nepal CO
Moore	Anthea	UNICEF	Emergency Specialist, EMOPS
Moshiri	Laylee	UNICEF	Representative, Zimbabwe CO
Mugaju	James	UNICEF	Deputy Representative, Burkina Faso CO
Mulenga	Doreen	UNICEF	Representative, Uganda CO
Muryango	Georgette	UNICEF	Operations Manager, Congo CO
Muthee	Christine	UNICEF	Implementing Partnership Management Specialist, Thailand CO
Mutiso	Joyce	UNICEF	Child Protection Manager, EMOPS
Nabi	Idrees	Board of Relief and Humanitarian Affairs (BRHA), Dohuk	Executive Director
Neves	Rita	UNICEF	Child Protection Specialist, Turkey
Ngurah	Ida	Plan International	
Nikyema	Theophane	UNICEF	Retiree
Nixon	Opiyo	UNICEF	Chief of Field Office, Somalia CO
Olivier	Aida	UNICEF	Representative, Colombia
Olsen	Tom	UNICEF	Supply and Logistics Specialist, SD
Otieno	Elizabeth	CINA	Assistant Director
Owens	Amy	DFID	Programme Manager and Policy Advisor
Oyewale	Tajudeen	UNICEF	Deputy Representative, Pakistan CO
Özertürk	Onur Kutay	Turkish Red Crescent	Deputy Programme Coordinator
Poirier	Marie Pierre	UNICEF	Regional Director, WCARO
Poole	Lydia		Consultant
Pronyk	Paul	UNICEF	Chief of Child Survival and Development, Indonesia CO
Raffi	Koorosh	UNICEF	Regional Evaluation Adviser, EAPRO
Ramadhani	Hamida	UNICEF	Representative, South Sudan CO
Rapold	Silas	UNICEF	Chief of Planning, Indonesia CO
Rishani	Karim	UNICEF	Programme Officer, Lebanon CO
Rizvi	Fatima Zehra	UNICEF	Programme Specialist, Jordan CO
Robins	Ann	UNICEF	Health Manager, Ethiopia CO
Rubin	Marc	UNICEF	Regional Emergency Adviser, EAPRO
Rumble	Lauren	UNICEF	Principal Adviser, PD
Saegusa	Asako	UNICEF	Regional Chief of Programme and Planning, EAPRO
Saez	Patrick	Center for Global Development	Senior Policy Fellow
Salah	Rima	UNICEF	Retiree
Schenkenberg	Ed	HERE-Geneva	Director

◀ Annex 2 continued

Name		Organization	Title
Stoianova	Velina		Consultant
Scott	Rachel	UNDP	Senior Policy and Partnerships Adviser
Seck	Amadou	UNICEF	Chief of Planning & Monitoring, Nepal CO
Servadei	Michele	UNICEF	Deputy Representative (Programme), Ethiopia CO
Shahyar	Sarah	UNICEF	Chief of Social Policy, Thailand CO
Shrestah	Rekha	UNICEF	Emergency Specialist, ECARO
Siregar	Margarettha	WVI	Emergency Affairs Director
Sizaret	Frederic	UNICEF	HR Manager, Emergency Unit, DHR
Smith	Kate	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia	Health Focal Point
Soetianto	Agus	Project Hope	Country Director
Sofiani	Lina	UNICEF	Emergency Specialist, Indonesia CO
Spano	Federico	FAO	Social Protection and Resilience
Steets	Julia	GPPi	
Sugi Mita	Michiru	UNICEF	Chief of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Syria CO
Suley	Andrea	UNICEF	Deputy Representative (Programme), South Sudan CO
Swartling Peterson	Stefan	UNICEF	Associate Director, Health
Syed	Nisar	UNICEF	Chief Global Cluster Coordination Unit
Tabbal	George	UNICEF	Chief of WASH, Syria CO
Takona	Timothy	UNICEF	Chief, DAPM
Thapalia	Sharada	UNICEF	Deputy Representative (Operations), Mozambique CO
Thomas	Ann	UNICEF	Senior Adviser, WASH
Unterreiner	Frederic	UNICEF	Regional Planning Adviser, WCARO
Usman	Said	Islamic Relief Pakistan	Director Provincial Field Office of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province
van de Wiel	Lieke	UNICEF	Deputy Regional Director, ESARO
van Hesse	Carmen	UNICEF	Regional Emergency Adviser, ROSA
Vandenent	Maya	UNICEF	Chief of Health and Nutrition, Myanmar CO
Veitch	Jonathan	UNICEF	Deputy Director, Private Fundraising and Partnerships
Vinci	Vincenzo	UNICEF	Social Policy Specialist, Ethiopia CO
Wanmali	Samir	WFP	Deputy Director of Programme and Policy
Warnery	Violet	UNICEF	Senior Project Coordinator, Yemen CO
Wecker	Richard	UNICEF	Emergency Specialist, Indonesia CO
Widjaja	Henky	UNICEF	Chief Field Office, Indonesia CO
Wijesekera	Sanjay	UNICEF	Director of Programmes
Williams	Cornelius	UNICEF	Associate Director, Child Protection
Young	Hamish	UNICEF	Chief, Pakistan CO
Yudhistira	Yewangoe	UNICEF	Chief Field Office, Indonesia CO
Yuster	Alexandra	UNICEF	Associate Director, Social Policy
Zicherman	Nona	UNICEF	Deputy Representative (Programme), Turkey CO

Annex 3. Nexus framework for the South Asia region

Summary of the who, what and how, by context

Context	A There is political will & disaster affects the national population & there is a functioning state	B Disaster affects non-nationals: refugees	C Disaster affects national population but there is no political will or fully functioning state: conflict
Who	Progressive shifting of responsibilities for financing and implementing to national governments	Provision and financing by humanitarian actors likely required in short term; Progressive shift of responsibilities to host governments in protracted situations	Provision and financing by humanitarian actors to a large extent, although in some instances government systems/structures can be used
What: a policy and programme choice and design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shrink the need (DRR, Resilience) Preparedness Better response (faster, more relevant, better targeted, more use of cash and shock-responsive/adaptive programmes) LNOB: programming to ensure needs of poorest and most vulnerable are met and that they can access services 	Alongside ensuring immediate needs are met, focus on long-term well-being, building human, physical and financial capital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education (flexible, portable) Employment opportunities Social Protection Also incorporate DRR, resilience, and preparedness in terms of natural disasters to which refugees are exposed and vulnerable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Long-term 'build back better' perspective wherever possible Use of cash to increase resilience and mitigate effects of crises LNOB: programming to ensure needs of poorest and most vulnerable are met and that they can access services Careful consideration of distributional concerns to ensure peace not undermined Also incorporate DRR, resilience, and preparedness in terms of natural disasters to which refugees are exposed and vulnerable
How: reinforcing not replacing national systems	Risk-informed policy and programming Short-, medium-, and long-term planning for eventual shift in responsibilities to government while ensuring immediate response capacity Entry points include: sector strategies, support to local governments, joint analysis	Policy advocacy with host government to ensure rights of refugees upheld Coordination/consistency in policies/programmes with those for host communities where possible	Utilizing existing government systems for delivery where possible Investing in systems that can be returned/handed over to government eventually, even if implemented by humanitarian system in short term
Effects	Fewer crises Poverty traps weakened More <i>inclusive</i> growth and multi-dimensional poverty reduction Increased government capacity for service delivery	Refugees have better life chances, wherever they end up over the long term Host country government systems strengthened to eventually absorb refugees as context allows	Systems are stronger, greater capacity for delivery over the long term Human, physical and financial capital strengthened as much as possible -> reduced vulnerability over long term

Source: The Humanitarian/Development Nexus: A Framework for UNICEF's South Asian Region

Notes: LNOB is Leave no one behind; DRR is Disaster risk reduction



For further information, please contact:

Evaluation Office

United Nations Children's Fund

Three United Nations Plaza New York, New York 10017

evalhelp@unicef.org

www.unicef.org/evaluation

© United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

March 2021