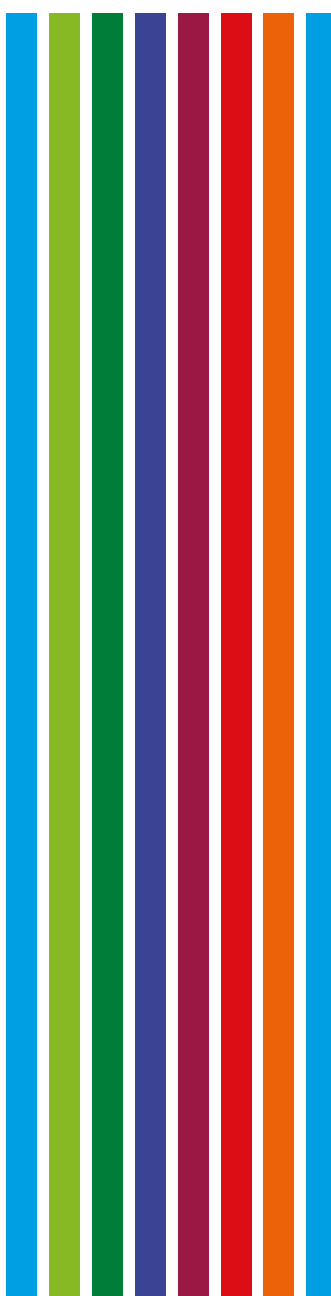




BEST OF UNICEF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION 2020

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The UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti is the dedicated research arm of UNICEF. Its prime objectives are to improve international understanding of issues relating to children’s rights and to help facilitate full implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child across the world. UNICEF Innocenti aims to set out a comprehensive framework for research and knowledge within the organization, in support of UNICEF global policies and programmes, and works with partners to ensure that policies for children are based on evidence. Publications produced by UNICEF Innocenti are contributions to a global debate on children and child rights issues and include a wide range of opinions.

The UNICEF Evaluation function helps UNICEF deliver results for children by fostering evidence-based decision-making. The Evaluation Office works with other divisions at UNICEF headquarters, regional and country offices, as well as with partners, to conduct dozens of evaluations each year. Conclusions and recommendations from these evaluations are essential for shaping policies, programmes, advocacy and partnerships at all levels of the organization. The UNICEF Evaluation Office is also a key actor in strengthening evaluation capacity at the country level.

The text has not been edited to official publication standards and UNICEF accepts no responsibility for errors.

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BEST OF UNICEF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION COORDINATION TEAM

Project management:
Emanuela Bianchera, Ada Ocampo
Advisory oversight:
Kerry Albright, Fabio Sabatini, Priscilla Idele
Technical assistance:
Eugenie Kodogo
Administration:
Patricia Arquero Caballero

EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION

Editorial and design coordination:
Céline Little
Report writing: Scriptoria Sustainable Development Communications
Copy-editing: Lisa Drysdale
Proofreading: Accuracy Matters
Design and layout: blossom.it

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Uyen Kim Huynh
Angie Lee
Celeste Lebowitz
Cristina Pizzolato
Thomas Rossmuller
Kathleen Sullivan

SELECTION PANEL

Best of UNICEF Research 2020

Assefa Bequele
Dina Craissati
Andrea Ordóñez Llanos
Ravi Verma

Most Influential Evaluations 2020

A. K. Shiva Kumar
Nancy MacPherson
Ada Ocampo

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UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti
Via degli Alfani, 58
50121 Florence, Italy
Tel: (+39) 055 20 330
Fax: (+39) 055 2033 220
florence@unicef.org
www.unicef-irc.org
Twitter: @UNICEFInnocenti

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Children and young people celebrate the Convention on the Rights of the Child at Patan Durbar Square in Lalitpur District in Nepal.

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FOREWORD

For children growing up now, the year 2020 will forever be marked by the virus that locked down their world. The COVID-19 pandemic is also a crisis for child rights, as health care and education are thrown into disarray. In May 2020, UNICEF estimated that, without intervention, disrupted systems could claim the lives of 6,000 children every day for six months.

The pandemic has demanded from UNICEF a response like no other in its 74-year history. With teams on the ground in more than 190 countries, the organization has acted to protect the most vulnerable children, mobilize the global community and advocate for the interruption to the status quo to be used to reimagine a world fit for every child.

The UNICEF Reimagine campaign provides a holistic vision of the world after 2020 – one which includes the full participation of children and young people. Notably, the enactment of this vision requires sound, evidence-informed decision-making. We cannot stop searching for answers to key questions, nor can we delay gathering more data and generating evaluative evidence to influence change.

In previous years, UNICEF has recognized excellent research and evaluations through two award schemes: Best of UNICEF Research

and Most Influential Evaluations. For 2020, the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti and the UNICEF Evaluation Office joined forces to produce a single publication based on these exercises. It is with great pleasure that we present the *Best of UNICEF Research and Evaluation 2020*.

In the current global political climate, evidence, facts and objective assessment are needed more than ever to help enhance the rights and well-being of the world's children and to ensure that we achieve maximum value for money for children with every UNICEF dollar spent. Researching the changing world around us and evaluating progress towards a better world are two sides of the same coin, both critical to reimagining the future.

The Best of UNICEF Research 2020 finalists consist of 10 research pieces originally published in English, French and Spanish. They cover diverse goal areas of UNICEF programming around the world, from health, education and child protection to social policy.

Some of this research is especially relevant amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The importance of understanding the influence of community linkages and social inequalities on Ebola virus disease preparedness in **Uganda** reveals

essential principles for shaping policy responses to other epidemics. An analysis of impacts on **Chad** of the 2014–2016 oil price crisis holds lessons for oil-dependent countries now facing a much deeper price shock. A youth-led exploration of social media use across **East Asia** has significant potential for impact as more of life moves online than ever before.

Other finalists went to great lengths to bring young voices into their research. In **Italy**, unaccompanied and separated children shared stories of their transition into adulthood, while adjusting to a new context and healing from traumas. Research on child labour in **Ethiopia** enriched existing national data by surveying 'hard-to-reach' children, especially those with disabilities and those without a home.

The prevalence of locally owned and conducted research is another encouraging trend. Researchers from **Belarus** captured the effects of social and fiscal policies on children while applying the first measurement of multidimensional child poverty in the country. The most comprehensive assessment of student learning ever conducted in **Uzbekistan**, as a collaboration between UNICEF and the Ministry of Public Education, is informing ongoing education sector reforms. A comparative analysis of maternity, paternity and parental



leave and breastfeeding support across **24 Latin American** countries makes a compelling case for policy change throughout the region.

A number of research pieces expertly applied rigorous, yet innovative mixed methods. UNICEF **Mozambique** reviewed its school readiness pilot programme using a strong mix of tools, including a longitudinal trial, cost analysis, qualitative interviews and parent-led focus group discussions. Research on integrated safety net programmes in **Ethiopia** also combined quantitative and qualitative instruments with a substantial process evaluation.

For the eight evaluation finalists featured in this publication, the key factors were quality and ‘significant influence’ – that is, influence that is consequential to social change and which is likely to lead, or has already led, to improvements at scale in the lives of children.

One factor leading to influence is the articulation of alternative approaches that can support a world fit for all children. In **Bulgaria**, which has significant rates of institutionalized children, an evaluation of a more family-centric approach to childcare, based on alternative care and risk prevention, showed a different pathway. Evidence on an early childhood development strategy in

Nepal demonstrated the need to coordinate action across the multiple sectoral ministries responsible for service delivery. An evaluation in **El Salvador** proved the benefits of a pilot programme that connected education and early childhood care to violence prevention and a culture of coexistence.

The best evaluations lead not only to the reimagining of our world, but also to commitments that can help to realize this vision. An evaluation of the national Birth Registration Programme in **Nigeria** spurred political commitment to support more registration centres, while also influencing within UNICEF the integrated programming approach to registration. In the **State of Palestine**, fading commitment to community-based family centres was revitalized when an independent evaluation revealed the essential child protection services they provide.

Other finalists demonstrated, and enabled, better targeting through better evidence. An evaluation of UNICEF responses to **complex humanitarian emergencies worldwide**



Gunilla Olsson
Director
UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti

influenced the development of UNICEF’s current Strategic Plan (2018–2021) through an evidence-informed understanding of how to reach the most vulnerable. In **Thailand**, an evaluation of a child support grant successfully argued for an expansion of the programme that avoids excluding significant numbers of families in need. Both of these evaluations also have strong relevance in facing the COVID-19 emergency and its socioeconomic fallout. So, too, does an evaluation of a community-led sanitation and hygiene programme in **Malawi**, which assessed solutions in a country where 15 million people lack a place to wash their hands.

From where we are now, the path to a better world for all children will not be a clear and well-paved one. Yet we know that high-quality research and evaluations, combined with a commitment to enhancing influence and use from the outset, will help show the way. We welcome you to the *2020 Best of UNICEF Research and Evaluation* report with feelings of both urgency and hope.



George Laryea-Adjei
Director
UNICEF Evaluation Office



SELECTION PROCESS AND CRITERIA



THE BEST OF UNICEF RESEARCH PROCESS

About Best of UNICEF Research

For the past eight years, the Best of UNICEF Research annual competition, managed by the UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, has invited UNICEF colleagues around the world to submit their best and most recent examples of quality research for children. The aim is to promote research best practices to identify where they may be scaled up, and to award quality studies with a high potential for impact on policies and programmes that benefit children.

Eligibility and assessment criteria

All UNICEF offices, including country and regional offices, headquarters divisions and National Committees, are invited to submit research outputs undertaken or commissioned by UNICEF and completed within the last two years. Submissions must meet the following UNICEF definition of research:

“Research is the systematic process of the collection and analysis of data and information, in order to generate new knowledge, to answer a specific question or to test a hypothesis. Its methodology must be sufficiently documented to permit assessment and replication. Research at UNICEF should examine relevant issues and yield evidence for better programme and policy advice.”

– *Taxonomy for Defining and Classifying UNICEF Research, Evaluation & Studies*

To avoid potential conflicts of interest and ensure impartiality in the review process, research conducted by UNICEF Innocenti, or co-authored by a UNICEF Innocenti staff member, is ineligible for consideration.

Submissions are assessed on the basis of originality, relevance of the topic, conceptualization, methodology, clarity and appeal of presentation, ethical standards, and potential for future impact.

Review process for 2020

Internal assessment: Each of the Best of UNICEF Research 2020 submissions was prescreened for eligibility. Those deemed eligible were peer-reviewed by six thematic review groups – each comprising 10 to 12 UNICEF Innocenti researchers with relevant expertise – overseen by a coordinating group to ensure consistency in process and scoring. A shortlist of the top 10 submissions (eight written in English, one in French and one in Spanish) was agreed by the coordinating group and then sent for external peer review.

External peer review: Four international experts with significant academic and policy experience, and good knowledge of UNICEF, reviewed the research of the 10 finalists. As well as provide comments on each piece, the panel selected the three final winners and recommended a further three pieces to receive special recognition.





THE MOST INFLUENTIAL EVALUATIONS PROCESS

About Most Influential Evaluations

The UNICEF Evaluation Office commissioned its first study on Most Influential Evaluations in 2018. The process aimed to analyse, through a series of case studies, the extent to which evaluations conducted or commissioned by UNICEF had been influential. The Most Influential Evaluations 2018 study called for the submission of evaluations that demonstrated significant levels of influence at the national or organizational level. Thirty submissions were received and analysed. Based on this analysis, and also on the Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System (GEROS) ratings for 2018, the UNICEF Evaluation Office selected the five best evaluations of 2018.

In 2020, the UNICEF Evaluation Office launched its second Most Influential Evaluations study. As part of this study, UNICEF evaluation staff from across all seven regions, and the Evaluation Office itself, were invited to submit high-quality and highly influential evaluations. The 45 submissions were assessed for the highest level of influence achieved, both at the national and global level, as well as within UNICEF.

Eight finalists were identified as first-rate examples of influential evaluation, from which the Influential Evaluations Team – a panel of three international experts, two external and one internal then selected the three final winners. The submissions covered evaluations conducted in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Eligibility and assessment criteria

Criteria for the *selection of the three best evaluations* included achievement of the following:

1. Significant external influence on one or more of: national policy, systems, strategy and legislation; national programming; resource mobilization; partnerships; advocacy; and coalition building, evaluative culture and capacity.
2. Significant internal influence on one or more of UNICEF: strategy, positioning, programming, learning, management, leadership and governance.
3. Rating as quality evaluation, both in the GEROS rating system and as determined by the Influential Evaluations Team in its analysis of the evaluations.

Review process for 2020

Internal assessment: A shortlist of 23 evaluations was selected from the initial body of 45 submissions sent by evaluation staff from UNICEF's seven regions and from the global Evaluation Office. Eight evaluations were selected as case studies, according to their level of influence, and sent for peer review.

Independent review: Selection of the three winning evaluations was conducted by the Influential Evaluations Team comprising two external international evaluation experts and one senior evaluation specialist from within UNICEF.

Official publication process

The Best of UNICEF Research and Evaluation project management team, comprising members of UNICEF Innocenti and the UNICEF Evaluation Office, worked together from April 2020 to bring together and harmonize the two independent award processes and create this joint publication featuring all of the finalists and winners.

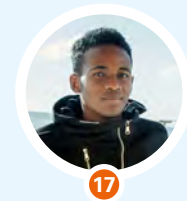


SUMMARY REPORTS



Goal Area ONE
Every child survives

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- 02 Nigeria
- 03 Uganda



Goal Area TWO
Every child learns

- 04 El Salvador
- 05 Mozambique
- 06 Uzbekistan



Goal Area THREE
Every child is protected from violence and exploitation

- 07 Bulgaria
- 08 Ethiopia
- 09 Palestine



Goal Area FOUR
Every child lives in a safe and clean environment

- 10 Malawi



Goal Area FIVE
Every child has an equitable chance in life

- 11 Belarus
- 12 Chad
- 13 Ethiopia
- 14 LACRO
- 15 Thailand



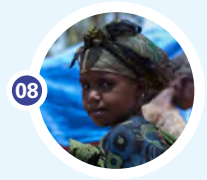
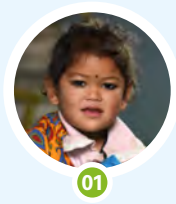
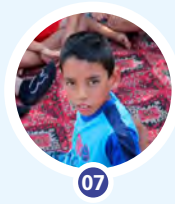
Cross-cutting

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RESEARCH

EVALUATION





GOAL AREA
ONE



EVERY CHILD SURVIVES

01 NEPAL



How was evidence used to reshape early childhood development policies in Nepal?

02 NIGERIA



What was the impact of the Birth Registration Programme in Nigeria?

03 UGANDA



What can community perspectives bring to Ebola virus disease preparedness in Uganda?







NEPAL

Evaluation of the National Early Childhood Development Program

How was evidence used to reshape early childhood development policies in Nepal?

Evaluation Manager: Dipu Shakya, ECD Specialist, UNICEF Nepal

Authors: Dr Shrochis Karki, Dr Prem Narayan Aryal, Dr Sushan Acharya, Meenakshi Dahal, Jaya Upadhyay, Dhruva Ghimire, Kritika Singh



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

This strategic evaluation was commended by the panel for underscoring the importance of a holistic approach to early childhood development (ECD). The evaluation aimed to inform a new ECD national strategy in Nepal. The resulting evidence showed that the new strategy should spell out the minimum ECD services that every child should receive, from birth to 5 years of age. The evaluation also informed the UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan 2018–2022, which identifies programming for ECD as a key cross-sectoral issue in Nepal.

© UNICEF Nepal/2015/KPanday

Children play with letter blocks from an Early Child Development kit in a child-friendly space created as part of the Nepal earthquake response in Bilaune Danda Village, Dhading District.



Early moments matter for every child's development. This principle has been recognized globally over time and consolidated through the adoption of United Nations Sustainable Development Goal Target 4.2, calling for all girls and boys to have access to quality ECD by 2030.

Amid the political, social and educational transformation that Nepal is undergoing, there has been a renewed focus on ECD, with evidence showing progress, even if slow. In 2004, a Strategy Paper for Early Childhood Development in Nepal was developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Education (MoE) at the time. The document set out an action plan to integrate ECD service delivery across the five sectors considered central to ECD provision: education, health, nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and protection.

This evaluation of Nepal's National Early Childhood Development Program (2004–2015) sought to identify potential ways of enhancing coordination among key ministries; demonstrate the linkages between early childhood education (ECE) and other ECD sectoral interventions; and identify the gaps between policy and implementation.

The analysis identified an emphasis on ECE, demonstrating the need to engage key ministries other than the MoE. Through Nepal's decentralized system of government, UNICEF has now uncovered an opportunity to integrate sectoral initiatives under the umbrella of the new ECD strategy for the period 2019–2030.

PURPOSE

There is no doubt that the situation of children in Nepal has improved: young children are now better nourished, less prone to disease and more likely to attend school. But the variable pace of development across regions and socioeconomic groups suggests that the integration of ECD initiatives throughout the country has been uneven. The National Planning Commission (NPC) requested an evaluation to focus primarily on how the ECD programmes had been integrated across sectors, and how relevant stakeholders coordinated ECD service delivery. The lessons learned will prove vital to the NPC in ensuring the success of the 2019–2030 strategy.

APPROACH

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach, combining primary qualitative research with secondary quantitative data analysis and a literature review. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions provided information about stakeholder perceptions of ECD implementation. Data drawn from national databases were used to build a picture of the national context for ECD service provision and the impact of services on outcomes for children.

To account for Nepal's geographical diversity and newly implemented federal structure, seven districts covering all three ecological belts and all seven provinces were selected for the fieldwork. Within these districts, both community- and school-based ECD centres were visited.

Limitations

The evaluation took place in 2018, three years after the ECD programme had ended. Respondents thus had difficulty recalling past activities and many programme officials had since been transferred. Tracing links between the 2004 Strategy Paper and ongoing programming across sectors also proved difficult.

BOX 1 WHAT DO CHILDREN GET OUT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT?

Eat, play, love are the foundations on which the future well-being of a child rests. This combination is never more critical than in the first three years of a child's life, when the brain develops at a faster rate than at any other time. Families are essential to ensure that children grow in nourishing and nurturing environments, but governments have a critical role too in providing support so that every child can reach its developmental potential.

ECD activities cover maternal and child health, nutrition, water and sanitation, early childhood education and child protection. Ideally, these services are provided through an integrated strategy, so that every child receives all ECD services at the appropriate age. ECD strategies are an attempt to draw these disparate threads together so that national targets for children are aligned with global targets, such as those set out in the Sustainable Development Goals.





ECD is a foundation for life. It is the primary stage and first step to educational achievement. It provides a real environment in which to adjust to senior class education. It intends to support a child's physical, social, emotional and psychological development.

– District official quoted in evaluation report

KEY FINDINGS

Holistic in intent, but not in practice

The MoE led the development of the 2004 Strategy Paper to expedite implementation of national commitments to ECD, in line with Nepal's adoption of the global Education for All framework. The strategy was explicit about taking a holistic, integrated approach to ECD, but omitted details regarding coordination. In fact, the main thrust of the National ECD Program was ECE, and delivery of other services to young children was fragmented across sectors. Line ministries were responsible for providing health, nutrition, WASH, education and protection services, but only MoE policies and programmes made direct reference to the strategy. As a result, the programme evaluation had to assess ECD efficacy by sector, and was unable to link findings to the national vision for ECD.

Early childhood education boosted, but unevenly

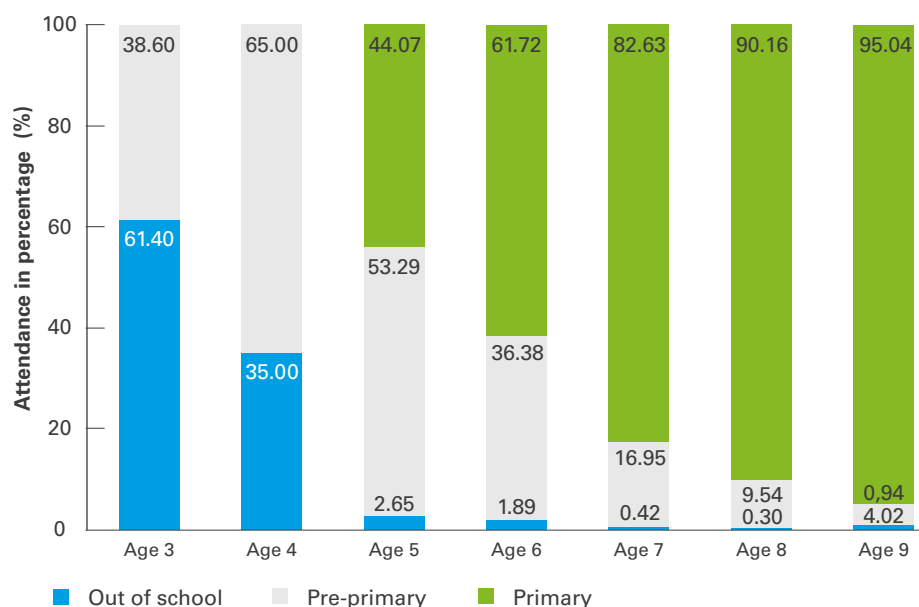
ECD centres increased substantially in number, from 4,032 centres in 2004 to 35,991 centres in 2015, dramatically boosting ECE provision nationwide. By 2011, 88.8 per cent of households lived within 30 minutes of a centre; by 2015, enrolment had doubled to just under 1 million. The proportion of children in their first year of school with experience of ECD also increased, from 10.9 per cent in 2004 to 62.4 per cent in 2014.

Despite these impressive achievements, the evaluation report expresses serious concerns about accessibility and quality of ECE provision. Just 28.9 per cent of children aged 3–5 years in the Far Western Hills could access ECE, compared with 78.2 per cent of their Central Hills peers; only 41.2 per cent of children aged 3–5 years from the poorest fifth of the population attended ECE, compared with 83.5 per cent of those from the richest quintile. Although the evaluation found that 64.4 per cent of children were developmentally on track according to the Early Childhood Development Index, only 28.8 per cent were on track with literary/numeracy. Further, children in the Kathmandu Valley were more than eight times (75.1 per cent) more likely to be on track with literary/numeracy than those in the Far Western Hills (7.7 per cent). Disparities between geographical areas and economic brackets recur in findings across sectors.

The evaluation found limited data on the ages of children in community-based ECD centres, with many underage (under 4 years) and overage children (over 5 years) attending school-based centres, and 20 per cent of those aged 4 years entirely absent. These findings raise questions about ECD service quality as well as access, since it is more difficult for facilitators to manage a range of ages. While facilitators receive training, low pay and insufficient resources translate into poor motivation and retention. Although the budget for ECD is increasing, it still represents only 1.47 per cent of Nepal's total education budget, and community-based centres are in decline.



FIGURE 1
Overage and underage early childhood development centre attendance



Source: Calculation made by the author based on Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2014 data.

TABLE 1
Early childhood development centre attendance, by wealth quintile

| WEALTH QUINTILES | TOTAL |
|------------------|-------|
| POOREST | 41.2% |
| SECOND | 39.1% |
| MIDDLE | 38.8% |
| FOURTH | 62.7% |
| RICHEST | 83.5% |

Source: MICS 2014.

The ECD centre is a place where children get an education. Although we did not get an education, if our children get a primary education, then their future will be bright. We send them to get an education and a good job.

– Mother quoted in evaluation report



Impressive health gains, but poor coordination

Nepal's budget allocations in health-related expenditure have quadrupled over the period 2004–2015, resulting in a rise in safe motherhood practices. Health gains included an increase in the proportion of deliveries attended by skilled workers from 12.7 to 40 per cent and in deliveries at institutions from 9 to 22 per cent from 2001 to 2017. Over the same period, the under-five mortality rate decreased from 54 to 34 deaths per 1,000 live births. Child survival has been boosted by exclusive breastfeeding and good immunization rates.

In just over a decade, from 2004 to 2015, Nepal's pioneering multisectoral approach to undernutrition reduced the national stunting rate from 57 to 36 per cent, with coverage of growth monitoring visits increasing from 54.5 to 78.2 per cent. Access to safe water and toilet facilities has improved rapidly, as has hygiene, producing very positive results for child health. In 2015, 82 per cent of the population used improved sanitation facilities, up from 39 per cent in 2005. Nepal has also increased its birth registration rates and provision of child grants, augmenting children's security and future prospects.

Yet significant discrepancies remain today. The child mortality rate is 57 deaths per 1,000 live births for the poorest quintile, compared with 22 deaths per 1,000 live births for the richest quintile. Malnutrition is still a major problem in more economically deprived regions, particularly the Far West, where only 48 per cent of the associated budget was spent in 2015.

The ECD strategy included health as a developmental domain, but did not outline how support should be provided, and sectoral bodies did not refer to the 2004 Strategy Paper. ECD centres did not usually systematically conduct health check-ups or keep records of child growth or immunizations. The evaluation found that facilitators were not generally responsible for initiating behavioural change among children attending ECD centres, as envisaged by the strategy, largely because of the focus on ECE and a largely theoretical rather than practical approach overall. Child protection demonstrated little coordination with the ECD agenda, neglecting those children who did not attend ECD centres or were in alternative care.

Stakeholder perceptions

On the whole, mothers perceived ECD centres positively – as places where children can develop and grow physically and mentally – although most considered such centres a stepping stone to primary education. Some integration across sectors to provide services, including through ECD centres, was found – but, contrary to some district officials' claims, this was more by accident than by design.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

UNICEF Nepal established channels for regular interaction with all stakeholders to share evaluation findings. UNICEF was able to leverage the influence of the evaluation through strategic communications, new partnerships and sustained advocacy.

Informing the new national strategy

Findings and recommendations provided by the timely evaluation – which took place between the old and new strategies – were critical in informing the National ECD Strategic Plan 2019–2030, drafted by the NPC. A key recommendation that was taken up was for an intersectoral body (such as the NPC) to coordinate implementation of the new strategy instead of the MoE, to avoid a continuing bias towards ECE.

The results of the evaluation were far reaching, brave and conclusive – and contributed to a complete reconfiguration of the way in which Nepal's early childhood development services are conceived, managed and delivered.

– Case study, UNICEF Evaluation Office



Informing UNICEF programming

The evaluation contributed to the UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan 2018–2022, which stresses the importance of delivering ECD as a cross-sectoral initiative. The Action Plan commits to supporting health, nutrition, WASH, education, protection and Communication for Development (C4D).

Encouraging ownership

To encourage ownership, the evaluation suggests that each relevant ministry assigns a representative to align departmental policies and programmes with the 2019–2030 strategy. Similarly, local governments under the new federal dispensation are being engaged in the process early on and informed on the range of services that can contribute to a quality ECD package.

Creating a child-centric checklist

The new ECD strategy provides a checklist of the minimum services to be provided, classified by age and theme, and clarifies which services every child should receive in each successive year. This service mapping is intended to be child-centric, to ensure that no child is left behind. Each sectoral ministry is now involved in the delivery of the checklist, and follow-up and accountability mechanisms have been put in place.

Monitoring progress

To enable evaluations of performance against the new strategy, key indicators have been identified for each ECD service to be provided. Sectoral ministries have been advised to regularly collect data to a specific level of detail.

Guaranteeing resources

Total ECD expenditure in Nepal amounts to around 0.34 per cent of gross domestic product. A strong political commitment is expected to boost the resources needed for ECD services, although community mobilization and local taxation may be necessary to compensate for the shortfall.



BOX 2 INFORMING AN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOCUSED ON COUNTRY OWNERSHIP

UNICEF joined the Government of Nepal to undertake a country-led evaluation. The findings, disseminated through a communication strategy, resulted in:

- a new evidence-based National Early Childhood Development Strategy 2019–2030, including a recommendation to have an intersectoral body – the National Planning Commission – to ensure intersectoral coordination
- an enhanced strategic positioning for UNICEF in Nepal
- relevant evidence to inform the UNICEF Country Programme Action Plan 2018–2022
- strong country and ministerial ownership through an effective advocacy strategy and the engagement of provincial governments, departments and representatives of non-governmental organizations, among others.

The new ECD strategy for 2019–2030 aims to enable a holistic approach to ECD to be implemented in Nepal in the coming years. Monitoring and evaluating progress towards the newly developed strategy will be key.





© UNICEF/Nepal
Children play outside of a school in Solukhumbu district, Nepal.

LOOKING AHEAD

ECD activities across sectors fell short of the expectations of the 2004 Strategy Paper. However, the new decentralized system of government in Nepal offers a unique opportunity for central and local government to work together to provide a comprehensive package of ECD services to every child. Evidence and recommendations from this evaluation will continue to inform the strategy for 2019–2030 and beyond. This should enable a holistic approach to ECD to be implemented in the coming years.



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NIGERIA

Impact Evaluation of the UNICEF Supported Birth Registration Programme in Nigeria 2012–2016

What was the impact of the Birth Registration Programme in Nigeria?

Evaluation Manager: Robert Ndamobissi, Evaluation Manager, Office of the Representative, UNICEF Nigeria

Author: AAN Associates



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

This evaluation was commended for achieving far-reaching influence both at the national level and within UNICEF, successfully leveraging: increased political commitment to support more birth registration centres in Nigeria; an increase in demand for birth registration; adoption in 17 Nigerian states of procedures on birth registration for officials and community leaders; and a redesign of UNICEF programming to encompass a more integrated approach with multisectoral partnerships.

The panel commended the evaluation's theory-based, hybrid design, driven by the motivation not only to understand the 'quantum' of observed changes, but also to develop insights into how the changes have occurred. The evaluation process entailed substantial engagement with community and government stakeholders.

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A birth registration session in a camp for internally displaced people in Damaturu, Yobe State, Nigeria.



“Every child has the right to be somebody.” This simple campaign message speaks volumes about the challenges faced by one in three children across the world whose births are not officially registered. Deprived of the fundamental right to an identity, name and nationality, these children may find it difficult to access protection, education, social services and the benefits of development interventions. Unregistered children may also be more vulnerable to trafficking, child labour and, especially in the case of girls, forced marriage.

Birth registration has risen dramatically in Nigeria over the years. Even so, only 41.5 per cent of children under 5 years of age were registered in 2011, with almost twice as many rural children remaining unregistered as those living in urban areas. Consequently, Nigeria’s National Population Commission (NPopC) implemented the Birth Registration Programme (BRP) from 2012 to 2016, with the support of UNICEF Nigeria.

The BRP aimed to boost birth registration rates across the country through legal and policy reform, partnerships and innovations in technology as well as improved behavioural change communication. An evaluation carried out in 2019 found that, while the programme had accelerated birth registration rates and strengthened service delivery, it had fallen short of immediate impact-related targets and had failed to exert a broader social influence. It had also been unable to establish a usable birth registration database.

PURPOSE

This first independent impact evaluation of the BRP aimed to establish evidence of its success and offer recommendations for future initiatives in this area. The timing of the evaluation coincided with the approval of Nigeria’s National Strategic Action Plan on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Systems 2018–2022. The findings support the need for a functional database for birth registration in Nigeria.

The evaluation also posed two hypotheses:

- An increase in understanding regarding the advantages of birth registration leads to an increase in birth registration rates.
- An increase in birth registration rates leads to increased immunization and school enrolment, and to decreases in female (child) genital mutilation, child trafficking and child marriage.

APPROACH

The evaluation used a mixed methods approach. Primary qualitative data collection took place through key informant interviews (61 individuals), focus group discussions (40 groups), unstructured field observations and informal discussions with stakeholders. Further evidence was collected through a workshop and field photographs. Data collection took place both in Nigerian states where media promotion of birth registration had taken place and in others where it had not.

Quantitative data were gathered by surveying 2,700 households from 80 local government areas across 10 states, and these were supplemented with existing data from multiple sources, including the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) programme.

BOX 1 WHAT IS BIRTH REGISTRATION?

Birth registration is the continuous, permanent and universal recording within the civil registry of the occurrence and characteristics of births in accordance with the legal requirements of a country. Article 7 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines birth registration as a fundamental right, and Sustainable Development Goal Target 16.9 aims to provide legal identity for all, including birth registration, by 2030.

Most respondents referred to putting food on the table, shelter, health care and education as priority needs for their children. Birth registration did not feature amongst the top five priorities of parents.

– Evaluation report



Limitations

The BRP evolved over its duration, and had neither a formal budget nor set targets in place at the outset. Additionally, programme documentation and monitoring were poor. As such, a comprehensive evaluation of programme efficiency was not possible.

KEY FINDINGS

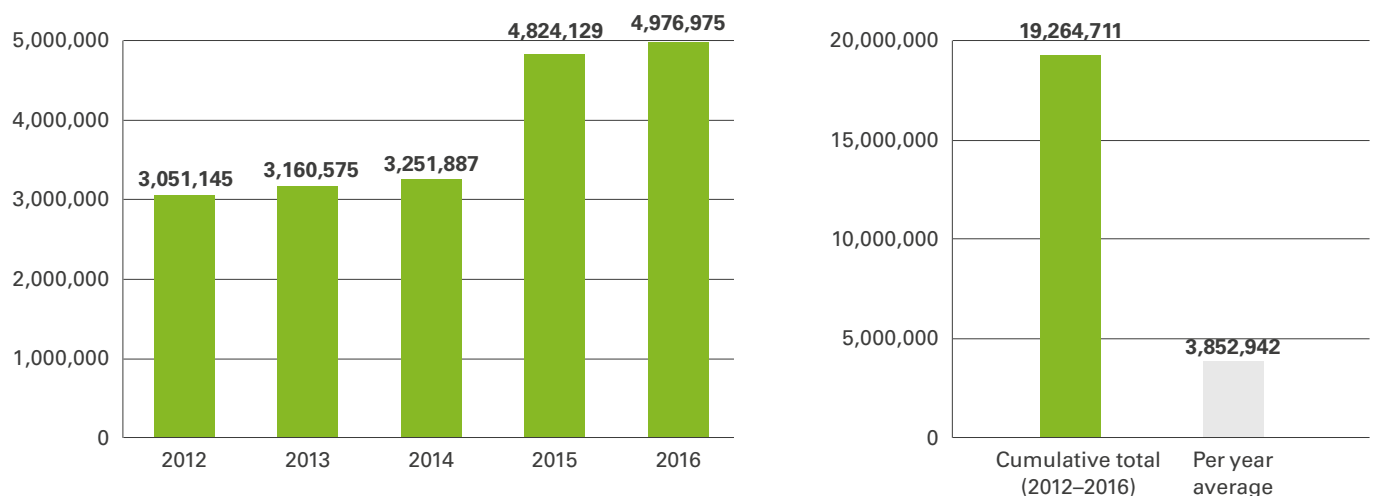
The evaluation found that the BRP had, overall, been successful. The programme was highly relevant to the needs of children in Nigeria, and aligned with government priorities – for example, birth registration was one of the six commitments of the National Priority Agenda for Vulnerable Children in Nigeria. Shortcomings in the design and delivery of the BRP, however, point to the need for NPopC and UNICEF Nigeria to better plan and budget for future programmes from inception.

Many more children registered, but still not enough

The number of children under 5 years of age registered annually in Nigeria rose from 3 million in 2012 to an impressive 5 million by 2016, bringing the total number of registered children to 19.2 million. This represents an increase of over 100 per cent in the number of births registered.

However, the BRP fell short of its target: a 20 percentage point increase in birth registration rate. MICS 2011 and 2016 data showed an increase of only 5.3 percentage points: from 41.5 per cent in 2011 to 46.8 in 2016. In addition, the gap in registration rates between the highest and lowest income groups increased from 41.9 per cent in 2007 to 64.9 per cent in 2016. The BRP failed to achieve its immediate impact-related targets for the following reasons: (i) ambitious targets; (ii) insufficient engagement of traditional and religious leaders; (iii) limited scale-up of integrated birth registration with health services owing to a lack of funding; (iii) low harmonization of birth registration processes across local governments; and (iv) limited scale of media campaigns.

FIGURE 1
Birth registration numbers for children under 5, 2012–2016



Source: Calculations from Household Survey Data Household survey.

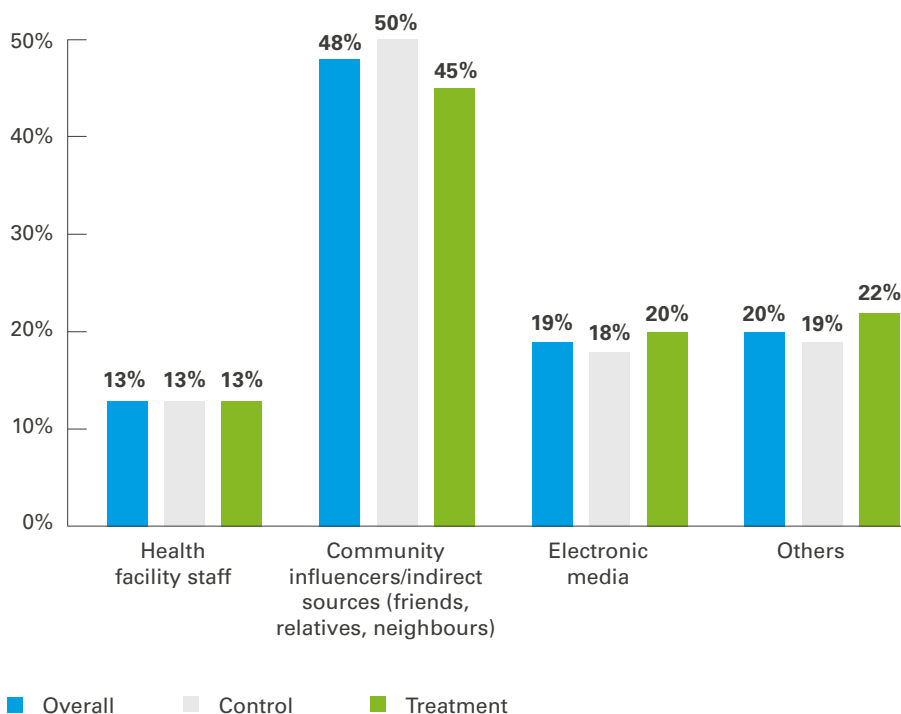
Poor data management impeded the civil registration and vital statistics system

The BRP was intended to provide a complete birth registration database that would harmonize with a fully functioning CRVS system accessible to all stakeholders, enabling them to plan and implement social services effectively. The inability of NPopC to collect and upload birth registration forms (from 2007 onwards) and its failure to produce CRVS reports (from 2008 onwards) undermined this goal, however.

Promotion works, but birth registration remains a low priority

The evaluation found evidence of a strong positive correlation between media campaigns on the benefits of birth registration and birth registration numbers surging by 100 to 250 per cent. Despite BRP efforts, parents continue to prioritize health, education and providing food for the family over birth registration, which is perceived as a secondary priority, useful to secure services such as education. There is a lack of awareness among parents about the significance of and the processes involved in birth registration. Travel distances and costs are additional obstacles to the registration of children living in poorer rural households.

FIGURE 2
Five key reasons why parents do not register the birth of their children



Source: Calculations from Household Survey Data (HHS).
 Note: The sample size was 2,700 households.

Inability to leverage community leaders' influence

Respondents to the evaluation survey reported relying on community influencers and other social networks (48 per cent) rather than electronic media (19 per cent) for information. The BRP media campaigns, however successful they had been, had neither paid sufficient attention to harnessing the influence of traditional and religious leaders, nor engaged with community associations. The programme thus failed to embed within the community the wider significance of birth registration. While a clear association was observed between birth registration awareness and registration rates, the evaluation found no links between increased birth registration rates and either an increase in immunization or school enrolment, or a decrease in female genital mutilation, child trafficking or child marriage.

A pilot to place traditional community influencers at the core of public awareness campaigns had been implemented in 2013 in Nigeria's capital city, Abuja, with promising results. It was not subsequently scaled up, however.

An evolving and imbalanced approach

The evaluation describes the BRP as an "evolving" programme; it lacked a proposal – including a logical framework analysis, and budget – at the outset. Instead, the BRP relied on a stakeholder exercise conducted in 2012 to develop interventions that were incorporated into rolling work plans, with new components added along the way. As a result, inconsistencies in budgets and stated expenditures arose, and a disproportionate emphasis was placed on supply-side components such as reform, partnerships and technological innovations. Only 4 per cent of programme resources were allocated to creating demand for birth registration, and no resources were earmarked for processing the data required to update the CRVS system.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

This independent evaluation of the BRP managed to represent the interests of both NPopC and UNICEF Nigeria at a crucial time, as the National Strategic Action Plan on CRVS Systems had just been approved.

Disseminating evidence to shape policy

A dissemination forum in May 2019 allowed UNICEF Nigeria to use the evaluation evidence to advocate for the importance of birth registration to the highest level of government, to development partners and to representatives of all 36 states of Nigeria. Findings were also disseminated to policymakers and have proved valuable in securing policymaker support for implementation of the National Strategic Action Plan on CRVS Systems. The NPopC management team was able to push for an expansion in the number of birth registration centres based on the evidence.

Implementing guidelines for registration

Following the evaluation, UNICEF Nigeria and NPopC developed guidelines for the benefit of officials and community leaders in 17 Nigerian states. These set out the minimum procedures required for birth registration. The evaluation has also had far-reaching effects on integrated programming for birth registration across multiple sectors, particularly around barriers to registration. Almost all of the evaluation's recommendations are being implemented, and technical meetings have been held with government stakeholders to drive this process forward.



Every child has the right to be SOMEBODY.

– Campaign message used on information, education and communication materials





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A statistician registers a child at the National Population Commission office in Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.

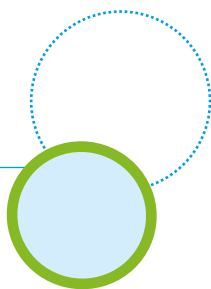
Generating demand for registration

In line with the need to create demand for birth registration among civil society and among parents – who are ultimately responsible for making the decision to register their children – UNICEF Nigeria developed advocacy briefs and shared these with 100 media executives across Nigeria.

Operationalizing the database

The evaluation report stresses the importance of operationalizing the CRVS database, with a focus on strengthening monitoring, documentation and knowledge management systems over the long term. This is to take place within the framework of the National Strategic Action Plan on CRVS Systems, which is being rolled out according to priorities set by NPopC and UNICEF Nigeria. The evaluation also recommends that consultations establish the capacity of these two organizations to achieve realistic impact and outcome targets, and determine what technical assistance and capacity development are required in this regard.





UNICEF Nigeria must take a considered view of the implementation approaches applied in the case of the BRP. Future assistance must strike the balance between 'supply' and 'demand'.

– Evaluation report

BOX 2 EMBEDDING EVIDENCE INTO NATIONAL POLICY, GUIDELINES AND MEDIA ADVOCACY FOR BIRTH REGISTRATION

This independent evaluation was well timed and its findings were disseminated widely for uptake and embedment into:

- implementation of the newly approved National Strategic Action Plan on CRVS Systems, resulting in an increase in the number of birth registration centres in Nigeria
- guidelines on birth registration developed by UNICEF Nigeria and NPopC for 17 Nigerian states
- advocacy briefs shared with the media to generate demand for birth registration
- UNICEF's Child Protection workplan for 2019–2020.

LOOKING AHEAD

A more proactive role for NPopC

As the primary service provider for birth registration in Nigeria, NPopC may have to be more engaged in registration to meet the needs of both newborns and older unregistered children. It can do so by adopting a multipronged approach, through partnerships at all levels – from local and regional government to civil society organizations and bilateral/multilateral donors. The organization must also lead the way in populating the CRVS database, not least by securing the funds it needs to upload its huge backlog of NPopC data on registrations.

A systems strengthening strategy, rather than an evolving approach

An evolving approach that adds components along the way according to donor-led priorities is inappropriate for a programme of this complexity and scale. Targets, approaches, activities and budgets for future birth registration programmes should be identified at the outset, with periodic reviews included so that timely adjustments can be made as required. Ultimately, it is as important to generate demand for birth registration as it is to strengthen the systems necessary to supply this service.



[Download original report](#)







UGANDA

Strengthening Community Linkages to Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Outbreak Preparedness: Anthropological research on the socio-cultural context of EVD in the most-at-risk districts in Uganda

What can community perspectives bring to Ebola virus disease preparedness in Uganda?

Research Manager: Mandi Chikombero, Communication for Development Specialist
Author: David Kaawa-Mafigiri



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

Reviewers commended this “excellent” piece of research for the deep insights into how unequal social structures and underlying structural violence shape community responses, and how epidemics can exacerbate pre-existing inequalities. The study’s participatory approach, appreciation of cultural diversity and human rights, and engagement with local communities and agencies, were also highly praised by reviewers.

Additional strengths noted comprise its transparent and ethical methodology and its well-substantiated conceptualization of the research purpose. The potential for impact is strong since the findings are highly relevant to the development of policy responses in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

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Drama group at Nyakabira village, in the Kabarole district of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, delivers messages on positive behaviour change and how to avoid Ebola Virus, as part of the activities for Interventions for Ebola Virus Disease.



In June 2019, an Ebola epidemic was declared in Kasese District, southwestern Uganda. This was traced, in part, to the porous border between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where an epidemic had been ongoing since August 2018. The epidemic was exacerbated by political instability in affected areas, leading to an influx of refugees to Uganda.

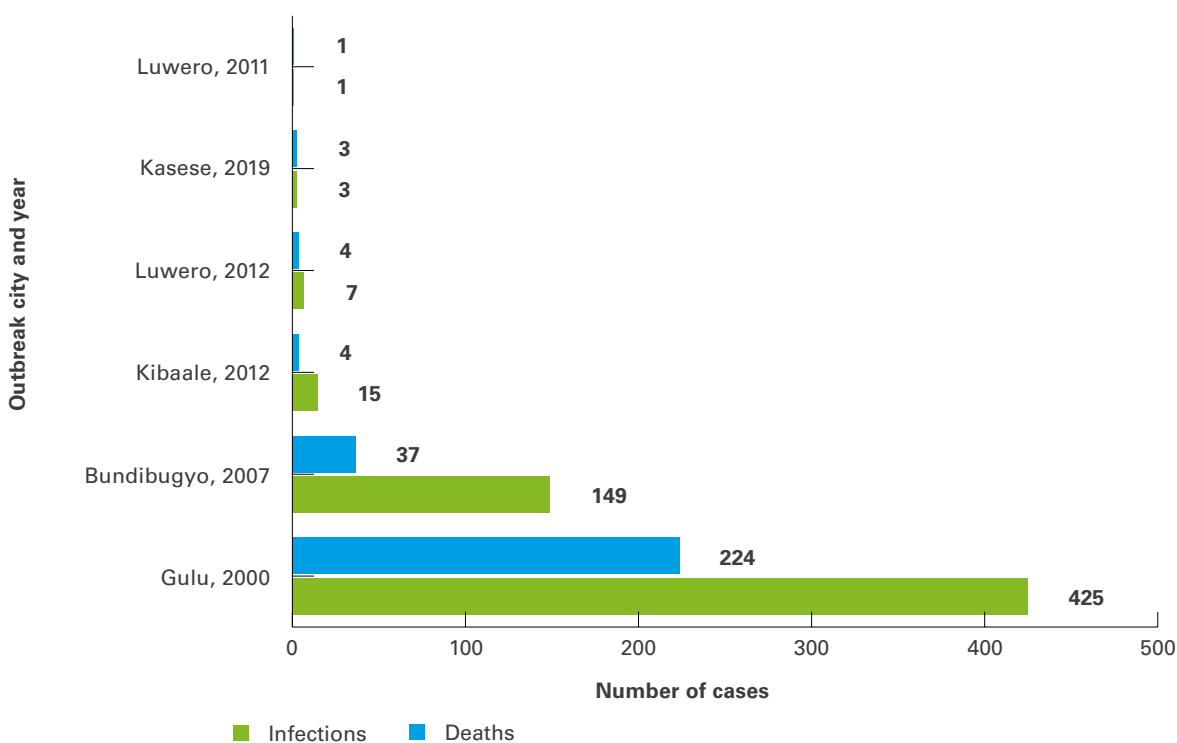
The Ugandan outbreak developed in a region characterized by frequent cross-border movements, low community engagement with prevention measures, and social and cultural practices that limited the uptake of robust Ebola virus disease preparedness practices.

In this context, UNICEF Uganda and Makerere University carried out anthropological research to better understand Ebola preparedness response uptake, particularly in relation to cultural norms governing health-seeking, caregiving and preventive behaviours. The research aimed to further understand how these behaviours are influenced by livelihoods, religious and spiritual beliefs, funeral and burial practices, caregiving practices, and trust in the health system – as each factor plays out across specific social, political and economic contexts.

PURPOSE

At the onset of the outbreak, the Ugandan National Task Force on Disease Outbreaks and Response called for a strategy for border health, cross-border cooperation and scaled-up risk communication, grounded in an understanding of the sociocultural context prevailing in high-risk border areas.

FIGURE 1
Ebola outbreaks in Uganda



Source: Adapted from Uganda, Ministry of Health, *National Ebola Virus Disease Contingency Plan*, 2018; and World Health Organization, 'Disease Outbreak News: Ebola virus disease – Republic of Uganda', 2019.



This research aimed to investigate community dynamics and cultural factors that may affect health-seeking and preventive behaviours by identifying possible areas of cultural resistance to information, and by assessing the appropriateness and acceptability of Ebola prevention and control activities.

In describing the sociocultural context of behaviours that may affect Ebola preparedness, the study sought to inform culturally sensitive Ebola preparedness planning, including public health messaging and social mobilization around protective health behaviours, particularly in high-risk border areas.

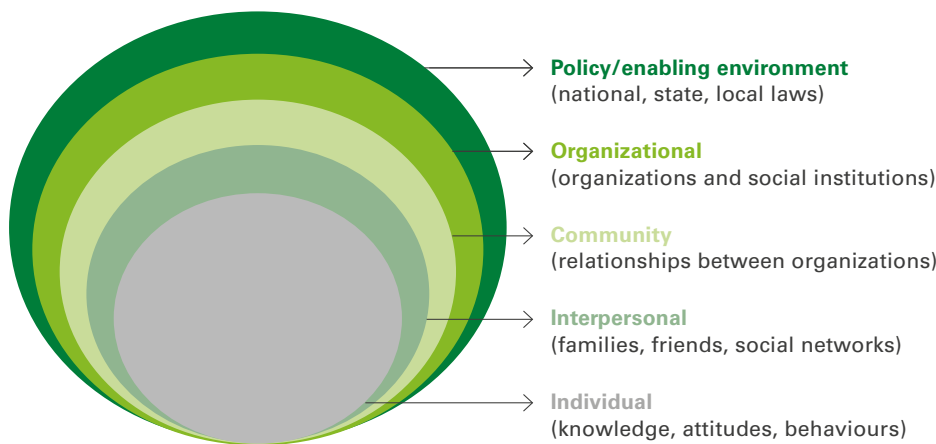
This research provides a missing part of the Ebola story, by situating narratives of local Ugandans in epidemic preparedness and control.

– Research report

APPROACH

The research used an anthropological approach and drew on an adaptation of the socioecological model of communication and behaviour that proved previously effective in Ebola containment in West Africa. This model has been used to understand the multifaceted and interactive effects of personal and environmental factors that affect behaviours. In the context of Ebola preparedness, the model has helped to identify social and cultural leverage points thought to influence positive health-seeking behaviours and effective risk communication.

FIGURE 2
Socioecological model of communication and behaviour



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2014.

Inclusive and locally grounded

Study sites were established across Uganda by engaging local councils in districts at high to moderate risk for the spread of Ebola. An inclusive approach to qualitative data collection was taken to incorporate local voices. Interviewees included a variety of community stakeholders: religious leaders, traditional leaders and healers, community influencers, front line health workers, local political leaders, civil society organizers, and members of District and National Task Forces.

Community members were recruited for focus group discussions from five cultural groups to account for differences in the sociocultural contexts of Ebola in Uganda. Female moderators conducted focus groups composed of women. Twenty local research assistants with comprehensive knowledge of the languages and cultural practices of each study site were recruited.



Participant observation – whereby the researchers actively participated in Ebola preparedness activities and local events such as market days – supplemented the qualitative data collection around sociocultural contexts.

Ethically sound

An ethics committee from Makerere University approved the research design, and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology registered the study protocol. Written informed consent was obtained from all participants, who were given the option to access counselling in case of distress. Individual interviews and focus group discussions were conducted in venues that minimized privacy concerns.

KEY FINDINGS

Research findings revealed that Ebola was known and feared across Uganda. Nevertheless, many interviewees, even in border districts, considered the risks remote and unclear. Preparedness was mediated by a range of contingent factors, some of which were perceived as higher priority than Ebola. Seven major drivers were identified.

Livelihoods and health

Although community members were afraid of Ebola, they could not easily change their behaviours because of economic constraints. For example, people living in border districts reported moving regularly between Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to tend crops, fetch water and trade at markets, while truck drivers and motorcycle taxi riders based in Uganda continued to cross the border to earn a living. Often, such activities meant traversing the border several times a day, using informal crossing points less well equipped to prevent Ebola spread.

Traditional healers and religious leaders

In rural areas, traditional healers were respected and trusted sources of health information in their communities. The healers interviewed for the study described advising their communities on Ebola prevention, including on the use of screening and handwashing facilities and the need to report cases immediately. Religious leaders such as imams, sheikhs and pastors also had a good level of knowledge about Ebola, how to prevent it and what to do with suspected cases. Churches and mosques were considered excellent channels for disseminating Ebola information.

Funeral rituals and burial practices

While burial practices were found to be of great importance in all research districts, they were also associated with substantial risks of contamination. Across cultural groups, bodies were kept at home and cleansed before burial, a task with substantial potential for contact with virus-contaminated bodily fluids. Some cultures required the body to be returned to the father's ancestral land, potentially across borders. In general, communities went to great lengths to ensure that the soul of every deceased person would rest in peace.

The research evidenced a strong cultural resistance towards changing deep-rooted traditional practices. Government health messages that did not take into account local traditions were perceived as unhelpful and disrespectful, and resulted in low uptake. Results suggest that communication around disease prevention is more effective when it offers solutions – such as ways to safely conduct burials – and that a culturally sensitive disease response needs to be informed by both medical and anthropological evidence.



In our cultures, some people believe that when they get sick, they have been bewitched. Instead of going to health centres, they go to traditional shrines.

– Local leader participating in focus group discussion in Luwero





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Students from Mushangi Primary School in Rubirizi District, Uganda, perform a song as part of the preparedness activities of the Ebola response interventions in schools, communities and health facilities.

Caregiving practices

Community and gender norms shaped caregiving practices during the Ebola outbreak, with the burden of care mainly falling on women. Unsurprisingly, 70 per cent of Ebola-affected individuals in the 2014–2015 West African epidemic were women. In cases of severe illness, community-based Village Health Teams were consulted to guide families in decision-making around care.

Health beliefs and health-seeking behaviour

Government health facilities usually had a poor reputation among participants, primarily because of health workers' perceived negative attitudes towards patients and mistrust in hospital treatments. In particular, pregnant women were reportedly sceptical about some preventive measures such as handwashing in chlorinated water, which they supposed to be potentially harmful to their pregnancy.

A predominant response of community members was that government health facilities were too far away and too expensive to access. Rural areas of border districts were particularly disadvantaged and underserved. Hence, participants reported a preference to seek care from more accessible local private health facilities or lower-cost traditional healers.

In this pre-crisis phase in Uganda, we see an opportunity to prepare and produce risk communication and social mobilization activities that are locally relevant.

- Key informant quoted in research report



Trust between communities and authorities

The sociocultural context of trust between communities and authorities, such as local leaders and health workers, has implications for Ebola preparedness. Trust in local leaders was generally said to be good, especially regarding information on Ebola prevention and control. Red Cross and UNICEF staff were seen as impartial mediators and an important source of support.

However, formal government health facilities were often perceived by communities as untrustworthy. Hearing that many patients suspected of having Ebola had died shortly after reaching hospital raised alarm and fostered mistrust in the health care system. Marginalized communities such as fishing communities reported widespread mistrust of authorities, including security officers, customs officers and the army.

Social, political and economic context

The broader context shapes how a community copes with disadvantage and vulnerability, with implications for Ebola. The study identified communities – from rural poor to fishing communities – that were particularly vulnerable owing to experiences of structural violence. Issues such as lack of water and sanitation, ongoing violence and health threats, food insecurity, and poverty contribute to both community vulnerability to epidemics and low uptake of preparedness practices. Unequal social structures shape community responses to Ebola and demonstrate how epidemics tend to exacerbate pre-existing inequalities.

BOX 1

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE EBOLA PREPAREDNESS

- Deploy participatory social mobilization practices (e.g., involving local leaders) as a sustainable means of supporting improved uptake of messages to counter the spread of Ebola.
- Emphasize that Ebola can be spread by anyone and address the stigmatization of migrants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
- Pay special attention to local dynamics (including to avoid conflict between fishing communities and authorities) so that preparedness efforts are not derailed.
- Design posters that are accessible to illiterate individuals and which use local languages and child-friendly messaging.
- Address the concerns of pregnant women, particularly around the use of chlorine for handwashing.
- Design youth-friendly mobilization practices, with the involvement of local youth.
- Chlorine for handwashing in hospitals.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

The research study provides specific recommendations that can inform UNICEF Communication for Development (C4D) efforts to scale up risk communication and social mobilization – including to train teams to educate communities about safe, respectful burials. It also grants insights into potential areas of cultural resistance to health information around Ebola; how to leverage cultural assets in support of Ebola risk communication; and the cultural appropriateness and acceptability of Ebola prevention and control activities.





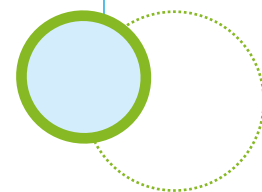
© UNICEF/UN0307507/Bongyereirwe
 Students from Kamabale Primary school, in the Kabarole district of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, participate in activities related to the Interventions for Ebola Virus Disease campaign.

The findings have already led to adjustments in the Ugandan risk communication strategy around improved and targeted messaging (e.g., translation into local languages) and use of trusted sources of information (e.g., village health workers, local leaders). Cognizant of the need for sensitivity to local conditions and to use existing structures to deliver messages, health workers have engaged with caregivers (typically women) and traditional healers to provide training and enhanced collaboration with local leaders.

LOOKING AHEAD

Results will be disseminated at briefings with appropriate implementing partners in Uganda, to facilitate the integration of social and cultural information into risk communication and social mobilization programming. Results will also be shared in relevant health and social research forums, to streamline research on Ebola virus disease on the Uganda–Democratic Republic of the Congo border. Efforts should be made to connect with social science researchers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to share knowledge and findings across the border.

The study’s approach and findings are potentially applicable to other epidemic situations, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Its conceptual model provides a framework for a multilayered policy response that balances both human rights and cultural sensitivities with the urgent need to control disease outbreaks.



Ebola is, similarly to HIV, an ‘epidemic of opportunity’ that is visible in communities most affected by structural violence.

– Research report



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GOAL AREA
TWO



EVERY CHILD LEARNS

04 EL SALVADOR



How did a pilot programme evaluation influence El Salvador to scale up early childhood interventions nationwide?

05 MOZAMBIQUE



Can accelerated school readiness programmes help to prepare Mozambique's children for primary education?

06 UZBEKISTAN



What factors are associated with positive primary education outcomes in Uzbekistan?







EL SALVADOR

Evaluación del Programa Triple E: Educación y Desarrollo Integral de Primera Infancia, Empoderamiento de Familias y Jóvenes y Entorno Protector Comunitario en Comunidades Seleccionadas

How did a pilot programme evaluation influence El Salvador to scale up early childhood interventions nationwide?

Evaluation Managers: Karla Rubio, former M&E Specialist and Marina Morales, former Education Specialist, UNICEF El Salvador

Author: Gonzalo Oliverio Rodríguez



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

The panel commended this evaluation for strategically positioning the evaluation of pilots as an essential part of long-term UNICEF efforts to bring about sustainable change at scale for children. Among other things, the evaluation illustrates the importance of conceptualizing and implementing pilot projects with a clear intent to scale up nationally and regionally.

The Triple E evaluation was deemed highly influential. Evidence generated by the evaluation led to the formulation of a new 'territorialization' strategy for early childhood care in El Salvador.

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Parents and their pre-school children participate in a parenting workshop in Santa Teresa, San Salvador in El Salvador, where they learn about early childhood development, including children's physical and emotional health, the importance of non-violent discipline and healthy ways to communicate.



Nearly two-thirds of the population of El Salvador is under 30 years of age, and school dropout rates are high. Yet less than 3 per cent of children under 4 years of age have access to comprehensive early childhood care services; in rural areas, this figure is even lower. Corruption, violence and insecurity have deterred investment and led to high levels of underemployment and inequality, impeding social development. In the last decade, however, positive trends have been observed in life expectancy, schooling and health, and inequality is now among the lowest in Latin America.

The Triple E pilot programme – which takes its name from the Spanish initialism for education, empowerment and protective environment – ran from 2012 to 2015. Supported and coordinated by UNICEF, Triple E was implemented by the Salvadoran Ministry of Education (MoE) and partner organizations in four municipalities: Ciudad Delgado, Cuscatancingo, Ilopango and San Martín. Its aim was to strengthen and improve education and early childhood care practices in institutions, communities and families by promoting violence prevention and a culture of coexistence. Triple E was a key part of the UNICEF country programme to improve coverage of early childhood care services in El Salvador.

PURPOSE

This evaluation set out to measure the success of Triple E in terms of changes it had brought about in the knowledge, attitudes and practices of families as well as national and local institutions and community leaders. The evaluation focused on education empowerment and safe environment at the local level; assessed the relevance of programme results to local needs; and examined whether sufficient coordination and local capacity had been established to sustain interventions.

The findings are to be incorporated into future programmes aimed at children and young people, especially those focusing on early childhood care. To support greater coordination between actors, the evaluation report is directed towards the institutions that took part in the pilot and UNICEF country offices. Findings have also been successfully used to persuade the Government of El Salvador to scale up the pilot nationwide.

APPROACH

The evaluation examined two groups: a treatment group comprising all of the preschool children who participated in Triple E, and a control group of children who attended preschools involved in the programme but who did not themselves take part. The control group was selected from across the four municipalities using propensity score matching to ensure its representativeness in terms of age, gender and school grade.

The main indicators measured related to parenting practices, academic performance and cross-sectoral coordination, with data collected in four ways. Firstly, UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey questionnaires on parenting practices and early childhood development were administered to the families of the children in both groups. Secondly, integral development reports for every child were obtained from the participating preschools. Thirdly, focus group discussions were held with community leaders in each municipality and focused interviews conducted with representatives of the participating institutions. Finally, a literature review was carried out, including administrative documents from government bodies and statistical information from the General Directorate of Statistics and Censuses.



Data were analysed using statistical tools including the chi-squared test, Student's t-distribution and the Mantel-Haenszel test. These tools were selected to fulfil two important needs: to establish differences between treatment and control groups, and to identify any associations between key variables.

KEY FINDINGS

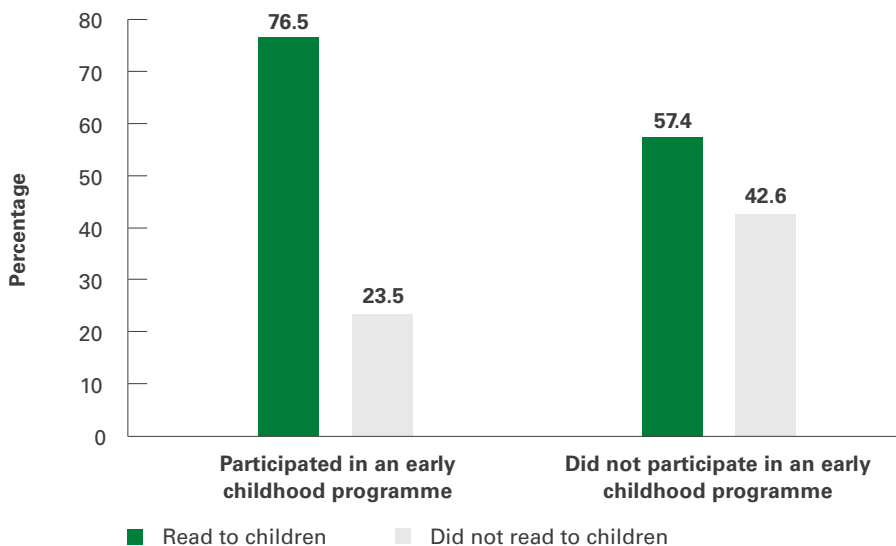
Changes in parenting practices

Parents of children who had participated in the Triple E programme read aloud to their children more often and had more children's books in their homes than parents of non-participants. Fathers of participants also engaged in play to a greater extent than fathers of non-participants.

The project has generated a strong impact on the equity of relationships between women and men. Men now have greater sensitivity and are more involved in the development of their children.

– Evaluation report

FIGURE 1
Proportion of mothers who had read to their children in the last three days



Source: *Gráfico 1. Porcentajes de madres que han leído libros infantiles a sus hijas (os) en los últimos tres días*, full report, p. 31.

Discipline was also maintained differently in the families of children participating in the programme. Use of some forms of physical violence (e.g., beating the child, or striking with a belt) was found to be lower in the treatment group than in the control group. On the other hand, use of psychological violence and other forms of physical violence (e.g., spanking) were not improved by programme participation – in fact, some forms were more prevalent in the families of participants. Parents of participants were more likely, however, to use more positive techniques like withdrawing privileges and to tell their children what they had done wrong.

Meeting child development needs

Parents and teachers indicated that children who had participated in Triple E adapted better to the primary education system and were more capable of independent work. They also appeared to be more secure, sociable, motivated and extroverted. Qualitative and quantitative data support these observations. Examination of children's integral development reports also revealed significant

benefits of participation, in the areas of personal and social development; expression, communication and representation; and relationship with surroundings. Additionally, children in the treatment group achieved better results when assessed at the start of preschool, and performed better throughout preschool.

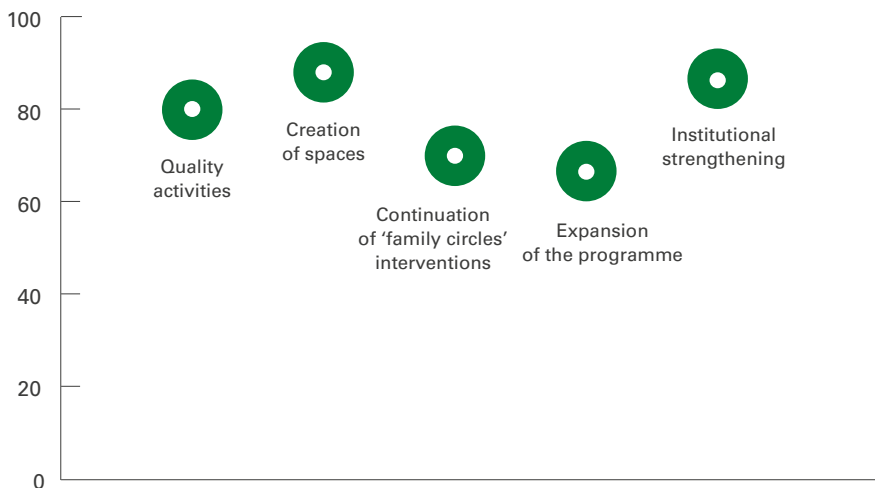
Good coordination across sectors

The standard of coordination between the various participating institutions was found to be very high. The planning process was detailed and participative, involving institutions at both the national and local level. The pilot programme successfully created spaces for discussion, reflection and implementation, using a level of communication described as fluid and effective.

Effective programme that eased transitions

The evaluation found that Triple E had achieved its objectives and produced an effective and high-quality early childhood care programme, with suitable spaces, supplies and play equipment, which greatly benefited community-level work. Key training received by institutional personnel under the programme had improved the quality of their work. Children's transition to formal education, which can often be traumatic, was significantly more successful thanks to the input participants had received through Triple E. The findings suggest, however, that benefits may decline following completion of the programme.

FIGURE 2
Triple E: Assessment of programme efficacy by specialists in the participating institutions



Source: *Gráfico 15. Valoración de la efectividad del programa Triple E por técnicos de las instituciones participantes empleando una escala del 0 al 100* (Triple E programme effectiveness on a scale of 0 to 100 as evaluated by technicians of the participating institutions), full report, p. 50.

Limitations

The pilot programme was found to have three main limitations. First, levels of violence in affected communities were so high that they restricted the rollout of some measures and, because of this danger, several personnel left. The second limitation was a lack of funding. This caused the pilot to start later than initially planned and led to changes in implementation timings. Finally, the pilot provided no baseline against which to compare the evaluation results.



INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Cost-effectiveness and impact contributed to sustainability and scalability

The findings show that, in a context with limited resources, community programmes based on cross-sectoral coordination can be cost-effective. They can use community spaces, locally available resources and volunteers, and draw on the capacities of institutions in contact with the community.

This approach contributed to the high impact, sustainability and scalability achieved by the Triple E programme within the framework of a new 'territorialization' strategy for early childhood care. Under this, the MoE undertook a continuation of the interventions introduced by the pilot and extended them to other parts of the country. It is also incorporating the methodology developed through Triple E into its own institutional and community programmes.

Influencing national education and early childhood policy

By validating the benefits of Triple E, the evaluation influenced the formulation of the 'territorialization' strategy with a focus on social inclusion, which was coordinated by the MoE, National Institute for Children and Adolescents and UNICEF. Seeking to reduce inequalities across El Salvador, the strategy aimed for the equitable development of territories and revitalization of local development to make basic social services accessible to all. It prioritized cross-institutional coordination within each territory and strengthening the capacities of local stakeholders to implement family orientation programmes, increase parental involvement in family and childhood activities, and improve parenting practices.



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Pre-school boy participates in a family workshop in Santa Teresa, El Salvador.





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While parents learn about child development and gain practical skills, their pre-school children play in a safe social space during in a family workshop in Santa Teresa, El Salvador.

UNICEF was recognized nationally for its leadership in positioning early childhood development across various platforms. For example, Ventanilla INJUVE facilitated communication between youth and local operators of the Triple E programme, as well as the establishment of committees on child rights. UNICEF was particularly influential in using the evaluation findings to promote a rights-based, gender-sensitive and inclusive approach, and to stress the need for interinstitutional coordination at the territorial level to conduct family orientation programmes in appropriate parenting practices.

Building a culture of evaluation and learning

Finally, the evaluation contributed to the building of a culture of evaluation and learning in El Salvador by introducing a methodology that emphasizes the sharing and use of evaluation results by local stakeholders, including national government.

BOX 1 SCALING UP SUSTAINABLE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE

The community-based, cross-sectoral nature of the Triple E pilot programme contributed to its success. The evaluation was highly influential. The evidence proceeding from the evaluation led to:

- the formulation of a nationwide territorialization strategy for early childhood care with a focus on social inclusion
- recognition of the leadership provided by UNICEF in positioning early childhood development in the national agenda – including the promotion of a rights-based, gender-sensitive and inclusive approach
- the building of a culture of evaluation and learning through a methodology focused on the sharing and use of results by stakeholders, including national government
- promotion of programmes and mechanisms for cross-institutional and cross-sectoral coordination to provide comprehensive cared and expanded early childhood development opportunities.

The evaluation calls for the creation of an information system to monitor the long-term results of interventions as they are implemented throughout the country.



LOOKING AHEAD

The evaluation report sets out various targeted recommendations for the scale-up of the Triple E pilot programme and for the future of early childhood interventions more broadly in El Salvador.

Cross-sectoral, inclusive interventions

The evaluation recommends that cross-sectoral interventions, such as those used in the Triple E pilot, should be incorporated into all early childhood policies, programmes and projects. Interventions should be designed from the bottom up with the involvement of local communities as well as local and national institutions.

Tracking long-term impacts

The evaluation calls for the creation of an information system to monitor the long-term results of interventions as they are implemented throughout the country. The MoE should use its existing organizational infrastructure and resources to track children through the education system to better understand the benefits of early childhood programmes.

Reviewing behavioural change

The limited effects of the pilot programme on parental disciplinary practices suggest a need to review the methods employed to elicit behavioural change in this area. Addressing cultural practices surrounding the use of certain forms of physical and psychological violence requires time and sensitivity. Any interventions to address these practices must include monitoring and reinforcement measures.

Including a baseline

Future programmes should overcome the limitations of the Triple E pilot resulting from its lack of a baseline. The evaluation recommends an experimental design that builds the evaluation method into the programme itself. This would not only provide a baseline, but also indicators that would enable effective measurement of the achievement of programme objectives.

Appropriate capacity

To ensure the quality of future programmes, an effective training system for new teaching and facilitating personnel must be set up to mitigate the effects of factors such as staff turnover. Similarly, the evaluation advises to designate the MoE, or other relevant stakeholders, to take over the facilitation role occupied primarily by UNICEF as the Triple E programme is scaled up.



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Although each institution was occupied with its own activities, it was always possible to meet to coordinate actions.

– Specialist at a municipal Principles and Values Unit







MOZAMBIQUE

Evaluation of the UNICEF Mozambique Accelerated School Readiness Pilot Programme: Final report

Can accelerated school readiness programmes help to prepare Mozambique's children for primary education?

Research Managers: Zlata Bruckauf, Research & Evaluation Specialist and Kezang Deki, Education Specialist

Authors: Juan Bonilla, Elizabeth Spier, Kaitlin Carson, Hannah Ring, Yulia Belyakova, Iliana Brodziak, Ethan Adelman-Sil



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

Reviewers commended this piece of research for its robust methodology combining quantitative and qualitative methods, and its clear, comprehensive and systematic presentation of recommendations based on the impact evaluation findings, which can be taken up realistically at the policy, programme and advocacy level. It also scored well on innovation and on potential for impact in addressing learning poverty, including through the use of cost analysis to help identify programme scale-up potential.

Reviewers also commented on the strong engagement throughout the research process of diverse stakeholders, from local communities and government representatives, to teachers and parents. Ethical considerations were also reported to a high standard and lessons learned were clearly documented.

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Children aged 5-6 attend an Accelerated School Readiness class at the Cazembe Primary school, Mozambique. The programme, piloted in the Zambezia province, aims to prepare children entering grade 1 to take full advantage of learning experiences.



Primary school enrolment in Mozambique has doubled in the last 15 years, yet this achievement is not reflected in children's learning outcomes. Only 6 per cent of children reach basic reading competency at the age of 8, while just 32 per cent of children complete primary school.

Children's readiness for school is a crucial factor in determining their future educational outcomes. However, only 3.5 per cent of children in Mozambique are currently covered by preschool provision. Accelerated school readiness (ASR) programmes – a rapid form of early childhood education intervention – aim to improve equity of access to pre-primary education. Such programmes have been shown to improve children's school attendance, learning and long-term academic achievements.

Working with Save the Children and the Mozambican Ministry of Education and Human Development, UNICEF Mozambique implemented an ASR pilot programme in the province of Zambézia from 2016 to 2019. An evaluation of the pilot, conducted during 2017 and 2018, clearly showed that it is possible to establish a low-cost ASR initiative in Mozambique, with positive and long-lasting effects on children's development.

PURPOSE

UNICEF Mozambique commissioned the American Institutes for Research to conduct a mixed methods impact evaluation of the ASR pilot programme in Zambézia. The research aimed to:

- determine the impact of the ASR programme on children's school readiness, on-time enrolment and academic achievement in Grade 1 of primary school
- identify aspects of community context and programme implementation (such as engagement of local families) that appeared to facilitate or hinder the programme's success
- calculate the cost-effectiveness of the programme.

This programme is a good way to prepare the children, because they leave preschool for elementary school with a good notion. Teachers also like it because their work is made easier.

– Parent discussing perceived benefits of ASR programme, quoted in evaluation report

BOX 1 COMPONENTS OF THE ASR PILOT PROGRAMME IN ZAMBÉZIA

- **120-hour summer school readiness programme** – for children aged 5–6 years, run by trained community volunteers.
- **13 weeks of home-based education sessions** – run by parents for parents to help improve parenting skills, foster a positive home learning environment and promote children's early success in school.
- **Capacity building for schools and teachers** – to help support a smooth transition to primary school for children.

APPROACH

The impact evaluation involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection as well as a cost analysis.

Quantitative data on school readiness, enrolment and academic achievement

Schools in two similar districts of Zambézia took part in a longitudinal, cluster-randomized controlled trial in 2017 and 2018 to investigate whether the ASR programme improved children's readiness for school, their enrolment in primary school and their academic achievement.



An equal number of schools in the Morrumbala and Derre districts (30 schools per district) were randomly selected for the trial. Within each district, 15 schools formed a treatment group, with the remaining 15 schools serving as a control group for comparison. Children aged 5–6 years who were due to start Grade 1 at the treatment schools in 2018 were invited to join the ASR programme before beginning school. Participants' academic achievements were compared with those of children from communities around the control schools who met the equivalent criteria but did not take part in the ASR programme. None of the children who took part in the research had previous experience of early childhood education.

Children from the treatment and control groups were assessed at three points during the trial: a baseline assessment was made just before children began the ASR programme (November 2017); a midline assessment was conducted when the children began Grade 1 (March 2018); and an endline assessment was completed at the end of Grade 1 (November 2018).

Save the Children's International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) was used to evaluate the children in six outcome areas. IDELA is an easy-to-use, rigorous global tool that has been proven to measure children's early learning and development.

BOX 2 **WHAT DOES IDELA MEASURE?**

- Emergent numeracy
- Emergent literacy
- Executive function (e.g., ability to pay attention, remember rules, exhibit self-control)
- Socioemotional skills (e.g., self-awareness, empathy)
- Motor skills
- Approaches to learning

Ratings in each of the six areas are combined to calculate the overall IDELA score for the child.

Other quantitative data captured school enrolment and attendance figures as well as measurements of parents' and caregivers' attitudes to education, their aspirations for their children and their parenting practices. Data were analysed using a difference-in-differences approach to compare changes in outcomes, including the average overall IDELA score, for the treatment and control groups over the course of the trial.

Qualitative data on perceptions of the programme

Focus group discussions and interviews were conducted with volunteer programme leaders, teachers, parents and caregivers, as well as Save the Children and UNICEF staff. Qualitative data were used to assess perceptions of the ASR programme implementation, and to uncover aspects that were felt to facilitate or hinder its success.

Cost analysis

An 'ingredient' modelling approach was used to analyse the overall costs of the ASR programme. This involved systematically identifying each of the costs involved, including those that may have been omitted from budget or expenditure data (such as volunteer time), as well as costs shared between the programme and other operational activities. The approach also distinguished between costs associated with setting up the programme and costs that recur during its operation.

The achievement of those who were not in the project was also positive because those who were at the project helped those who were not – they learned something from the others. So it is positive on everyone's part.

–Teacher discussing student performance at the end of Grade 1, quoted in evaluation report



The cost-effectiveness ratio of the ASR programme was calculated by dividing the estimated cost of implementing the programme per child by its impact on IDELA scores and primary school attendance.

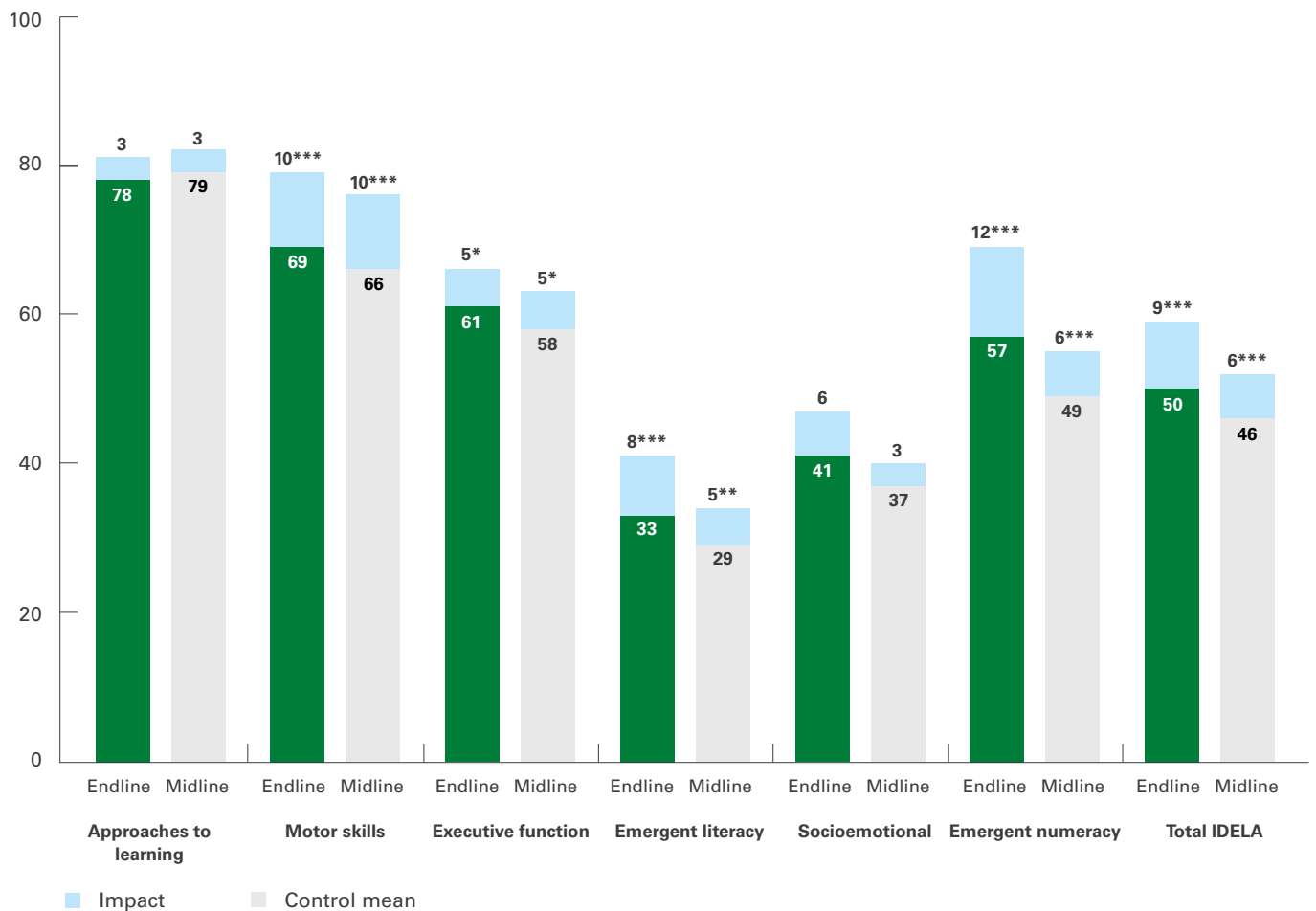
KEY FINDINGS

School readiness improves primary school performance

Participation in the ASR programme was found to significantly improve children’s performance in Grade 1. The performance of non-participant classmates improved too, suggesting that they benefited from a wider ‘peer effect’. The overall IDELA score for programme participants increased by 17 points on average between the baseline and endline assessments (equivalent to 0.93 standard deviations above the mean).

Although the skills of children in the control group improved during Grade 1, children in the treatment group showed a greater improvement. Increased skills were first observed at the midline assessment, immediately following the four-month ASR programme. The same result was seen at the endline, nine months after completion of the programme. Analysis showed that girls and boys benefited equally from the programme.

FIGURE 1
Mean IDELA scores for children in the control group, and programme impact on IDELA scores



Source: Authors’ calculations.

Enrolment and attendance increases

The ASR programme had a positive effect on school enrolment and attendance. Children who had participated in the programme were 34 per cent more likely to enrol in Grade 1. Attendance in general was 12 per cent higher in treatment schools than in control schools. A particularly positive effect was seen among girl participants, who were 11 per cent more likely than their control group peers to be attending school at the end of Grade 1.

TABLE 1
Impacts on primary school attendance by gender – single difference

| | ITT | ENDLINE MEAN | | | | N |
|---|-------------------|--------------|-------|---------|-------|-------|
| | Impact difference | Treatment | | Control | | |
| | | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | |
| Dependent variables | (1) | (6) | (7) | (8) | (9) | (10) |
| Is this child currently attending school? | 0.108*(0.05) | 0.90 | 0.91 | 0.83 | 0.74 | 1,023 |

Source: Author's calculation.

Parent-to-parent sessions benefit children

The qualitative data provided parent and community perspectives on the context in which the ASR programme was implemented, as well as on parent-to-parent education sessions, and on the overall effects on the children themselves.

Involving local parents in conducting home-based education sessions was perceived as a key strength of the ASR programme. Parent-to-parent sessions proved effective in improving parents' awareness of their children's diet, personal hygiene, dressing and timely arrival at school each morning. Gender norms around childcare were identified as a challenge, and earmarked for future consideration. While women were more engaged in the parent-to-parent sessions, men still typically dominated household decision-making, including around children's education.

The use of local parents as relatable group leaders, combined with the programme's ability to create a space to share experiences, lent credibility to the parent-to-parent sessions. Parent leaders played a particularly important part in guiding sessions in local languages, as not everyone spoke Portuguese, Mozambique's official language. Parents reported that the sessions gave them an opportunity to share their own experiences and to learn from others, helping them to improve their children's school readiness and attendance.

Academic impact

Interviews with teachers confirmed that programme participants performed at a higher level than non-participants. This was particularly the case in terms of the children's Portuguese oral comprehension and vocabulary, and executive function, including the ability to focus and follow directions.



ASR programming is cost-effective in Mozambique

Analysis indicated that full implementation of the ASR programme cost the Government of Mozambique about US\$60 per child. This is lower than the cost of similar programmes elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa – for example, a study in Malawi calculated a programme implementation cost of US\$93 per child. It was also estimated that if some elements of the Mozambican ASR programme could be delivered as part of other government programmes, the cost could be reduced to US\$39 per child. To increase the average IDELA score attained by children by 17 points – as achieved by participants in the pilot programme – the cost-effectiveness ratio was found to be US\$3.50 per IDELA point increase. This level of cost-effectiveness has positive policy implications for scaling up the ASR programme throughout Mozambique.

TABLE 2
Impact and cost-effectiveness of the ASR programme on the IDELA constructs

| | IMPACT | COST-EFFECTIVENESS (USD) |
|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Total IDELA | 17*** points (0.93 SD) | \$3.50 (\$6.50 per 0.1 SD) |
| Emergent numeracy | 21*** points (0.98 SD) | \$2.90 (\$6.10 per 0.1 SD) |
| Emergent literacy | 14*** points (0.70 SD) | \$4.30 (\$8.60 per 0.1 SD) |
| Executive function | 9* points (0.37 SD) | \$6.70 (\$16.20 per 0.1 SD) |
| Motor skills | 19*** points (0.78 SD) | \$3.20 (\$7.70 per 0.1 SD) |

Note: In United States 2017 dollars. The per-child cost is \$60 and includes in-kind costs.
Source: Authors' calculation.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

It is hoped that the strong engagement with Ministry of Education and Human Development officials at all levels from the outset of the impact evaluation will have a positive effect on the uptake of its recommendations. Similarly, from a demand perspective, the community engagement of local leaders, parents and families should help to drive the expansion and uptake of the ASR programme.

The study's midline results were shared in November 2018 at an international conference organized by UNICEF and the Universidade Pedagógica in Quelimane, Mozambique. Many education partners from Zambézia attended and participated in the discussions. UNICEF Mozambique also presented the midline findings at a 2018 meeting with the Mozambican Ministry of Education and Human Development and donors, to support the case for early childhood education.

Finally, the research strengthened collaboration between UNICEF, the World Bank and UNESCO on a diagnostic assessment of early childhood education to inform an education sector analysis and plan for Mozambique.



BOX 3**KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ASR PROGRAMMING IN MOZAMBIQUE**

- Scale up the ASR programme in further districts of Zambézia as well as in other provinces.
- Include extended training for volunteers as part of the programme and strive to maintain a gender balance among them.
- Strengthen the use of parent-to-parent sessions as a key component of the ASR model, by providing small incentives to attend and encouraging more fathers to do so.
- Maintain Portuguese as a language of instruction for ASR activities to help children adapt to primary school.



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UNICEF staff and representatives from the National and Provincial Directorates of Education conduct a joint monitoring visit at the Mecanga Primary School, Derra District to discuss key results and implementation challenges at the school and community level.

LOOKING AHEAD

UNICEF Mozambique will disseminate key messages from the impact evaluation to encourage dialogue and resource mobilization towards scaling up the ASR programme in Mozambique. The results will also be shared on global and regional platforms to promote the programme more widely as a cost-effective, scalable early learning intervention.

Using evidence from the impact evaluation, UNICEF will continue to work with the Government of Mozambique to develop an investment case and plan for scaling up an effective, nationwide system of preschool education that is accessible to all children. A national ASR programme in Mozambique could be the first step towards establishing such a system led by the Government and supported by UNICEF and other donor organizations.



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UZBEKISTAN

Student Learning at Primary Grades in Uzbekistan: Outcomes, Challenges, and Opportunities: A summary of Uzbekistan National Learning Achievement Study, Grade IV, 2018

What factors are associated with positive primary education outcomes in Uzbekistan?

Research Manager and Author: Deepa Sankar, Chief, Education, UNICEF



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

Reviewers commended this piece of research for filling an obvious evidence gap in understanding quality education in Uzbekistan and for representing the first comprehensive assessment of student learning quality in the country. The research adopts a holistic, well-designed conceptual framework, drawing on international best practices for learning measurement, and develops an impressive base of tools.

Reviewers also commented that the research has a strong potential for impact on policymaking, especially thanks to the collaboration with the Ministry of Education, hence ensuring ownership of the process and its results, as well as informing ongoing educational reforms. It is also highly relevant to UNICEF's broader work in a global context of learning poverty.

© UNICEF Uzbekistan/2015/Pirozzi
Students in the Fergana region, Uzbekistan solve mathematical problems.



Uzbekistan's new government has prompted broad political reforms with the introduction of its Development Strategy 2017–2021. These changes aim to expand economic growth, increase employment, encourage innovation, and improve skills and experience. A key focus is to improve the quality of education and learning among children and youth. This long-term economic investment will ultimately support the introduction of a more skilled and competent workforce.

While Uzbekistan has made remarkable progress in improving access to general secondary education and achieving gender parity in school enrolment, the quality of education is not well understood. To address this knowledge gap, a national learning achievement survey was conducted by UNICEF Uzbekistan in 2018. This comprehensive study provides the first insights into children's school performance at primary level, and the causes and correlations of learning and education quality in Uzbekistan. It also offers a crucial benchmark, enabling comparisons of educational performance within and beyond Uzbekistan, and lays the groundwork for optimizing children's learning outcomes.

PURPOSE

In 2010, UNICEF reported that although school enrolment rates were high in Uzbekistan, sparse data were available on quality of education and on learning outcomes. This situation has not changed over the last decade, even though education remains a priority of government social policy.

Within the context of the country's ongoing education sector reforms, there is a recognized need for evidence on children's learning to inform and support further progress. In addition, as a signatory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Uzbekistan is responsible for achieving a number of educational targets. These include Target 4.1: "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes."

To progress towards the achievement of quality education for all children, UNICEF Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Public Education and the wider Government of Uzbekistan worked together to conduct the most comprehensive assessment of primary school student learning to date.

The four key aims of the research were to:

- assess learning levels (both in terms of content knowledge and performance by cognitive domain) among children at the end of primary school
- understand background factors that may influence learning levels
- provide a starting point to demonstrate the use of national assessments (and their analysis) to systematically track effective learning and quality improvement
- provide recommendations for policymaking to improve the quality of education.



APPROACH

A nationally representative survey

More than 7,000 children in the final year of primary education (Grade 4) took part in the research in April and May 2018. Schools and participating classes were randomly selected from across all 14 regions of Uzbekistan to provide a nationally representative sample of 268 mainstream primary schools. The average age of participants was 10 years.

This study was designed based on the quality education conceptual frameworks and international best practices of measuring learning. The assessment was modelled on existing Lithuanian national assessment tools and frameworks, which are compatible with similar assessment tools and procedures developed by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) for their international assessment programmes. Each child was tested in three subjects: language (reading comprehension), mathematics, and general science/ environmental studies. Test scores were converted to a standardized scale (with each question weighted to reflect its difficulty) to allow meaningful comparison of students' level of ability on test items of varying degrees of difficulty.

All participating children, as well as their teachers and principals, were asked to complete background questionnaires. Questions captured information on student background, home and classroom/school context, and attitudes to learning (student questionnaire). The staff questionnaire shed light on teaching methods, teacher backgrounds, pedagogical views and professional development. Mathematical modelling was used to analyse the characteristics to determine factors associated with better or worse learning outcomes.

Ethical considerations

The study was approved by an external review committee and guided by the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis. Administrators from each participating school informed teachers, students and parents about the study, including the benefits and potential risks to the children. All participants were informed of their right to leave the study at any time. Data were securely stored and maintained to protect children's anonymity.

Limitations

Without clearly defined learning standards in Uzbekistan, it was impossible to compare the results with the expected levels of learning. The responses to background questionnaires also presented challenges, as there were large proportions of both unanswered questions (in some cases, up to 30 per cent of a questionnaire was left blank) and a high proportion of positive responses (which may reflect a culture of conformity). These limitations were taken into account when interpreting the research results.

KEY FINDINGS

Mixed achievements across cognitive domains

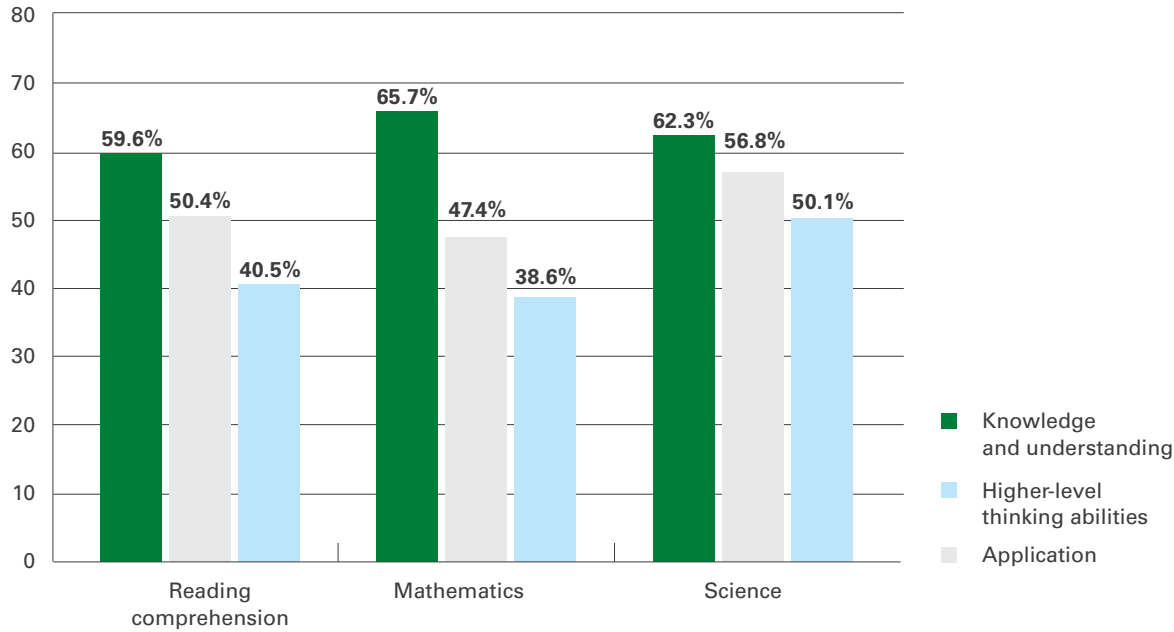
By the end of primary school, students in Uzbekistan were able to identify or recall simple and more obvious information and complete clearly set out, uncomplicated tasks. However, students struggled to identify, interpret and evaluate more complicated information, solve complex mathematical problems and respond to questions that required reasoning and application.

In the absence of robust data and analysis, evidence-based and contextualized policies and programmes to reform education sector quality and equity issues remain a challenge.

– Research report



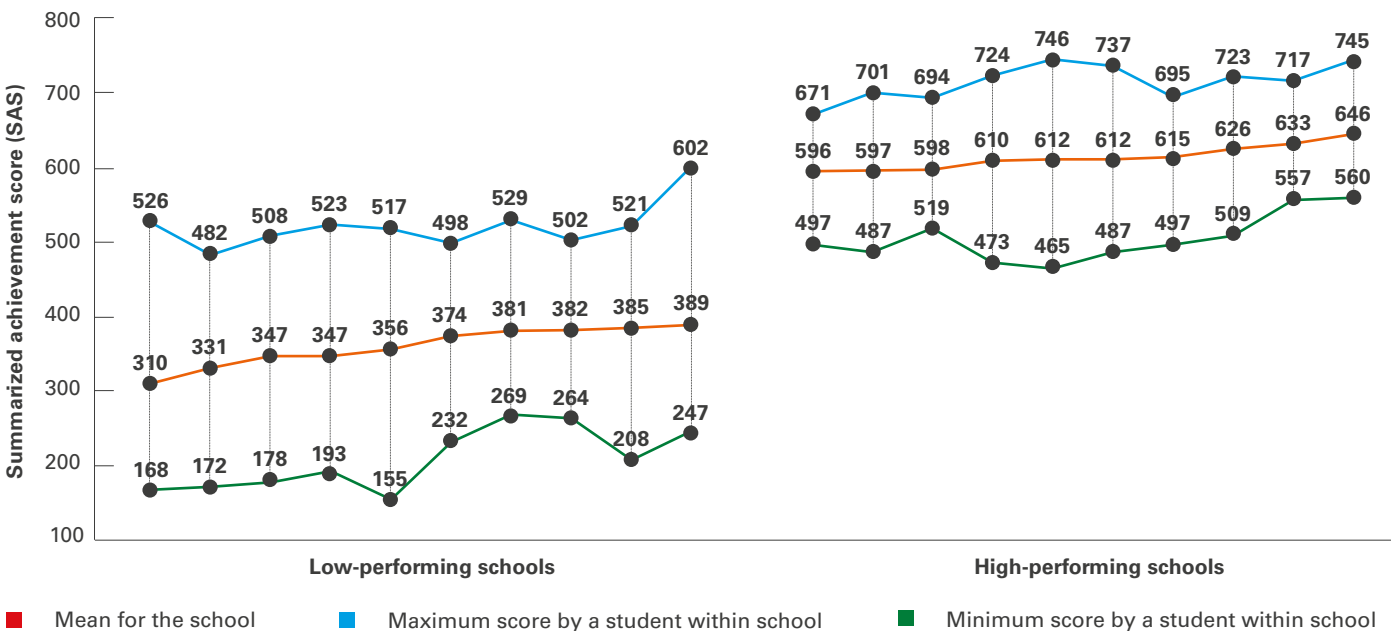
FIGURE 1
Student performance by cognitive domain



Inequalities in learning outcomes

The wide differences in the test scores of the best- and worst-performing students suggest inequalities in learning outcomes. Test scores also varied substantially between schools: in every learning area assessed, the best-performing school achieved a mean test score that was more than double that of the worst-performing school.

FIGURE 2
Student test scores by low- or high-performing schools



Gender and location associated with different learning outcomes

Girls performed better than boys in reading comprehension but similarly in mathematics and science. Children in urban areas performed better than those in rural areas in mathematics and science but not in reading comprehension.

Home environments support better learning

Children who had access to books and were immersed in a culture of reading and learning at home performed better on every test compared with children lacking access to reading aids. Having the physical infrastructure at home to enable study (e.g., a desk) also enhanced learning.

Better test scores were achieved by those students whose families had provided them with early learning and literacy experiences, for example, by reading books, telling stories and singing lullabies to them. Children who felt supported by their family, and who were either rewarded or reprimanded for their school performance, also achieved higher scores. Children who had attended a preschool before starting primary school performed better than those who had not.

Furthermore, those children who were educated in the same language as spoken at home performed much better than children whose school and home languages differed. In tests of reading comprehension, students in Uzbek-speaking schools (where 68 per cent of students spoke Uzbek at home) did much better than those in Russian-speaking schools (where only 42 per cent of students spoke Russian at home).

The school environment matters

Better learning outcomes were achieved by children who liked their school, felt good about their classes, felt safe in school and had never experienced bullying. In contrast, children attending schools where students displayed a higher level of behavioural problems – such as late arrivals, absenteeism, skipping classes or violations of school rules – tended to perform poorly.

Performance and learning were also influenced by the physical facilities of classrooms, including the ability to adjust room temperature, the suitability of desks and chairs, and the availability of learning and teaching materials. Children who were more physically comfortable in the classroom achieved better test scores.

Modern teaching methods and experience count

Children taught by teachers with previous classroom experience and a modern degree (e.g., a bachelor or master's degree) performed better in tests than those taught by a new teacher or a teacher with a Soviet-era higher education diploma or a vocational qualification.

High-performing students have home environments that support learning. The higher the support and involvement from parents/ family and better the home resources, the better the student performance in test outcomes.

– Research report



INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

As the first comprehensive national assessment of its kind in Uzbekistan, this study set a benchmark for improving the quality of education and achieving better learning outcomes. Its findings raised awareness among policymakers of the importance of using sample-based national assessments to measure education outcomes. Developed in partnership with the Ministry of Public Education, the research also ensured local ownership of research processes and results and is hoped to be used to inform ongoing education sector reforms in Uzbekistan.

The Ministry has already implemented a key recommendation around the early identification of learning gaps, by introducing Early Grade Reading and Mathematics Assessments with the support of the US Agency for International Development. The research has also informed the development of a new National Curriculum Framework for Uzbekistan and initiated a process of curriculum revisions for Grades 1 to 11.

BOX 1 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE PRIMARY EDUCATION IN UZBEKISTAN

- Reform the curriculum, the methods and practices used in teaching in primary school in Uzbekistan.
- Apply the new national learning achievement survey regularly to review education system quality.
- Reform the development of the teacher workforce.
- Expand preschool education to maximize school readiness and learning in primary school.
- Create in schools a friendly and enabling environment for learning through initiatives such as the Child Friendly Schools initiative.
- Focus on school community, including parents and families, to create greater awareness of and accountability for learning outcomes.
- Improve the resources and achievements of low-performing schools.
- Strengthen the education sector's monitoring and evaluation system through continuous and comprehensive evaluations, so that planning and programming are more evidence based.

Safe schools contribute to better learning achievements. Students attending schools where behaviour problems were reported as high, such as late arrivals, absenteeism, skipping classes or violations of school rules, tend to do worse in tests.

– Research report



LOOKING AHEAD

The new national learning achievement survey created by this research represents a key baseline dataset that can help to identify strengths and weaknesses of the education system. It will be used to highlight any gaps and challenges for policies and decision-making; to explore and optimize existing resources; and as a baseline for measuring future changes to educational standards. Use of the survey will also enable Uzbekistan to participate in several international projects, including the forthcoming Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2021.

More broadly, the findings are expected to trigger policy debates among education stakeholders, such as government, development partners, parents, teachers and civil society organizations, about the quality of education in Uzbekistan and what really contributes to better learning, both inside and outside of school. Ultimately, the research results will be used to guide and design new strategies to focus on those interventions that can most effectively improve the quality of education, in an equitable manner.



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Students in the Fergana region, Uzbekistan perform a science experiment using a microscope.



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BULGARIA

Evaluation of the Family for Every Child Project in the Region of Shumen, Bulgaria

Has deinstitutionalization improved the situation of children in Bulgaria?

Evaluation Manager: *Elena Atanassova, Child Rights Monitoring Specialist, UNICEF Bulgaria*

Authors: *Joanna Rogers, Elayn M. Sammon, Luba Devetakova*



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

This evaluation was commended for its profound influence on the rights of children in Bulgaria, as well as for its multiplier effect across Eastern Europe. By providing crucial evidence, the evaluation helped to reverse the longstanding historical practice of institutionalizing children in Bulgaria, thus helping to restore children's right to family relations, except where this is contrary to their best interests.

The panel valued the evaluation's clear purpose to generate evidence that could inform the Government of Bulgaria's decisions in relation to ensuring the sustainability and scaling up of alternative approaches to institutional care in the country. The evaluation further strengthened the position of UNICEF in Bulgaria.

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Workshop in Veliki Preslav, Bulgaria provides children with a space to share their experiences and the opportunity to acquire new skills, through physical activities, for coping with challenging



Residential institutional care has long-term negative consequences for children's physical, psychological and emotional well-being. Yet some parents are driven by economic, social and cultural pressures to place their children in institutions. In 2010, following national and international outcry over the poor conditions in children's homes across the country, the Government of Bulgaria adopted the Vision for Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria. This five-year national strategy sought to end children's institutionalization and move towards a more family-centric system of care.

To support the strategy and its action plan, UNICEF Bulgaria set up the Family for Every Child project in the Shumen region, in partnership with the national and regional governments. The project, which ran from 2010 to 2016, aimed to help strengthen the national child protection system to secure the best interests of the child in every case. More specifically, it aimed to develop a network of core services to support families, reduce the number of children entering institutional care and, ultimately, close the Home for Medical and Social Care for Children (HMSSC) in Shumen. A 2016 evaluation of the project concluded that much had been achieved – and establishing core support services such as family counselling centres (FCCs) had been key to this – but longer-term challenges remain.

PURPOSE

The Family for Every Child project aimed to demonstrate that viable alternatives to institutionalization exist, and that as long as a network of suitable support services is in place, deinstitutionalization is achievable. UNICEF Bulgaria commissioned this evaluation to establish whether the project had been successful, looking beyond the main goal of closing the Shumen HMSSC.

APPROACH

The project evaluation used a mixed methods approach to capture a range of perspectives on service delivery for children and their families and on the performance of UNICEF. The evaluation focused not only on the closure of the Shumen HMSSC, but also on the development of a system of infant foster care in the region and the creation of a new FCC service.

Representatives of government partners, non-governmental organizations and UNICEF, as well as staff of the newly created support services in Shumen shared their experiences of the project through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Other data sources included project-related documents, case file reviews and administrative data. Owing to time constraints, it was not possible to interview project beneficiaries (children and adults in contact with the FCC service).

KEY FINDINGS

Closure achieved, but longer-term outcomes unclear

The Government closed the Shumen HMSSC in 2015, with the support of the Family for Every Child project. Most of the infant home's 150 child residents were placed in a family environment, usually foster care followed by adoption; other children were reintegrated with their families. There were no major differences in outcomes for girls and boys, but children with disabilities were more likely to remain in a formal residential care setting than be adopted or reintegrated with their families. Children with disabilities were also 16 times more likely to die upon leaving residential care than those without disabilities.

All the activities of the FCC were aimed to prevent abandonment, with the idea that there is nothing better for a child than growing up in a family.

– Key informant, municipality level, quoted in evaluation report

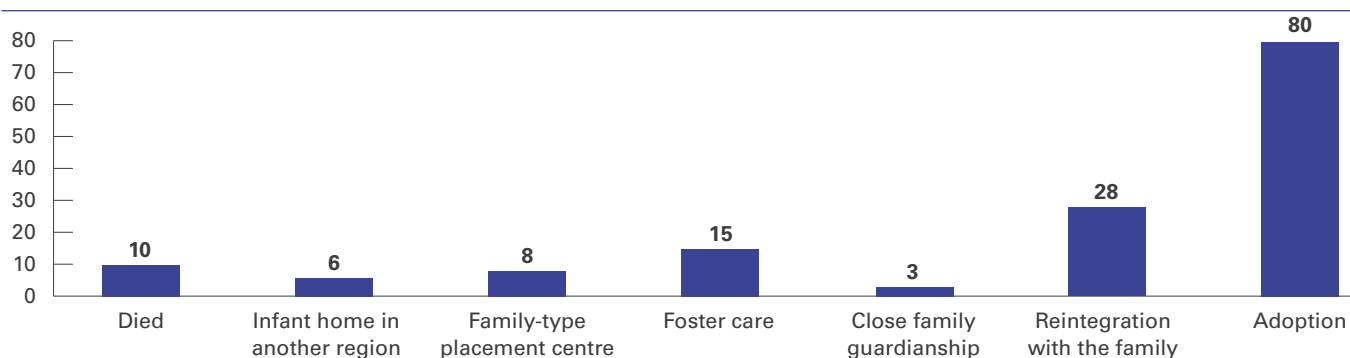


TABLE 1
Outcomes for girls and boys leaving the Shumen infant home

| | GIRLS, N=64 | BOYS, N=86 |
|-------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Adoption | 59% | 50% |
| Reintegration with the family | 17% | 19% |
| Close family guardianship | 0% | 3% |
| Foster care | 13% | 8% |
| Family-type placement centre | 3% | 7% |
| Infant home in another region | 2% | 6% |
| Died | 6% | 7% |

Note: Sample size: children with disabilities n=53; children without disability n=97.
 Source: Shumen Regional Directorate of Social Assistance (RDSA) and author calculations.

FIGURE 1
Outcomes for children moved from Shumen infant home



Source: Shumen Assistance RDSA and author calculations.

The well-being of some of the children moved from the Shumen HMSCC was not tracked beyond their initial placement, so there is an incomplete understanding of how they fared in the longer term. Alternative arrangements should be made for monitoring outcomes for children in areas where the capacity of statutory authorities is limited.

Core support services reduce child institutionalization

The Family for Every Child project established three community-based FCCs in the Shumen region to support parents who were considering relinquishing their children. FCCs deliver family support services in response to individual, family and community needs. As well as working directly with pregnant women and families to assess their needs, the centres offer services such as parental information and education sessions, counselling, family planning and access to medical care. By offering support from early pregnancy, FCCs may help to reduce the number of women who intend to relinquish their child at birth. Incomplete data and anomalies in data collection mean it is not possible, however, to definitively assess how effective FCCs have been in preventing family separation. Further work is needed to help FCCs and other services become fully effective in preventing separation and ensuring the well-being of younger children.

The infant foster care service has been a valuable addition in Shumen and is now a fundamental part of the care system in the region, welcomed at all levels. It was key to closing the Shumen HMSCC, both through finding foster placements for children already in the infant home and by facilitating the fostering of newborns directly

from the maternity ward. Additionally, it facilitated foster care for newly relinquished children who would previously have been placed in the HMSCC. Of 107 children placed in foster care over the course of the project, 30 came from the HMSCC, 33 were newborns from the maternity ward and 44 were children relinquished by their families.

UNICEF intervention welcomed

Government partners at the national, regional and local level appreciated the Family for Every Child project. The project clearly supported the Government in achieving closure of the Shumen HMSCC; its associated technical, financial and administrative inputs were valued and seen as important in supporting statutory services for vulnerable children and families, and for finding alternatives to institutional care.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Although the Family for Every Child project enabled the closure of the Shumen HMSCC, the evaluation was unable to determine conclusively that it had contributed to the long-term well-being of children and to improved child development. The evaluation has nevertheless been very influential in informing national policy as well as the strategic positioning of UNICEF with regard to child protection and, in particular, deinstitutionalization.

Informing national policy on deinstitutionalization

The evaluation's findings and recommendations informed the updated action plan for implementing the Government's Vision for Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria. The evaluation also paved the way for an analysis of the country's child protection system, jointly commissioned by the Bulgarian Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and UNICEF. Carried out by an independent team of international and national researchers in 2019, the analysis – considered the most comprehensive record of Bulgaria's child protection system – proposes wider reforms to better protect child rights in the country.

Informing UNICEF strategic positioning and planning

The evaluation has strengthened the positioning of UNICEF in Bulgaria, which is now viewed as a model country with regard to the deinstitutionalization of children under 3 years of age. As well as informing the development of the UNICEF Country Programme Document for 2018–2022, the evaluation has reaffirmed the importance of programming for risk prevention, early intervention, family support and provision of alternative care in a family or close-to-family environment.

Clarifying the role of family counselling centres

One suggestion from the evaluation is to clarify the role, responsibilities, mandates and objectives of FCCs to secure the sustainability of the services developed by the Family for Every Child project. Initially, many stakeholders viewed the new services in Shumen as 'UNICEF services' and there was little sense of local ownership, so vital to ensuring sustainability. Once FCCs were recognized as a state-delegated service, able to receive formal referrals from statutory child protection departments, local authorities were supported to gradually take full responsibility for the management and further development of FCCs. This has led to better monitoring of outcomes within the statutory system.

Documentation and analysis

The evaluation recommends systematic documentation of successful service interventions to inform the deinstitutionalization process, and replication or scaling up of associated support services. In response, the critically important methods and approaches of the services established in Shumen were distilled, emphasizing key original features such as flexibility and outreach.



The municipality values the activity and hopes that UNICEF can manage to make it a state-delegated activity

– Key informant, municipality level, quoted in evaluation report



Also recommended is an analysis of the cost of Shumen's child protection system as a whole and of its individual components, to gauge the potential for the state to take on the system and expand its coverage to other regions. Linking cost analysis to evidence of the child protection system's efficacy has already helped to ensure sustainability of the project's achievements.

Monitoring well-being and progress

As the evaluation could not establish that all children who had left the Shumen HMSCC were doing well in their subsequent placements, it called for an audit of their well-being and development. This was carried out by the Agency for Social Assistance. The situation of children moved out of other infant homes is being monitored by child protection departments.

Enabling the ongoing monitoring of well-being and development outcomes for children could support the Government of Bulgaria in moving towards a national, integrated, child-centred system of child protection and family support. Following the evaluation, the monitoring system was aligned with the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children to ensure child well-being.

Reaffirm relevance

The evaluation recommends that service users are regularly consulted to affirm that the services provided remain relevant. This has been incorporated into case management to help ensure that the specific child protection priorities in the communities served are being addressed appropriately, particularly in light of changing contexts.

Training and professional development

A structured, modular system of training and continuous professional development for FCC staff has been implemented to strengthen the outcomes of the FCC model of service provision – and the potential to replicate it elsewhere. Comprehensive guidelines are in place for conducting outreach work in marginalized communities.

Case management

The evaluation recommends setting up a simplified case management reporting interface to provide the Government and its development partners with data for monitoring, evaluation and planning purposes. A national case management system would improve both the coherence of interventions and the collection of data at the national level. Standardized assessment and case management frameworks would reduce the administrative burden on caseworkers and help to ensure more efficient and effective service delivery. Development of case management mechanisms to support intersectoral working, which would contribute to realizing the vision of an effective national network of services, should build on the practices employed in Shumen.

The reform of Bulgaria's social services is ongoing. It is anticipated that the adoption in March 2019 of an entirely new Social Services Act will lead to an improvement in case management mechanisms.

LOOKING AHEAD

UNICEF should consider how it can consolidate and develop its efforts to move beyond deinstitutionalization, towards a child protection system focused on protection from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. This should include strengthening the relationship between child protection and social protection systems.



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BOX 1 INFORMING POLICY FOR THE DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CHILDREN

The evaluation has proved very influential in informing national policy and UNICEF's strategic position. This has led to:

- an updated action plan for the Vision for Deinstitutionalization of Children in Bulgaria, based upon the evidence generated by the evaluation
- a comprehensive analysis, in 2019, of Bulgaria's child protection system
- stronger positioning for UNICEF in Bulgaria
- a new UNICEF Country Programme for 2018–2022
- an audit of the well-being and development of the children moved out of the Shumen HMSCC, and alignment of the related monitoring system with the United Nations Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children
- stronger linkages between the Government and UNICEF

Looking ahead, the challenge for UNICEF is to move towards a child protection system more focused on protection from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect. The evaluation also recommends setting up a simplified case management reporting interface.







ETHIOPIA

Child Labour Analysis in Ethiopia

What are the causes and consequences of child labour in Ethiopia?

Research Manager: Vincenzo Vinci, Social Policy Specialist

Author: Center for Evaluation and Development



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

Reviewers commended this piece of research for providing a comprehensive mixed methods overview of the issue of child labour in Ethiopia and the underlying vulnerability factors associated with this practice. It shows, through extensive statistical analysis, the complexity of factors behind individual and household decisions, including the significance of the educational status of heads of households and the role of gender in decision-making about schooling and child labour.

Reviewers also praised the rich mapping and holistic overview of the policy recommendations outlined by stakeholders drawing upon the qualitative and quantitative research findings, as well as the report's helpful reflections on the role of migration in child labour, a topic about which much remains unknown.

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Girl engaged in domestic work and childcare in Babilie town IDP site East Hararghe Zone, Oromia Region, Ethiopia.



Ethiopia has a rapidly growing economy, a young population and a high prevalence of child labour. In 2015, a national survey found that nearly 43 per cent of children aged 5–17 years in Ethiopia were engaged in some form of employment or family labour.

Child labour is understood to be work that is detrimental to a child's potential, dignity, physical and mental development, and well-being. It has also been shown to be economically inefficient in the longer term, due to the transfer of income from child to parent, at a cost to the child's education and future earning potential.

This research, commissioned by UNICEF Ethiopia, aimed to generate new evidence on child labour, assess the effectiveness of existing strategies and programmes, and propose future policy recommendations. The results provide a comprehensive picture of the drivers and impacts of child labour in Ethiopia.

PURPOSE

Child labour is a multifaceted issue that calls for integrated, evidence-based solutions. Although Ethiopia has ratified international conventions on child rights and has national legislation and policies in place to protect children, the issue remains a major concern. In this context, UNICEF and the Center for Evaluation and Development (C4ED), based in Germany, conducted a mixed methods research study to better understand the vulnerability factors associated with child labour in Ethiopia.

APPROACH

The research draws on analysis of secondary quantitative data and primary qualitative data concerning vulnerable, 'hard-to-reach' children in Ethiopia. A literature review was also conducted to assess previously identified causes and consequences of child labour, and associated welfare implications.

Survey data analysis

Quantitative analysis was largely based on data drawn from the Ethiopia National Child Labour Survey (NCLS) 2015, with additional data captured from the National Labour Force Survey 2013. The research also used descriptive techniques and regression analysis to determine the most important reasons why a child may get involved in child labour. This included examining how factors, such as the child's age, gender and family situation, may affect the degree to which a child is attending school or working, or combining both school and work.

The study also assessed the relationship between the number of hours spent by children on work and at school each week, as well as the effect of child labour on total years of schooling completed overall.

Interviews with vulnerable children

Major household surveys, such as NCLS, tend to overlook some of the most marginalized children, for instance, those who are homeless, have a disability or are not living with a parent. To address this evidence gap, a qualitative analysis was conducted to capture information from hard-to-reach children. In-depth interviews were carried out with girls and boys aged 7–17 years, employed in activities such as waste collection, street vending, domestic work, shoe shining and child prostitution. In addition, stakeholders from federal, regional and local authorities and organizations were consulted.

My grandmother was responsible for raising me. She was very old and had no capacity to help me out ... I am working and living on a street because there is no one to help me out and fulfil the things I need for survival.

– Hadush, aged 10, a street vendor in Mekelle



What could be gained by eliminating child labour?

As a final analysis, the researchers examined the prospective social and economic benefits of eliminating child labour, looking at the likely impacts on both current and future generations of children.

KEY FINDINGS

Poverty is a major determinant

Poverty emerges from the research as a key driver of child labour: overall, children from wealthier households are less likely to be working. The likelihood of a child being involved in family labour increases in rural areas, particularly in households that own more land or livestock.

Interviews with hard-to-reach children also identified poverty and the need to survive and support their families as the most important circumstances associated with child labour.

Age and employment are correlated

As may be expected, the proportion of children in work increases with age. By the age of 14 years (the end of compulsory schooling), 60 per cent of children in Ethiopia are working. Age is significantly related to whether and to what extent a child works. Up to the age of 12 or 13, children are less likely to be working only and are more likely to be attending school only or combining both work and school.

As children get older, they have a greater role in making decisions regarding work. Analysis of the NCLS data revealed that more than 25 per cent of working children aged 14–17 years had made an autonomous decision to work, compared with 10 per cent of working children aged 5–11 years. Nevertheless, more than 70 per cent of working children aged 14–17 reported that their families had made the decision for them – evidence supported by many of the stakeholders interviewed.

Schooling is affected

The literature review confirmed that child labour is well recognized as having a negative impact on a child's education, in terms of both school attendance and academic achievement. This was supported by the quantitative analysis, which showed that children involved in child labour complete fewer years of education and are more likely than their non-working peers to lag behind in school. Of the 25 hard-to-reach children interviewed, just 6 children were enrolled in school, with only 1 child attending full time.

When examining the impact of hours worked on school attendance using quantitative data, however, the researchers found that children who worked up to 20 hours per week were also the children most likely to be going to school. Results thus suggest that policy on child labour in Ethiopia should focus on children who work for in excess of 20 hours per week – since this is the threshold beyond which school attendance drops.

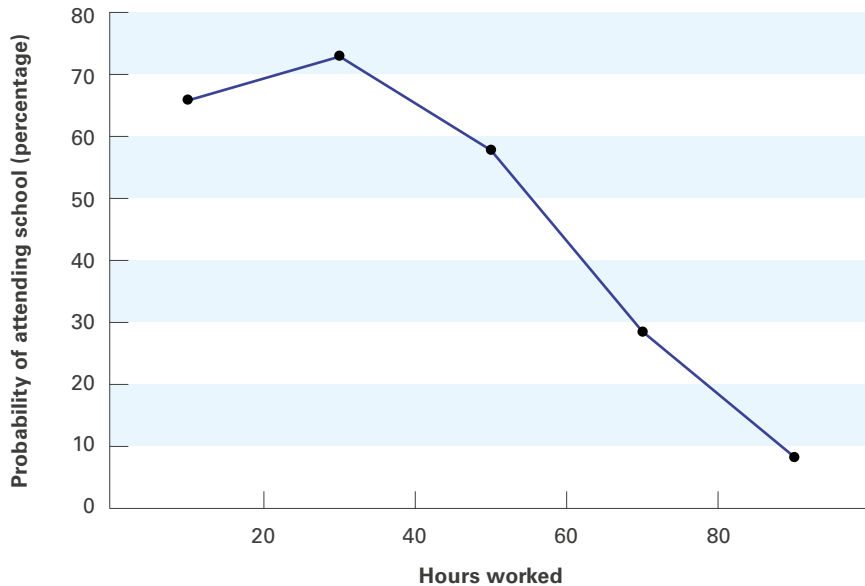


There are no children that work because they want to. They work because of the pressure by their families or because of the difficult situations that they face.

– Employee of the Bureau of Women and Children's Affairs, Addis Ababa



FIGURE 1
School attendance versus hours worked



Source: Designed graph.

Family circumstances have an influence

A child’s family background is also a strong determinant of their involvement in child labour. For example, a child living with parents who believe in the importance of education, or with a head of household who has a higher level of education, is more likely to attend school. Also, the older the head of household was when they first started working, the less likely it is that any children in the household will be involved in child labour. This suggests that child labour has intergenerational effects, and that action to reduce child labour now will benefit future generations of children.

Interestingly, children in households headed by a single adult (as a result of bereavement or divorce) are less likely to be involved in child labour. In fact, the lowest rates of child labour were found among children in single-parent households headed by the mother. Empowering women to play a stronger part in household decision-making could therefore contribute to reductions in child labour rates.

Migration also affects child labour. Analysis of the NCLS data revealed that children in households that have migrated, particularly from a rural setting to an urban area, are more likely to be involved in child labour than children in non-migrant households. Many of the children interviewed reported they had moved to the city in search of a better life and that they had aspirations for self-improvement.

Child labour is also a coping mechanism in households facing idiosyncratic shocks such as adverse impacts on household finances or on the health of a family member.

The impact can be long term

Failure to complete school can affect a child’s future earning potential, and child labourers face hazards that affect their health, development and well-being. In addition, working children are more likely to suffer injury or illness because of their work.

Children from rural areas sometimes leave their home in search of a better life in the city. Hence, there are no relatives who can take care of them and they opt to work to survive.

- Former street child in Hawassa



Interviews with hard-to-reach children revealed their exposure to verbal, physical and sexual abuse, and to the risk of drug abuse and addiction. In addition, marginalized children faced risks as a result of adverse work conditions, long working hours and dealing with heavy loads or dangerous materials. Long-term consequences included ongoing health issues and disability, anxiety and mental health problems.

Tackling child labour can bring about improved outcomes for children, including improved earning and income-generating capacity through greater participation in education, less illness and fewer injuries, improved mental health, and better family welfare.

BOX 1 **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO TACKLE CHILD LABOUR**

- Raise social awareness of child rights and the effects of child labour on children's health and well-being.
- Improve the enforcement of existing laws to prevent and punish abuse of children.
- Support families in meeting their most basic needs.
- Focus on providing high-quality education and making education available to all.
- Address barriers to education to reduce the number of children forced to drop out of school.
- Help parents and children to appreciate that schooling is valuable and can lead to improved living standards.
- Focus on creating jobs that require a more educated labour force to encourage adolescents to remain in education and seek training.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

The research maps existing policies and strategies related to child labour in Ethiopia and indicates that action is needed in key areas such as better enforcement of existing laws and new child-centred policies.

The report also calls for action by government and by non-governmental organizations to address the underlying issue of poverty and to support families in meeting their most basic needs – including those of their children. As Ethiopia currently has no education law, it is also necessary to develop legislation guaranteeing equal access to inclusive, high-quality education, irrespective of gender, ethnicity or family background.

LOOKING AHEAD

Findings from this research will be presented at the Child Research and Practice Forum in Ethiopia. Participants in the Forum include non-governmental organizations working with children living or working on the streets, and ministries of the Government of Ethiopia such as the Federal Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs. The research results and recommendations will also be discussed with high-level officials at these ministries.

Videos and short animations to raise public awareness of the negative effects of child labour are also in development.



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STATE OF PALESTINE

Evaluation of Family Centres as Community Level Service Delivery Mechanisms Reaching Vulnerable Children in Gaza for the period June 2015 to October 2017

How can family centres in the State of Palestine improve their child protection services?

Evaluation Manager: Shereen Obaid, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UNICEF State of Palestine

Author: Theresa Wilson



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

This high-quality evaluation conducted under a complex political environment was commended by the panel for having contributed to significantly improving the design, management and quality of service delivery by family centres. The evaluation findings also contributed to an enhanced partnerships approach and to mobilization of resources for continuing a much-needed Family Centre programme.

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Girls enjoy a life skills education session in a family center in the Gaza Strip, State of Palestine.



Decades of occupation, conflict and economic constraints have led to hardship and suffering for the 1.9 million people who live in the Gaza Strip in the State of Palestine. Children are exposed to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation arising from the occupation and from within their own families and communities.

Family centres (FCs) were introduced in Gaza in 2009 with UNICEF support, following the Israel–Gaza conflict of 2008–2009. Designed as child-friendly spaces, and run by community-based organizations, FCs offered children and caregivers psychosocial, educational, health and protection services within their own neighbourhoods.

Since 2015, FCs have been increasingly employed for managing child protection cases, as part of a UNICEF-led strategy to meet the individual needs of conflict-affected children through a case management and referral service. This work has been guided by standard operating procedures on gender-based violence and child protection developed by the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development (MOSD) with support from UNICEF and other stakeholders in Gaza. By 2017, 51 FCs operated from fixed locations in Gaza and 5 from mobile centres near settlements of internally displaced people.

UNICEF State of Palestine commissioned an independent evaluation of FCs to assess their effectiveness in meeting child protection needs. The evaluation was timely, given declining support for FCs, and has led to a better understanding of their essential role in providing protection services to children in Gaza. The findings and recommendations have led to significant improvements in the design, management and quality of service delivery.

PURPOSE

The evaluation aimed to assess the effectiveness of FCs in identifying and responding to child protection needs, and consider how human rights, equity and gender are integrated into the response. It also set out to provide recommendations to strengthen child protection service delivery, and document good practices and lessons learned to inform future programming.

APPROACH

Twenty UNICEF-funded FCs operated by two civil society partners – MA'AN Development Center and the Tamer Institute for Community Education – participated in the evaluation. The evaluation covered the period from June 2015, when standard operating procedures for managing child protection cases were first piloted in FCs, to October 2017, when the existing partner cooperation agreements with MA'AN and the Tamer Institute came to an end. The evaluation selected eight FCs to visit, but a deteriorating security situation curtailed the fieldwork before the last centre could be visited.

A mixed methods approach was used for the evaluation, combining key informant stakeholder interviews, focus group discussions, and review and analysis of existing quantitative and qualitative secondary data. Eighteen key informant interviews were conducted with staff from UNICEF, implementing partners, the MOSD and non-governmental organizations associated with the FC programme. Additionally, 36 focus group discussions involving 315 participants were deployed. FC staff helped to identify the 172 children and 108 parents and caregivers who participated in the focus groups, as well as 35 members of the Child Protection Community Committees (CPCCs) that acted as a bridge between communities and FCs.

BOX 1 SERVICES OFFERED BY FAMILY CENTRES*

- Life skills education.
- Expressive art activities such as creative writing.
- Counselling services.
- Case management services for lower-risk child protection cases.
- Structured child protection sessions for parents and caregivers to raise awareness of issues and share key child protection messages.
- Facilitated parent–child interactions for parents and young children, with an emphasis on encouraging fathers to participate in their children's upbringing.

* Not all centres run every service.



Qualitative data were analysed using an inductive approach. Secondary quantitative data were analysed to calculate percentages related to cost per child/caregiver, the caseload handled by the FCs, the share of cases managed by each partner, male-to-female beneficiary ratios, UNICEF and partners, financial contributions, and other data that reflected the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the centres.

KEY FINDINGS

FCs bring many positive benefits to the communities they support, by providing essential child protection, prevention and early intervention services for children in Gaza. There are no other child protection stakeholders in Gaza able to take on this role should the FC programme be withdrawn.

Relevant at all levels

The evaluation found the FC programme relevant to the priorities of the partners involved, including UNICEF, MA'AN and the Tamer Institute, and to the implementation of the MOSD child protection response and case management in Gaza. Introducing the case management service enabled FCs to successfully identify and respond to the needs of individual children and their families. In fact, FCs managed 93 per cent of recorded child protection cases in Gaza from June 2015 to October 2017.

Expectations exceeded

In some areas, outcomes achieved by the programme were better than expected, particularly in terms of improved psychosocial well-being and protection of targeted children. Also, the numbers of children participating in structured FC activities often exceeded the targets set.

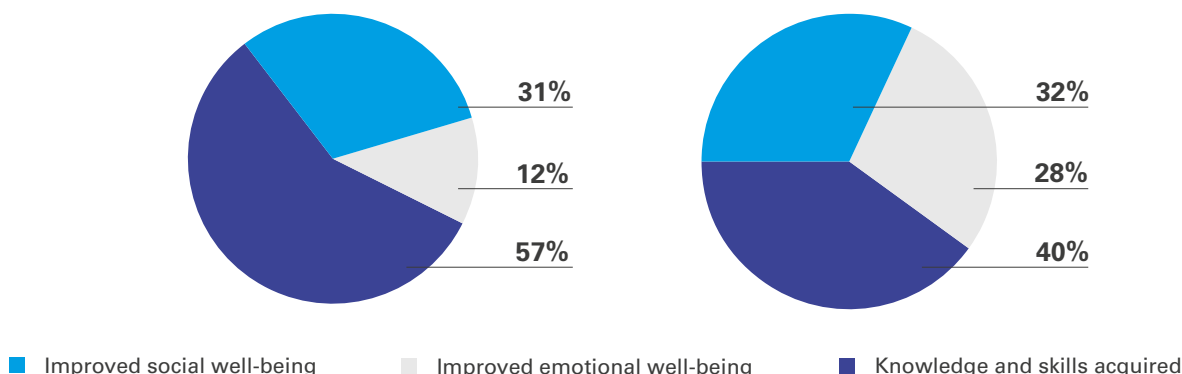
Positive change can be achieved

Remarks made during the focus group discussions provided evidence, albeit anecdotal, that FCs contribute to positive changes in the lives of children and their caregivers. Children in particular reported that they had learned new skills and observed positive changes in their emotional and social well-being. Caregivers also reported that they had gained knowledge and capabilities and felt their well-being had improved. This evidence suggests that the programme is having long-term impacts on participants.

Besides taking on cases, the Family Centres also provide services for children who have suffered from the wars, especially in the buffer zone areas.

- Key informant quoted in evaluation report

FIGURE 1
Positive change reported by children and by caregivers attending family centers



Source: Author's calculation.

Cost-effective, but affected by budgetary cuts

The evidence suggests that funding for the FC programme was disbursed responsibly and in a cost-effective way. When budget cuts were made, programme partners were initially able to achieve similar results (such as reaching a similar number of beneficiaries) at a lower cost. But further budget reductions affected staffing levels and the programme activities on offer. The evaluation identified the importance of diversified funding sources to ensure the financial stability of child protection and welfare services offered by civil society organizations.

Lack of inclusiveness, capacity or a plan for sustainability

There was limited evidence that children with disabilities participated in or benefited from the programme. The budget made no provision for FCs to make relevant improvements to their premises, including adaptations to improve accessibility for children with disabilities. More women than men took part in the FC programme, suggesting that more could be done to strengthen the programme's response to gender inequality.

The evaluation also found that the FC programme had no viable sustainability strategy or exit plan. Capacity building of the community-based organizations and CPCCs was lacking – despite the latter being the main mechanism for mobilizing communities to identify and respond to child protection concerns. This meant that FCs and their services could function only as long as the partnership agreement between implementing partner and community-based organization was in place.

Other gaps identified in the programme included the lack of baseline measurements for impact and outcome indicators, and the lack of both an underpinning theory of change and an overall monitoring and evaluation plan. A further constraint on programme efficacy was the limited capacity, in terms of financial and human resources, of child protection counsellors working for the MOSD to provide a timely response to more serious child protection cases transferred from FCs and to cases referred for financial support.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

The evaluation provides clear evidence of the importance and value of FCs to the social and emotional well-being of children in Gaza. This evidence has helped to build the overall confidence of the national community in FCs. A number of the evaluation's recommendations have been incorporated in the programme.

Improved programme design and management

Greater awareness of the value of the FC programme among UNICEF senior management and donors has led to renewed programmatic and donor support for FCs. Furthermore, UNICEF has taken steps to significantly improve both programme design and management.



Diversified prevention and early intervention responses

The evaluation recommends exploring the development of other community-level child protection service delivery models. In response, staff in schools and libraries have been trained to identify and refer vulnerable children for case management.

Heightened awareness and better case management

UNICEF has worked with two civil society organizations to raise awareness of child protection and to familiarize parents, caregivers and CPCC members with child protection referral pathways. UNICEF has also worked with CPCCs to raise awareness of the FC programme through radio campaigns, interviews and conferences. CPCCs are now better informed about children's rights and child protection concerns and have a greater understanding of vulnerable children's needs. They also value FCs and are more aware of how to raise concerns about child protection issues. Such insights are essential if child protection services are to continue, in the event that the FC programme encounters future financial constraints.

New standard operating procedures

The evaluation informed the revision of the standard operating procedures for child protection case management and referral in Gaza. Introduced in 2019, the new standard operating procedures are intended to be a user-friendly reference for case managers and supervisors directly involved in managing child protection cases. The procedures will build new partnerships to promote child and family programmes, improve the accessibility of FCs, establish equity-based programmes that mainstream disability, and strengthen outreach services to both women and men in a structured, standardized way. An enhanced case management system is now operating in FCs, strengthening their capacity to respond to the needs of vulnerable children.

Strengthened coordination with government

Engagement with MOSD officials and child protection counsellors has been strengthened, including by inviting these individuals to visit FCs and interact with staff. The possibility of supporting MOSD in case management is being explored.

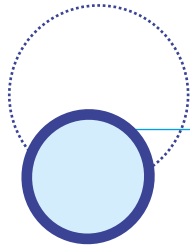
Standardized Child Protection Community Committees

A standardized approach to CPCCs, in the form of a manual, is now applied across all FCs. CPCCs are more formally represented within the programme, and FC staff are being trained to engage appropriately with them.

Improved measures for inclusion

National disability standards and the new standard operating procedures on child protection detection and referral pathways have been integrated into the national FC programme. Inclusive measures have been put in place to enable children with disabilities to benefit from FCs, and more men are being encouraged, through outreach activities, to be involved in the programme.





My daughter, who is 14 years old, was isolated and stayed at home. I encouraged her to come to the family centre. Now she has a lot of friends, her personality has changed totally.

– Mother, focus group discussion

Coherent theory of change

In response to another evaluation recommendation, a theory of change and logical framework are under development. These will guide partnership agreements and programme direction, and boost ownership and capacity of the organizations involved – particularly important if they are to take over from MA'AN and the Tamer Institute. A family strengthening approach, with a focus on improving the situation of children, will be considered. All partners will employ a monitoring, evaluation and learning system.

BOX 2

SUPPORTING FAMILY CENTRES AND INCLUSIVE CHILD PROTECTION

By demonstrating how FCs are supporting the well-being of children in Gaza, the evaluation has boosted confidence in the programme, leading to:

- improved national programming as well as improved quality of service delivery
- new partnerships to promote child and family programmes
- greater awareness of child protection issues among civil society organizations and CPCCs
- new standard operating procedures for case management
- strengthened coordination with the MOSD
- a standardized approach to CPCCs
- better approaches to including children with disabilities and involving more men in the programme.

LOOKING AHEAD

The evaluation recommends strengthening the FC programme and child protection system in Gaza, and considers how both could be more sustainable. Investments in community-level service providers such as FCs and CPCCs should be long term, creating an evidence base to help decision-makers allocate budgets accordingly. Longer-term investments would also support community ownership – crucial to the success of programmes. There is also a need for a better understanding of the protracted humanitarian crisis within which the programme must operate, and the specific circumstances faced by children and families in Gaza.



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A girl takes part in a life skills education activity in the Gaza Strip, State of Palestine.



GOAL AREA
FOUR



EVERY CHILD LIVES IN A SAFE AND CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

10 MALAWI



How can rigorous evidence help to inform Malawi's national water, sanitation and hygiene strategy?







MALAWI

Evaluation of the Community Led Total Sanitation and Hygiene Programme in Malawi

How can rigorous evidence help to inform Malawi's national water, sanitation and hygiene strategy?

Evaluation Manager: John Kanyama, WASH Officer, UNICEF Malawi

Authors: Zach White, Shona Jenkins, Martina Garcia, John Pinfold, James Mambulu, Chimwemwe Msukwa



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

The panel commended this high-quality evaluation for generating sound and rigorous evidence on the extent of open defecation-free slippage within Malawi. It further provides quality evidence on the need to focus more on latrine improvements and sustainability in line with market-based sanitation. As a result, the evaluation helped UNICEF and the Government of Malawi to evolve the water, sanitation and hygiene sector strategy across the country.

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Woman walks towards water basin with her 1-year-old daughter Tawime, Malawi.



Over the last two decades, Malawi has achieved remarkable strides in securing basic sanitation and hygiene services. This national progress, however, masks great variation across the country and within communities: open defecation is still practised by about 1 million people in Malawi, and 15 million people have no designated handwashing facility. Although impressive gains have been made in building sanitation infrastructure, achievements are threatened by the quality of this construction and the prevalence of diarrhoeal diseases and other waterborne diseases in poorer households. These diseases then multiply, affecting entire communities and contributing to 3,000 under-five deaths in Malawi annually.

In 2007, Malawi pioneered a new approach to ending open defecation as part of its national water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) strategy. The UNICEF Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS) and Hygiene programme implemented in Malawi was one of the first large-scale applications by any organization of the CLTS approach. Of the 38 Malawian local authorities that have at some point been declared open defecation-free (ODF), 16 were supported by UNICEF. District councils, with support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), carried out CLTS activities as part of the programme, which included a training component in building latrines. This 2019 UNICEF evaluation of the CLTS and Hygiene programme – covering its second phase, from 2013 to 2018 – found that it was extremely relevant and had a considerable impact on promoting basic sanitation and hygiene services in Malawi. Programme sustainability, however, depends on inclusiveness, streamlined processes and support for internal partners at all levels.

PURPOSE

Despite the scale and scope of the CLTS and Hygiene programme throughout Malawi, only limited assessments of its impact have been conducted. This evaluation was commissioned to assess programme strengths and weaknesses with the twofold aim of guiding improvement of the UNICEF Malawi Country Programme 2019–2023, and providing evidence to support CLTS and hygiene promotion in Malawi and further afield.

The second phase of the CLTS and Hygiene programme was implemented with support from the UK Department for International Development, European Union and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. This evaluation proved timely, given the heavy reliance on external donors by Malawi's WASH sector and a recent decline in such funding.

APPROACH

An inception mission determined that the evaluation assessment would cover 3 of the 15 Malawian districts where the CLTS and Hygiene programme had been implemented.

A qualitative assessment of 26 questions was carried out, covering criteria under relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, gender and human rights, drawing on sources including programme monitoring data, financial data and documents, and semi-structured interviews. Key informant interviews involved government and implementing partners at the national level; government, partners and health surveillance assistants (HSAs) at the district level; and schools, health facilities and community leaders at the community level. The methodology included a rubric scale to classify responses to the evaluation questions.

BOX 1 WHAT IS COMMUNITY-LED TOTAL SANITATION?

Community-led total sanitation (CLTS) is an innovative way to mobilize communities to eliminate open defecation. Communities are supported to assess the prevalence of open defecation among community members and to determine a course of action to become open defecation-free (ODF).

The success of this approach lies in moving beyond providing for the installation of sanitation and hygiene 'hardware' (i.e., putting in place subsidized sanitation infrastructure) to supporting the 'software' of community awareness and mobilization for long-term behavioural change. CLTS engages schools and health facilities, disseminating and applying messages about sanitation and hygiene to permanently break the cycle of faecal–oral contamination and disease. Wide-reaching in its impact, and popular and effective across many countries, CLTS has facilitated a move from the construction of latrines for individual households to the creation of ODF villages and districts.



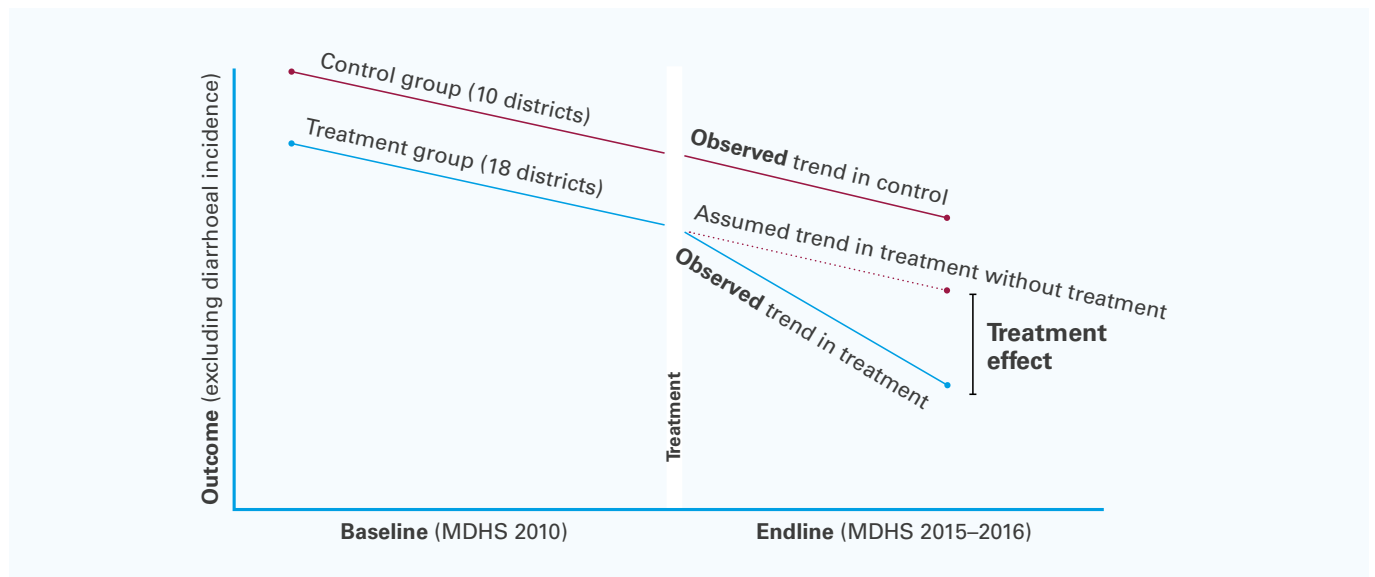
A quantitative component deployed a quasi-experimental difference-in-differences methodology, comparing outcomes for UNICEF programme districts and other districts. Existing secondary data drawn from the Malawi Demographic and Health Survey (2010 and 2015–2016 rounds) were used. The evaluation also sought to verify the extent to which the sample of 50 communities had maintained ODF status 12 to 18 months after being declared such.

Limitations

The evaluation was restricted by:

- limited financial data for a reliable value-for-money analysis, and limited gender-disaggregated data
- lack of alignment between UNICEF interventions and government datasets
- problematic comparisons of UNICEF programme districts and non-UNICEF programme districts, as both types of district benefited from programmes run by other organizations
- lack of a mid-term evaluation, meaning respondents were more likely to focus on recent events from the long period of time (2013–2018) under appraisal
- potential bias introduced by the involvement of staff who had previously worked for the UNICEF programme, though efforts were made to correct for this.

FIGURE 1
Representation of the difference-in-differences approach



Source: Hypothetical data; MDHS: Malawi Demographic and Health Survey.

KEY FINDINGS

Inclusive, but not by design

The evaluation found that the CLTS and Hygiene programme design was both relevant to sanitation and hygiene needs in rural Malawi and aligned with national policy and decentralization of service delivery. The theory of change, however, while plausible, was only developed halfway through the programme and lacked detail.

The CLTS and Hygiene programme is by nature inclusive and oriented towards the more equitable provision of sanitation services. However, the programme had neither developed specific targets for marginalized groups nor built them into monitoring efforts. Further, the programme design did not fully align with UNICEF or government gender policies: the needs of girls, women and the most vulnerable were not adequately considered, and the programme did not produce sufficient evidence that benefits were fairly distributed.

A rocky road to meeting targets

The programme faced numerous challenges in Malawi, its decentralized, large-scale approach to implementation resulting in complex and burdensome arrangements for management. As well as duplication in coordination and staff travel, there were delays in the disbursement of funds, particularly as these far exceeded normal budget allocations for districts. Poor performance on the part of some NGOs compounded these inefficiencies.

In many cases, targets and time frames were overambitious, leading to underachievement in those set for schools and for the training of masons in latrine construction. The programme overachieved, however, on core targets related to community sanitation, as measured by the number of communities declared ODF and the number of latrines constructed.

Gaps in monitoring

The theory of change specified outcome indicators on sustained latrine and drop-hole cover use, proper handling and disposal of child faeces, sustained handwashing with soap, and communities declared ODF. Since monitoring was designed prior to the theory of change, however, these indicators were overlooked. This meant that the programme's efficacy in bringing about change could not be assessed, except for its overachievement regarding community sanitation targets.

The evaluation also identified major inconsistencies within UNICEF monitoring data. Programme impact was weakened by late implementation of training for masons in latrine construction, and by shortages of staff and in the capacity of HSAs. Where HSAs expected allowances in addition to their salary, some NGOs made payments conditional on the declaration of ODF status.

Rapid gains in access across the board

There were rapid, comparable gains in access to improved sanitation and handwashing facilities across both UNICEF programme districts and other districts. The evaluation found, however, that where UNICEF interventions were particularly intense, results were enhanced. The findings are complicated by an actual rise in the incidence of diarrhoeal diseases, though this is an indicator that is affected by more than just latrine ownership or use. Incidence of diarrhoeal diseases and open defecation rose most among the poorest households in both groups of districts.

The programme overachieved on core targets related to community sanitation ... this should be celebrated as it represents better value for money than was initially envisaged.

– Evaluation report



TABLE 1
Assessment of programme sustainability risks at the local level

| DIMENSION | RISK AREA | RISK RATING |
|-----------------------------|--|-------------|
| User/community level | | |
| Functional | The selected technologies are not fit for purpose or fit for context | Severe |
| | The construction quality of physical infrastructure is not adequate for sustainability | Moderate |
| Institutional | Responsibilities of service users and support organizations are not clearly and appropriately established | Minor |
| | Service users do not have sufficient capacity (organized, trained and equipped) to undertake key tasks | Severe |
| Behavioural | There is evidence that, where constructed, infrastructure is not used (latrine use, adoption of handwashing with soap) | Minor |
| | There was not substantive continued promotion to consolidate latrine use and the adoption of handwashing with soap | Moderate |

Maintaining ODF status is difficult, but learning is occurring at many levels

The evaluation found that the CLTS and Hygiene programme had focused successfully on building the capacity of national, district and community institutions to provide sanitation services. The learning component was key, both for the programme and in feeding into national-level review processes for the WASH sector: UNICEF made a strong contribution to sector policy and coordination at the national level. Placing district councils at the centre of service delivery meant that the programme supported decentralization and local capacity building.

The ongoing decline in WASH sector funding anticipated in Malawi limits the sector's capacity to execute strategies and to restore services following natural disasters such as floods. Of concern is the fact that ODF status had not been sustained in any of the 50 sampled communities at 12 to 18 months after ODF declaration. The evaluation report also expresses concerns about durability of latrines – often built to very basic standards in sandy areas – and low prevalence of handwashing facilities. The overall loss of ODF status masked good progress at the household level, however, with 80 per cent of households possessing latrines at the endline. There was evidence that behaviour change had taken place, with households sharing sanitation facilities.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

National and UNICEF strategy

The evaluation provides strong evidence of the extent of the slippage of ODF status in Malawi, and of the need to focus more on latrine improvements and sustainability in line with market-based sanitation approaches. Using the findings, UNICEF Malawi has evolved the focus of its WASH strategy to encompass market-based sanitation (using SanMark), including to optimize the sanitation value chain, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Further, the National Sanitation and Hygiene Technical Committee of the Government of Malawi has initiated discussions with key stakeholders on national ODF protocols.



Market-based sanitation

UNICEF is well placed to pilot and scale up supply-side and market-based approaches that complement the CLTS and Hygiene programme, thereby catalysing changes in social norms while developing local markets to sustain safe latrine use. Incorporating the market-based sanitation approach, as recommended by the evaluation report, will include working with small businesses and introducing low-cost products, or engaging with microfinance institutions to extend credit.

Inclusion and equity

The evaluation revealed clear priorities for programmatic action, including a stronger focus on inclusion and equity. The UNICEF WASH Section is currently implementing a sanitation fund model to increase access to sanitation products and services among marginalized individuals.

Better construction of latrines

Another of the evaluation recommendations is to focus on the construction of more durable latrines. This will involve disseminating information about latrine pit design, providing early training to masons, and building HSA capacity and traditional leadership around durable construction.

Streamlining processes

The experience of the UNICEF CLTS and Hygiene programme highlights the need for more effective, simplified administration. The evaluation suggests reducing the number of districts involved while increasing the scale of implementation, to build momentum behind sanitation and hygiene at the district level. Accordingly, the WASH Section has reduced the number of districts it works in, and is aiming to streamline logistics by working with fewer, larger NGOs. Tracking expenditure to link the theory of change with specific outputs and outcomes will enable value-for-money analyses.

**BOX 2****TOWARDS A STREAMLINED, INCLUSIVE WASH STRATEGY THAT INCORPORATES MARKET-BASED SANITATION**

This high-quality and rigorous evaluation provided evidence and inputs that led to:

- streamlining UNICEF Malawi's WASH strategy to encompass market-based sanitation to optimize the sanitation value chain, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
- initiation of multi-stakeholder dialogues on national ODF protocols
- implementation, by UNICEF, of a sanitation fund model aimed at increasing access to sanitation products and services among marginalized individuals
- a focus on construction of more durable latrines, including dissemination of information about latrine pit design and provision of early training to masons.

LOOKING AHEAD

Despite the anticipated decline in external funding for the country's WASH sector, the sanitation component of the UNICEF Malawi Country Programme 2019–2023 is expected to provide continued support at the national level to sustain momentum at the local level. This support will focus on ODF monitoring and verification, assisting national task forces in conducting annual reviews, and supporting the Government of Malawi's sectoral performance reporting.

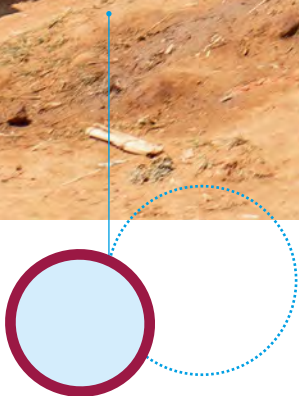


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Families draw water from a borehole in Ntcheu District, Malawi.



Investment in learning was a positive feature of the programme.

– Evaluation report



GOAL AREA
FIVE



EVERY CHILD HAS AN EQUITABLE CHANCE IN LIFE

11 BELARUS



How can fiscal policies in Belarus reduce child poverty more effectively?

12 CHAD



Could Chad prevent an oil crisis from fuelling child poverty?

13 ETHIOPIA



Does an integrated nutrition and social cash transfer programme improve outcomes for children in Ethiopia?

14 LACRO



Are national workplace policies supporting new mothers in Latin America and the Caribbean?

15 THAILAND



How will Thailand counteract intergenerational poverty with its child support grant?

UNICEF/UN056403/Thuentap

Sukanya, 20, and her 3-month-old, Tharit, in Samoeng district of Chiang Mai province, Thailand, benefit from the Thailand Child Support Grant







BELARUS

Commitment to Equity for Children: Redistributive Effects and Efficiency of Social Assistance to Households With Children in Belarus

How can fiscal policies in Belarus reduce child poverty more effectively?

Research Manager: Uladzimir Valetka, Monitoring & Evaluation/Child Rights Systems Monitoring Specialist

Authors: Kateryna Bornukova, Jose Cuesta, Gleb Shymanovich, Uladzimir Valetka



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

Reviewers commended this piece of research for the strong conceptual framework and comprehensive perspective to understand the redistributive effects of social and fiscal policies on children in Belarus. They also valued its sound methodology involving not only analysis of monetary poverty, but also the first measurement of multidimensional child poverty in the country. It was appreciated that the study was led by researchers from Belarus, supported by international experts, factors likely to enhance policy uptake as well as national capacity.

Reviewers also commented that the report illuminates the different policy opportunities, constraints and obstacles for child well-being and equity in Belarus, making a strong case for redefining existing policy tools to maximize their impact.



Child-related benefits constitute a major part of the public direct transfers in Belarus. Despite this explicit child focus, households with children are among the most vulnerable groups in Belarus when it comes to the risk of absolute poverty and multidimensional poverty.

In 2016, 1.9 per cent of national gross domestic product (GDP) was spent on child-related benefits, from lump-sum benefits in pregnancy, maternity aid and a childcare allowance to targeted social assistance, education and health care.

Yet poverty among children in Belarus increased to 11.3 per cent in 2017, compared with 5.9 per cent for the population as a whole. Families with three or more children aged 6–13 years – especially single-parent households, and households living in smaller cities and rural areas – are most adversely affected. Distribution of benefits appears to favour some households over others, suggesting a social policy bias and shortfalls in support for the most vulnerable.

Research funded by UNICEF Belarus and the World Bank confirms such a bias and recommends targeted interventions to more equitably and efficiently secure the welfare of the country's most vulnerable children.

PURPOSE

The study's main objective was to understand the distributional impact of taxes and public spending on children in Belarus, by considering multidimensional child poverty (MDCP) as well as monetary poverty.

Specifically, the research sought to:

- assess how fiscal redistribution and poverty reduction are being accomplished through social spending, taxes and subsidies from household to national level, in urban and rural areas
- consider how social spending is distributed by age of children, and which households bear the burden of, and benefit from, the taxation system
- identify fiscal system shortcomings in regard to children and indicate how social assistance can be better targeted.

The study supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 1 target of reducing by at least half the proportion of children living in poverty by 2030 – and Belarus's own target of reducing the national poverty rate to 4.5 per cent by the same year. By assessing the interplay of social assistance programmes with multidimensional and monetary poverty, the analysis aims to inform Belarusian policymakers and national and international researchers.



APPROACH

Child-centred analysis

The research team applied the Commitment to Equity for Children (CEQ4C) methodology to analyse household survey data and administrative fiscal data from Belarus. This analytical model seeks to determine the effects of child-relevant budgeting at the level of fiscal incidence (overall economic impact of government taxation and expenditures on an individual's real income), as well as multidimensional poverty and public finance analysis. CEQ4C was applied to 2016 fiscal data and Household Budget Survey data to calculate welfare before and after social policy interventions. The sample of 6,000 households encompassed 50 cities and rural councils in Belarus.

Disposable income was used as the measure of well-being. Directly transferred state benefits were subtracted from household disposable income, to which estimated direct taxes were added, to calculate market income – that is, income available to the household before any fiscal interventions.

The researchers also analysed the data in view of known determinants of poverty risk, such as the number of children in the household, their age and the place of residence (urban/rural). Subjective evaluations of households, taken from the Household Budget Survey, were also considered.

Multidimensional poverty measure

This study represents the first use of a multidimensional measure of poverty in Belarus. MDCP can be defined in this context as the share of children suffering from multiple deprivations rather than income deprivation alone. Children may lack basic rights or necessities such as access to safe water and sanitation; a healthy, diverse diet; adequate living space; or use of a personal computer (PC) to support learning.

These variables were considered alongside monetary poverty, defined as when disposable income per capita is lower than the subsistence budget (amount of money a household needs to satisfy basic material needs).

Limitations

Using the CEQ4C methodology requires a household-centric approach, with calculations based on the entire household as a unit rather than children specifically. The researchers therefore expanded their focus to also examine the impact of pensions, an important source of income for many households with children.

KEY FINDINGS

Belarus has a pro-poor benefits system, but MDCP stands at 16.7 per cent, higher than the overall poverty rate. Poverty rates vary significantly across households; however, for households with three or more children, and households in rural areas, MDCP is 29.5 per cent, and for households with a single parent, it is 23.8 per cent.

Inequitable distribution of benefits and transfers

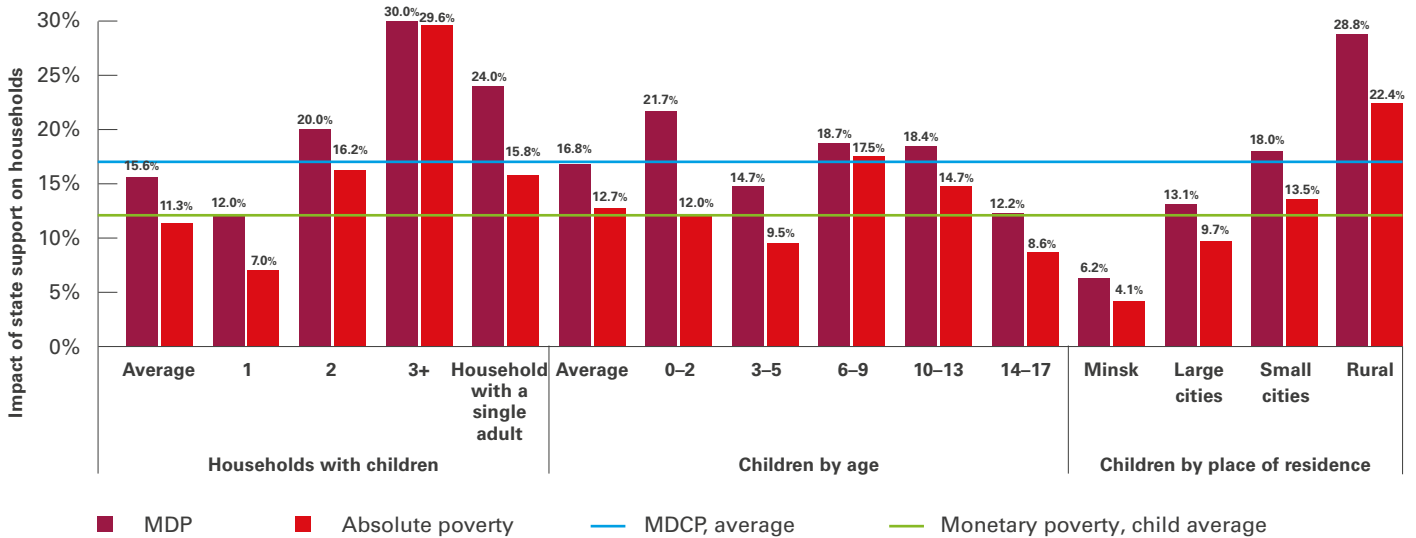
Analysis revealed gaps in the country's system of benefits and transfers, with particular groups left behind. The impact of state support on a household varied according to the number and age of its children and its economic situation.

Policies in support of households with children need to develop targeted social assistance and introduction of vulnerable group-specific benefits for, inter alia, households with three or more children, and single-parent households.

– Research report



FIGURE 1
Multidimensional and monetary poverty, by household variables



Source: Author's calculation.

The biggest source of financial support for families with children in Belarus is a childcare allowance for children under 3 years. In 2017, this allowance absorbed 95.4 per cent of social protection expenditure. Distribution of benefits was also skewed in favour of families with three or more children, 63.3 per cent of whom were covered, receiving 13.7 per cent of their disposable income in benefits. Large families also benefited most from direct transfers: 87.5 per cent of households with three or more children were covered, receiving 29.7 per cent of their disposable income in transfers.

Children over 6 years of age had more limited access to the benefits system, even though they received dedicated social assistance, indicating their higher risk of poverty. For households with children aged 6-9 and 10-13 years, benefits made up only 11.3 and 9.6 per cent of disposable income respectively.

For single-parent households, poverty rates were higher still. Overall, 32.8 per cent of such households received some kind of child-related benefit, yet monetary poverty stood at 15.9 per cent.

Further inequalities were experienced by households facing monetary poverty and material deprivations. Transfers represented a higher proportion of disposable income - about one-fifth - for children at risk of poverty (both absolute poverty and MDCP) than for non-poor children. The researchers attributed this, however, to the scarcity of other income sources for households with poor children, rather than the lack of a targeted intervention to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.



Weak targeting of utility subsidies and uneven tax burdens

Disparities and inefficiencies emerged in the distribution of utility subsidies. The more children per household, the lower the level of indirect utility subsidies. Thus, the most vulnerable multi-child households – particularly those in rural areas and those with children experiencing multidimensional or monetary poverty – received less support than other households.

Weak targeting of utility subsidies rendered these inefficient at reducing poverty levels, especially when allocated to households with two or more children or to residents of smaller cities.

Furthermore, households with children had a higher than average tax burden – 33.7 per cent of household income compared with 23.7 per cent of household income for those without children. The burden was lowest for households with three or more children under 3 years, suggesting that they tend to consume fewer fully taxable goods and services owing to higher levels of poverty. The burden was highest for households with only one child, aged 14–17 years.

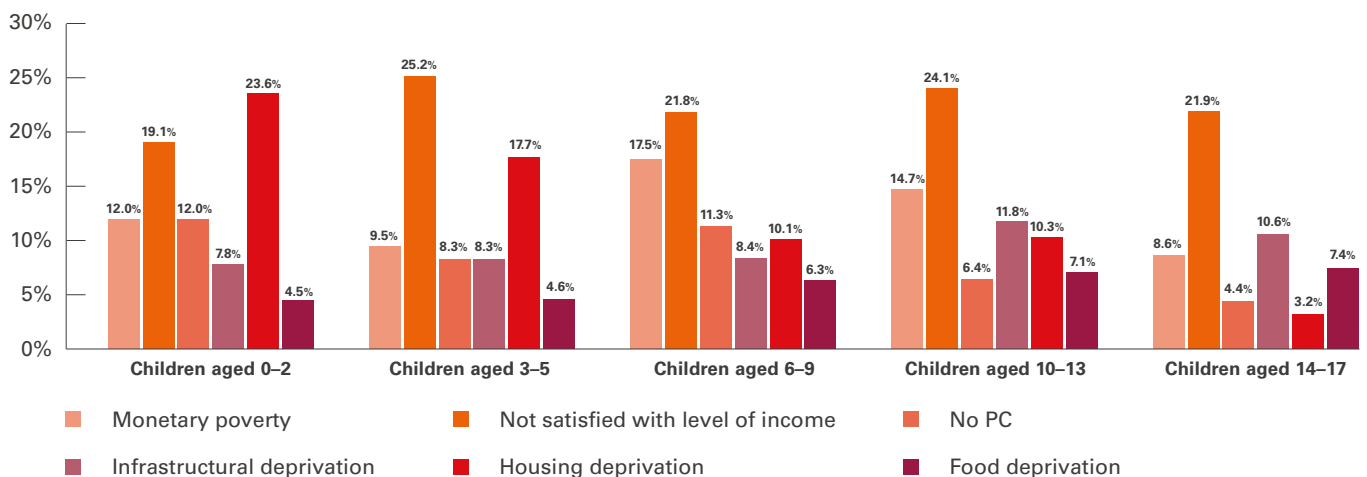
Education expenditure displayed a more progressive trend, with benefits increasing in line with the number of children per household, and higher than average rates per child in smaller cities (due to fewer students).

Varying deprivations by number and age of children

Households with two or more children were found to be at higher risk of housing deprivations due to limited space per person. This was especially the case for preschool children: 21.1 per cent of households with children under 2 years suffered housing deprivations.

The situation worsened for households with three or more children, in which infrastructure deprivations and monetary poverty were more pronounced. Food deprivation increased for school-aged children, peaking at 7.7 per cent for those aged 14–17 years. Only 54.1 per cent of children experienced no deprivations; 29.2 per cent faced one deprivation, 10.5 per cent faced two and 6.2 per cent faced three or more deprivations.

FIGURE 2
Incidence of selected deprivations experienced by children, by age



Source: Author’s calculation.



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Two girls play with dolls in an Inclusive Kindergarten in Vitebsk, Belarus.

Gender-sensitive but inefficient, inequitable allowances

A cost-benefit analysis was conducted on a modified simulation of the most costly programme, the three-year maternity leave allowance. Such extensive periods of maternity allowance were found to be highly inefficient in reducing poverty. In fact, like childbirth and pregnancy registration allowances, they worsened inequalities.

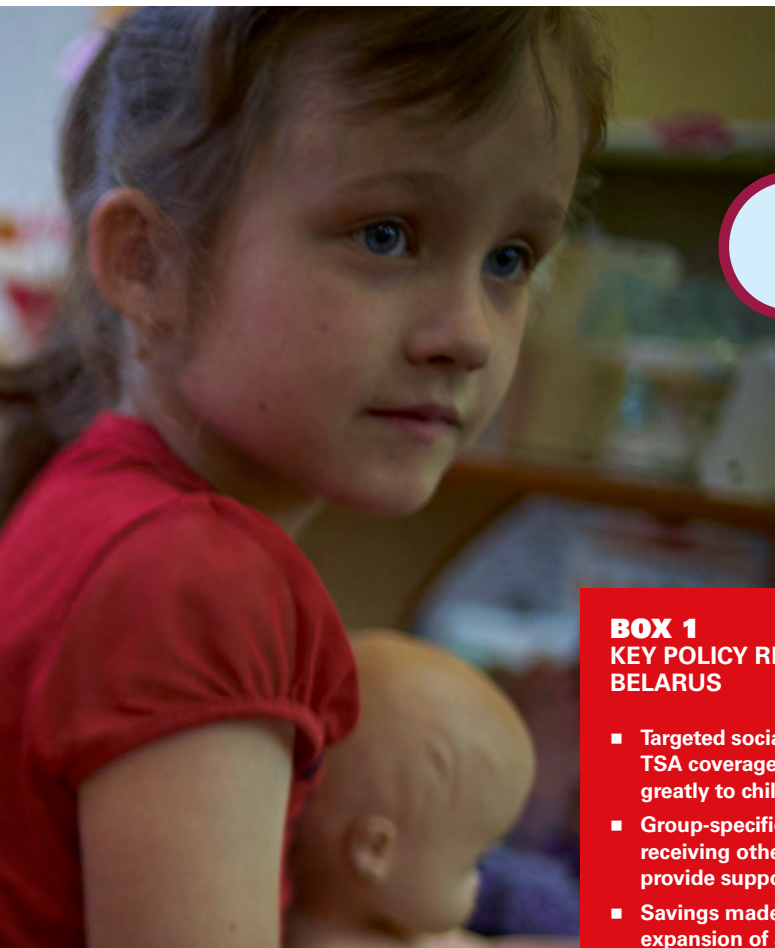
INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

The report recommends the implementation of a range of policy measures that could help reduce the proportion of children living in monetary or multidimensional poverty, or not covered by social assistance, from 6.8 to 4.2 per cent – significantly contributing towards halving child poverty in Belarus by 2030. In particular, according to the research simulations, a reduction in child poverty from 11.3 to 5.5 per cent could be achieved at a cost of about 0.27 per cent of GDP, through the introduction of group-specific benefits to single-parent and multi-child families and the expansion of targeted social assistance (TSA) to all households with children.

The technical approach applied in this research can serve as a model to improve future data collection and analysis on child poverty in Belarus. In particular, the CEQ4C methodology can unearth findings on the role of interventions indirectly related to children. In Belarus, for example, it was found that pensions make an important contribution to reducing child poverty.

Including policymakers from the Belarusian Ministry of Labour and Social Protection and Ministry of Finance in discussions about intermediate results and research plans increased the relevance of both to the ongoing policy debate. In fact, preliminary findings informed the scaling up of TSA for households with children vulnerable to economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.





Maternity allowances, as well as childbirth and pregnancy registration allowances, are inefficient from the point of view of poverty and inequality reduction. Moreover, they actually widen the inequality gap.

– Research report

BOX 1 KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO REDUCE CHILD POVERTY IN BELARUS

- Targeted social assistance (TSA) is very efficient in combating poverty. Improving TSA coverage and duration for all households with children will contribute greatly to child poverty reduction.
- Group-specific benefits targeted at single-parent and multi-child families not receiving other child benefits could efficiently reduce monetary poverty and provide support to families experiencing multidimensional poverty.
- Savings made by phasing out inefficient utility subsidies could support expansion of a means-tested TSA alongside provision of benefits for particularly vulnerable households.
- Maternity leave could be made more efficient and equitable by reducing eligible leave time, levelling out the allowance over remaining years, and linking it to household wages.

LOOKING AHEAD

The findings are currently helping to shape plans for a more dynamic population survey that will enable greater insights into key variables such as health and education. The multidimensional poverty model is being validated by the National Statistical Committee of Belarus, Belstat. In 2021, UNICEF will continue to support Belstat in producing an official methodology for multidimensional poverty measurement as part of its National Statistics Strategy for 2018–2022 and SDG Statistics Roadmap 2018.

Findings will be disseminated via the ministries of Economy, Finance, and Tax and Duties; Belstat; the Social Protection Fund; the President's administration; and the annual Kastrycnicki Ekanamicny Forum. International organizations including the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, International Monetary Fund and Eurasian Development Bank will also receive the report.

In the UNICEF Country Programme for 2021–2025, the Government of Belarus has expressed interest in using the recommendations to allocate public spending to reduce MDCP. Through dynamic surveys that apply the MDCP measure and CEQ4C methodology, and by promoting more rigorous data collection, UNICEF can support the Government in tracking health and education outcomes for vulnerable families. The additional data will enable the assessment and fine-tuning of social cash transfers and the integration of social services in Belarus, to better serve vulnerable families with children.



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CHAD

Impacts de la baisse des prix du pétrole de 2014-2016 sur le bien-être des enfants au Tchad: Analyse à l'aide d'un modèle EGC dynamique avec microsimulations totalement intégrées

Could Chad prevent an oil crisis from fuelling child poverty?

Research Managers: Mariana Stirbu, Deputy Representative (previously Chief Social Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation) and Hamid Ahmat, Social Policy Specialist
Author: Christian Arnault Emini



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

Reviewers commended this piece of research for its innovative analysis of the impact of oil crises on child poverty in Chad and the rigorous examination of three types of policy response to mitigate this impact. The research deployed a robust methodology, using a computable general equilibrium model with integrated microsimulations to address the research questions.

Reviewers also commented on the solid conceptualization, the clear writing and presentation of findings, and the well-articulated and convincing recommendations on the most effective policy responses and strategies to prevent an increase in child poverty in the event of future oil crises.



Not only is monetary poverty among children higher than the national average, but, even in a situation of economic growth, it tends to decrease less rapidly than overall monetary poverty if there are no or insufficient interventions targeted towards children.

– Research report

Although the oil price crisis of 2014–2016 has faded from memory in much of the world, it has left its mark on Chad, which depends on oil for about 90 per cent of its export earnings. An oil boom that began in 2003 had positive effects on most of the country's socioeconomic indicators, but left its economy tightly bound to a global market that is prone to shocks. When oil prices fell by 80 per cent within two years, gross domestic product (GDP) also shrank. Poverty rose again as a result, including child poverty.

This research by UNICEF Chad, in partnership with the Chadian Ministry of Finance and Budget's Department of Studies and Forecasting, examined the repercussions of the crisis for child poverty as well as for overall poverty. Using simulations, it explored how the country might have progressed had the oil crisis not occurred, and compared the results to projections under the existing circumstances. Findings revealed the extent to which the fall in oil prices led to an increase in child poverty. Further simulations made it possible to identify and explore effective measures to compensate for such an increase, providing vital information to mitigate the effects of future crises.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the investigation was to analyse the impacts of this specific crisis on the well-being of children in Chad – and in particular its impact on child poverty. The research proposed different policy scenarios, simulating the impact of each on child poverty reduction, and evaluating the overall costs. The ultimate objective was to identify and recommend measures to compensate for the number of children forced into poverty by the crisis – by bringing at least an equal number out of poverty.

APPROACH

The data for this research were drawn from national statistics and economic institutions as well as from the results of a survey on consumption and the informal sector in Chad. These data were fed into a computable general equilibrium model with integrated microsimulations. The model was used to simulate two main scenarios – a 'non-crisis' and a 'crisis' scenario – over the period running from 2011 (the year the data were collected) up to and including 2025. The research also simulated further scenarios representing various policies that could be implemented in response to the crisis.

The results of these simulations were then compared with various indicators of child poverty, including Chad's national poverty line of 237,942 Central African francs (US\$429) per household adult equivalent. As well as look at the impact on the population as a whole and on children in particular, the research examined the effects of several demographic variables. These included household location (urban or rural) as well as age, gender, marital status and level of education of the head of household.

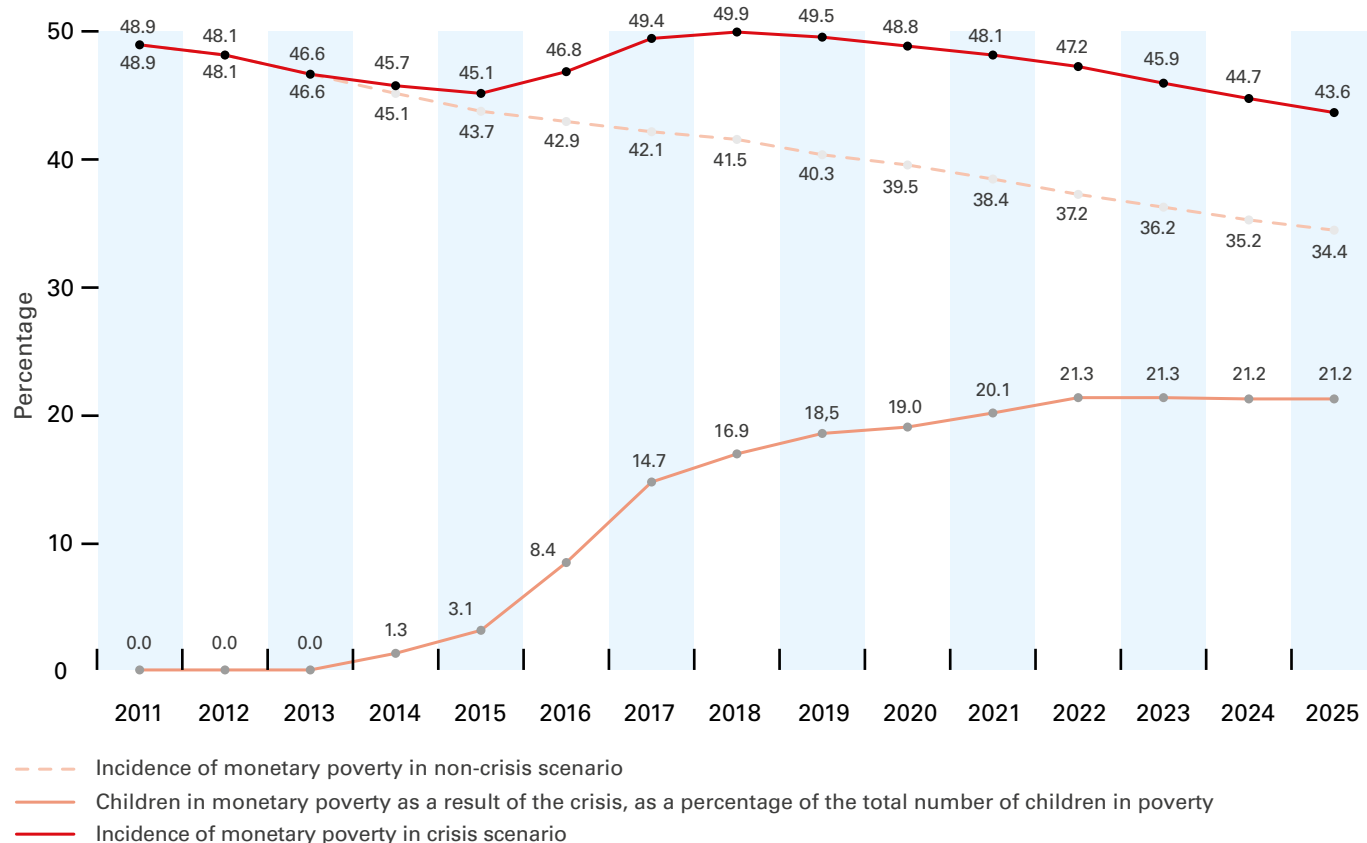
Simulating policy responses

Three types of policy response were selected for modelling, with the aim of identifying measures with direct and beneficial effects for children.

The first type sought to provide a social safety net, in the form of cash transfers to certain households below the poverty line. This was based on a series of pilot programmes already implemented by the Government of Chad in three provinces: a cash-for-work pilot in N'Djamena, and unconditional cash transfer pilots in



FIGURE 1
Poverty in Chad modelled under oil crisis and non-crisis scenarios



Source: Adapted from *Graphique 13: Evolution du taux de pauvreté monétaire (FGT0) des enfants dans les scénarios avec et sans crise*, full report, p. 57.

Bahr el Ghazal and Logone Occidental. The simulation looked at the effects of extending transfers to more households and increasing the allocated budget.

The second type of policy response examined by the researchers concerned two policies that did not specifically target poor households but which aimed to reduce food prices more generally. One policy sought to eliminate customs duties on imported food products; the other aimed to introduce a value-added tax (VAT) exemption for all food products.

Finally, the research simulated a more comprehensive extension of direct cash transfers to all households in Chad with poor children. This final type of policy response was modelled twice at different levels of investment – with a budget equivalent to 1 per cent of GDP and to 3 per cent of GDP.

KEY FINDINGS

The analysis found that, without intervention, the oil crisis significantly increased the number of children living in poverty in Chad, and this number grew over time. The simulation indicated that an additional 884,528 children would be living in poverty by 2025 as a result of the crisis, if nothing was done to help – a 27 per cent increase in child poverty in Chad compared with the non-crisis scenario.

Pilot programme impacts

All three cash transfer pilot programmes were found to improve consumption per capita among beneficiary households, but only one programme reduced monetary poverty, and then only to a small extent. The analysis showed that, in N'Djamena, less than 3 per cent of those living in poverty (children and the population as a whole) would be lifted out of it by 2025 – even though the cash-for-work programme benefited a much higher proportion of those living in poverty than the unconditional cash transfers in the other two provinces. In particular, the failure of a cash transfer programme to take into account either household size or number of children per household impairs its ability to contribute significantly to reducing poverty.

Lowering food prices

According to the simulations, eliminating customs duties on food imports was even less effective at reducing the impact of the crisis. The number of people taken out of poverty by this policy was low compared with the cost of implementation, and decreased further over time. By 2025, the policy would lift out of poverty only 0.67 per cent of the total number of children made poor by the crisis. This policy was also found to disproportionately benefit those already above the poverty line: the increased competitiveness of imported foods led to a drop in the performance of the domestic food sector, which predominantly employs people from poor households. As a result, the increase in real spending per capita was predicted to be 9.5 times higher in non-poor households than in poor ones.

In contrast, a VAT exemption on food products was found to more effectively and efficiently reduce poverty. The effect of this policy on real spending per capita was similar overall to that of eliminating customs duties, but was far more heavily weighted in favour of poor households. The average cost of implementation per individual lifted out of poverty was between 48.5 and 55 per cent of that of the cash transfer programmes. The rate of poverty reduction remained low, however: this policy would reach only 1.8 per cent of the more than 880,000 additional children living in poverty by 2025.

Extending cash transfers

The most effective policy response investigated by the simulations was to extend direct cash transfers to all households with children living in poverty in Chad, while adjusting the amount in proportion to the number of children per household. With an initial overall budget of 1 per cent of the previous year's GDP, increasing annually in line with the rise in the child population, the policy was found to reduce the rate of child poverty from 49.9 per cent in 2018 to 40.8 per cent in 2025 – 2.8 percentage points lower than in the crisis scenario without intervention. Nonetheless, the effect on the total number of children in poor households was not enough to compensate for population growth over the same period: though this number fell initially in 2019, by 2025 it would be 200,000 higher than its starting point.

When the initial overall budget was instead 3 per cent of the previous year's GDP, the policy caused a substantial reduction in overall poverty. In terms of the total number of children in poor households, it would compensate entirely for the effects of the crisis within seven years. This number stabilized at about 3.3 million children from 2019 until the end of the simulation period in 2025, by which time it would have stood at 4.2 million in the absence of any mitigation policies.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

The research recommends the adoption of an extensive cash transfer policy in Chad, with a total initial budget equivalent to at least 1 per cent of the previous

BOX 1

Key recommendations to prepare for the next oil crisis

- Establish an extensive cash transfer policy with a budget equal to at least 1 per cent of GDP, and progressively increase this to 3 per cent of GDP.
- Adjust the transfers in proportion to the number of children living in each household.
- Set up a social wealth fund with the support of Chad's technical and financial partners to ensure uninterrupted financing of the cash transfer programme.
- Seek ways to ultimately empower beneficiaries to exit poverty and become financially independent.
- Explore the possibility of removing VAT from some essential food products as a supplementary policy.
- Continue to promote education, especially at secondary and higher levels, for girls and women and boys and men, as educational attainment at higher levels displays a strong effect on household income.



year's GDP. It stresses the need to adjust the transfer amount in proportion to the number of children per household. Population growth would also need to be taken into account to maintain the same rate of allowance per child year to year.

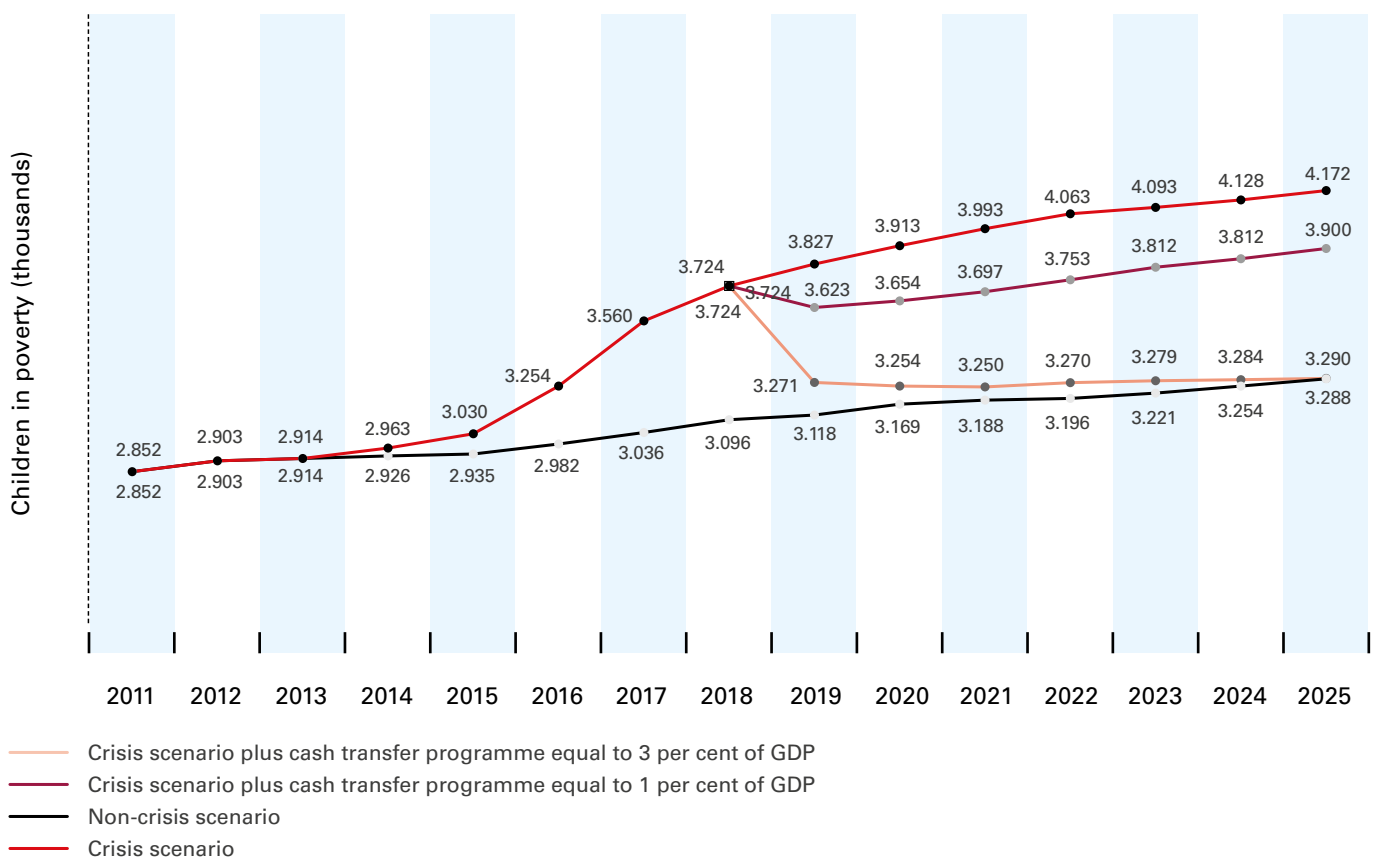
Given this complexity, it remains necessary to design an efficient but simple system for targeting the transfers. Chad would also need to work with its technical and financial partners to set up a social wealth fund to finance this initiative, especially since history has shown that the Government of Chad should expect to experience financial constraints in the aftermath of a fall in oil revenue.

Lastly, the report underlines the strong role of educational attainment, especially at secondary and higher levels, in promoting positive effects on household income.

Close to 19 per cent of children living in monetary poverty in 2019 would have escaped it if the 2014 crisis had not taken place. From 2022 to 2025, this figure is over 21 per cent.

– Research report

FIGURE 2
Simulated effects of cash transfer programmes in Chad after an oil crisis



Source: Conception de l'auteur à partir des résultats des simulations.

LOOKING AHEAD

The simulation methods used in this research are broadly applicable. For example, they could be adapted to investigate the impact of the sharp fall in oil prices that arrived with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This new crisis began following the research and is likely to have further severe repercussions for child poverty in Chad. The methods used by UNICEF Chad in its analysis point to suitable response measures to mitigate such effects – at a time when these are urgently needed.



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ETHIOPIA

Impact Evaluation of Improved Nutrition through Integrated Basic Social Services and Social Cash Transfer Pilot Program (IN-SCT) in Oromia and SNNP Regions, Ethiopia

Does an integrated nutrition and social cash transfer programme improve outcomes for children in Ethiopia?

Research Manager: Vincenzo Vinci, Social Policy Specialist

Authors: Daniel O. Gilligan, Alejandra Arrieta, Stephen Devereux, John Hoddinott, Dereje Kebede, Natasha Ledlie, Keetie Roelen, Alemayehu Seyoum Taffesse



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

Reviewers commended this piece of research for its clear and convincing analytical framework as well as the competent collection and analysis of data. Integrated safety net programmes are on the rise, and this is one of the first impact evaluations to assess this type of complex intervention. Reviewers considered the approach to evaluating the wide set of activities implemented in different regional settings to be exemplary.

Reviewers also commented on the impact evaluation's "very innovative" and robust design and on its creative attempt to answer the research questions. Making the choice to implement a process evaluation was felt to have added substantial value. The neatly presented and well-structured findings and practical recommendations were also well received.

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Fatiya, 25, feeds her 8-month-old son in their home, Halaba, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region.



Malnutrition has long been a serious issue in Ethiopia and presently contributes to 28 per cent of child deaths. Stunting prevalence in children under 5 years of age stands at 38.4 per cent nationally. Only 58 per cent of children are exclusively breastfed during the first six months of life, and micronutrient deficiencies are common among young children.

Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) is a cornerstone of the country's strategy to address poverty and food insecurity, providing cash and food transfers to the poorest members of society. In the 10 years following its launch in 2005, 8 million people enrolled in the programme, with beneficiaries either employed in public works or given unconditional transfers if unable to work.

In 2015, to coincide with the launch of the fourth phase of PSNP (PSNP4), UNICEF supported the Ethiopian Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to initiate the Improved Nutrition through Integrated Basic Social Services and Social Cash Transfer (IN-SCT) pilot project. This project aimed to enhance PSNP4 and improve nutritional and other outcomes for children and vulnerable adults such as lactating mothers. An ongoing impact evaluation of IN-SCT provided evidence of the project's effects on household well-being, maternal nutrition knowledge and child outcomes.

PURPOSE

UNICEF commissioned researchers from the International Food Policy Research Institute, the Institute of Development Studies and Cornell University to assess the IN-SCT pilot project's performance in two regions of Ethiopia: Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' (SNNP) Region.

To inform immediate decisions about how to improve the efficacy of the IN-SCT project – as well as longer-term strategies to address poverty, food security and nutrition across Ethiopia – the research set out to:

- assess the impacts of child-specific nutrition and health-related outcomes
- evaluate the effectiveness of IN-SCT in reaching target groups and delivering expected social outcomes
- assess the impacts of nutrition-related co-responsibilities (i.e., sets of linked actions that caregivers are expected to fulfil with regard to children).

The research also examined the efficacy and efficiency of project delivery processes.

APPROACH

The study used a mixed methods approach, including both quantitative and qualitative components, to measure causal impacts and understand the factors contributing to or limiting success.

Assessing process and impact

Quantitative data were collected using a baseline household survey carried out in 2016 and an endline survey conducted in 2018. A complex sample design enabled comparison of characteristics and outcomes between beneficiaries of the IN-SCT pilot (an enhancement of PSNP4), beneficiaries of PSNP4 only and non-beneficiary households.

Households in the IN-SCT pilot and in the non-beneficiary control group were drawn from the same *woredas* (districts). For the PSNP4-only comparison group, households were drawn from PSNP4 *woredas* not involved in IN-SCT. Samples of

BOX 1 KEY ASPECTS OF THE IN-SCT PILOT PROJECT

The IN-SCT pilot project supported PSNP4 by:

- developing and testing the integration of basic social services and social cash transfers
- building the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to support individuals receiving permanent direct support
- assisting the transition of pregnant and lactating women and malnourished children's caregivers from employment in public works to temporary direct support (unconditional transfers with no requirement for public works)
- developing, establishing and testing a management information system
- supporting nutrition behaviour change communication (BCC) sessions for beneficiaries engaged in public works
- promoting beneficiary compliance with co-responsibilities in areas such as antenatal and postnatal care, growth monitoring and BCC
- strengthening multisectoral links between social workers, health extension workers, schools, child protection services and other service providers
- employing social workers operating at the *kebele* (municipality) level to support IN-SCT objectives.



IN-SCT and PSNP4-only households included beneficiaries of public works, permanent direct support and temporary direct support.

Three samples were used. In Oromia, 300 households participated in longitudinal panel surveys as part of a process evaluation to assess experiences over time. For the impact evaluation in the SNNP Region – where the nutrition-sensitive IN-SCT component was piloted – 1,920 households including pregnant or lactating women, or women with children aged 6–23 months were surveyed. These survey data were used to assess the effects of IN-SCT on child nutrition, feeding practices and maternal nutrition knowledge. A third survey targeted 1,200 households with children under 5 years at the baseline to assess project impacts on household food security, consumption, poverty and health.

Reviewing experience

To support the quantitative data, qualitative data were gathered in both regions to examine how multisectoral collaboration enabled case management for beneficiaries receiving permanent or temporary direct support. The qualitative data were also used to understand the impact of the IN-SCT project and the sustainability of its model. Data were collected through structured key informant interviews with project staff, semi-structured focus group discussions with beneficiaries and case studies of beneficiary experiences.

KEY FINDINGS

The IN-SCT theory of change included components to improve both access to food, by providing cash transfers, and the beneficiary living environment, through a multifaceted package of health services.

Mixed effects on diet, food security and nutrition knowledge

Analysis of the relative impact of the project (comparing IN-SCT households with PSNP4-only households) revealed some positive effects on dietary diversity, food security and knowledge of nutrition. Also, women in IN-SCT permanent direct support households were more often than others found to be consuming a minimally acceptable diet.

The ‘food gap’ – the number of months in the previous 12 months that a household struggled to meet its food needs – was used as a measure of food insecurity. Researchers found that IN-SCT reduced the food gap in permanent direct support households by almost one month. BCC sessions supported by the project helped to increase some women’s nutrition knowledge when compared with women in PSNP4-only households. But while women with children under 5 years showed improved nutrition knowledge, no effect was seen among those with children aged 6–23 months.

Moreover, while the relative impact of the project was positive for these factors, no effect was seen in absolute impact comparisons between IN-SCT and non-beneficiary households.

Positive and negative effects on asset holdings

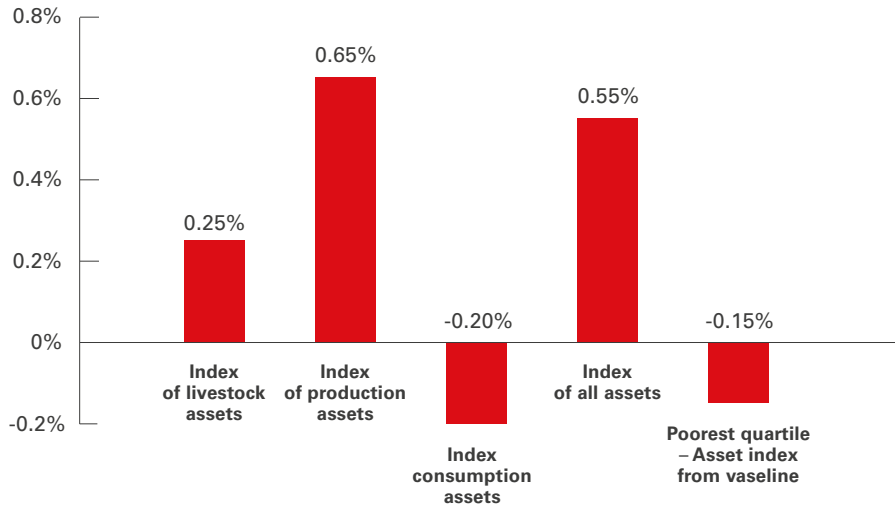
Compared with PSNP4-only households, IN-SCT households showed increased holdings of livestock and productive and total assets, but reduced holdings of consumer durables. This may suggest that IN-SCT households take a more forward-looking and savings-oriented approach. Participation in the project also reduced by 15.3 per cent the probability that a household would be in the poorest quartile for asset holdings at the endline.

Now mothers are breastfeeding children properly. Although the health education was there in the past, due to the introduction of the health extension programme, it has been strengthened by IN-SCT.

– Key informant quoted in research report



FIGURE 1
Impact of IN-SCT versus PSNP4 on asset holdings



Source: Designed graph.

Comparing IN-SCT households with non-beneficiary households revealed, however, that participation in the project had significant negative effects on household holdings of livestock, consumer durables and total assets.

Improvements in child welfare outcomes

Ensuring that children enrol in and attend school is a key co-responsibility for IN-SCT households. Comparison with PSNP4-only households found that the project had no impact on enrolment. For children aged 7-14 years, however, IN-SCT households reported that their children’s school had opened for nearly half a day more than it had done the previous week, and weekly school attendance increased by one quarter of a day on average.

The IN-SCT project also had a positive effect on child labour. On average, children aged 5-11 years from IN-SCT households worked 1.7 hours less than their peers from PSNP4-only households; children aged 12-14 years typically worked 2 hours less than their peers.

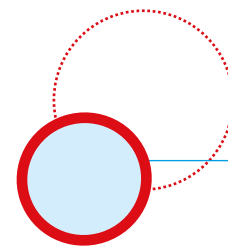
Few positive impacts on child nutrition status and health

The IN-SCT project had a significant positive effect on breastfeeding behaviour compared with PSNP4 only. It also led to meaningful improvements in household dietary diversity, food security and asset holdings as well as schooling and child protection.

Comparisons with the control group showed, however, that IN-SCT had no measurable impact on nutrition outcomes or breastfeeding behaviour, because interventions were not sufficiently resourced or sustained over time.

Connection to health services

Ensuring that pregnant and lactating women receive antenatal and postnatal health care is another key co-responsibility of the IN-SCT project. In comparison with PSNP4 only, participation in IN-SCT significantly increased the share of pregnant women receiving antenatal care, though not the number of antenatal care visits.



Behaviour change communication sessions provide information about breastfeeding and other things on nutrition. Because of this, awareness has been created.

– Key informant quoted in research report





© UNICEF Ethiopia/2019/Tadesse
Social worker visits a household which benefited from Social Protection in Dawa chefa Woreda.



The proportion of children from IN-SCT households registered at birth increased slightly over time, but children in this group were significantly less likely to have health cards than children in PSNP4-only households. When compared with children in non-beneficiary households, those in IN-SCT households were significantly less likely to be registered at birth or have a health card.

Perceptions are more positive than impacts suggest

The qualitative data suggest that, while the relative and absolute impacts of the IN-SCT project are mixed, the changes brought about by the pilot were positively received. For instance, improved behaviours relating to hygiene and sanitation were reported by BCC session participants in IN-SCT *woredas*. Interviewees at federal and regional levels highlighted the project's success in raising awareness of the importance of using the services available.

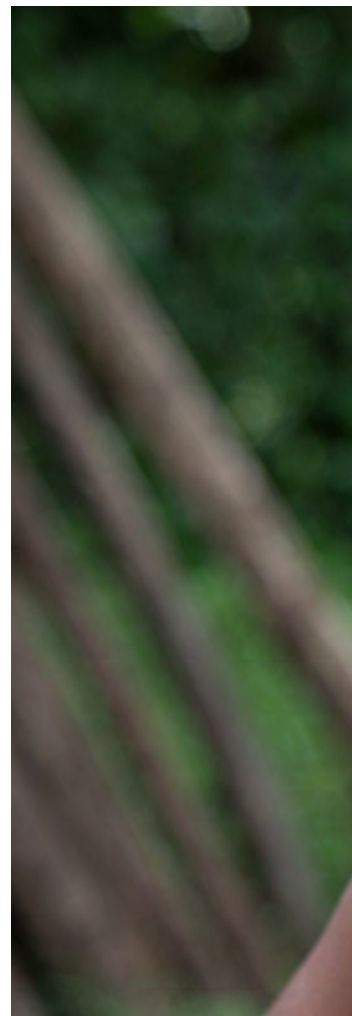
Successes and shortcomings in project delivery

The IN-SCT pilot project improved collaboration between social workers, local development agents, health extension workers and school officials. This, in turn, increased beneficiaries' fulfilment of their co-responsibilities. Too few social workers were available, however; high staff turnover driven by heavy workloads negatively affected service continuity. Social workers reported spending more time on administration than on other tasks, while transport constraints prevented them from visiting clients or conducting BCC sessions in remote areas.

Health extension workers also reported high workloads that, given their role in identifying malnourished children, may have affected how caregivers of malnourished children transitioned from employment in public works to temporary direct support. Transition often failed because of irregular malnutrition screening and lack of clarity around the transition criteria.

BCC sessions were generally well received, though some were poorly attended. There was an apparent lack of materials and protocols for delivering sessions. Although an extensive BCC manual was developed, some health extension workers and development agents were unable to access it.

The management information system was identified as a further constraint. Insufficient technical expertise in-house meant that external consultants were relied upon for software updates and general troubleshooting.





BOX 2 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE IN-SCT

- Strengthen IN-SCT components that improve children's diets and nutrition.
- Expand IN-SCT components that improve diets of pregnant and lactating women.
- Emphasize maternal nutrition knowledge.
- Reform the recruitment and training model for social workers and fund their travel.
- Improve and streamline the management information system.
- Increase the size of PSNP4 transfers.
- Implement recommendations from beneficiaries and service providers.
- Strengthen coordination and supervision mechanisms.

© UNICEF Ethiopia/2019/Tadesse
Girl in Dawa chefa Woreda.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Overall, the findings suggest that the IN-SCT pilot project had positive impacts, although progress was uneven. Challenges in delivering the nutrition-sensitive component, alongside issues with PSNP4 and constraints around the involvement of social workers, resulted in almost no measurable impact on child nutrition outcomes. A longer period of intervention, or more intensive interventions, may improve results.

The findings have been shared with PSNP stakeholders and will be presented at a Child Research and Practice Forum for discussion with high-level officials, to ultimately help inform the design of future social protection programmes. Selected findings from the research will also be disseminated via social media to raise public awareness.

LOOKING AHEAD

The evaluation has clearly indicated which components of the IN-SCT project must be strengthened or expanded, such as those that improve the diet and nutrition of children and of pregnant and lactating women. Refining the management information system and boosting the recruitment, training and support of social workers could also make IN-SCT more effective. For the Government of Ethiopia, UNICEF and partners, this could provide justification for continued investments in nutrition for poor households.



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LACRO

Maternidad y paternidad en el lugar de trabajo en América Latina y el Caribe — políticas para la licencia de maternidad y paternidad y apoyo a la lactancia materna

Are national workplace policies supporting new mothers in Latin America and the Caribbean?

Research Manager: Monica Rubio, Regional Advisor Social Policy

Authors: Charlotte Bilo, Raquel Tebaldi, Monica Rubio, Yohana Amaya



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

Reviewers commended this piece of research for its comprehensive coverage and comparative analysis of current maternity, paternity and parental leave policies, as well as workplace support for breastfeeding, across 24 countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region. The research was also able to extract very clear recommendations for policy reforms necessary at both the national and regional level for countries to reach minimum international standards.

Reviewers also commented on the report's engaging structure and, in particular, the clear way it synthesizes information for policy discussion, including through the use of a 'traffic light' system, enabling easy comparison of how countries are performing across a given variable.

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Guatemala, 2019

Woman breastfeeds her 16-month-old son of the community of Chicoy, Todos Santos, Huehuetenango, Guatemala.



Despite the importance of lactation for maternal and child health, breastfeeding rates in Latin America and the Caribbean remain very low and many of the region's workplace policies on parental leave and breastfeeding do not meet minimum international standards.

Protecting the right to parenthood is an essential component of family and labour policies worldwide. Not only do these policies support the health and early development of children and help reduce maternal stress, but they also promote gender equality – by enabling women to become parents and continue with their careers. Governments can support the right to parenthood through two key policy areas: maternity, paternity and parental leave for workers, and measures to support breastfeeding in the workplace.

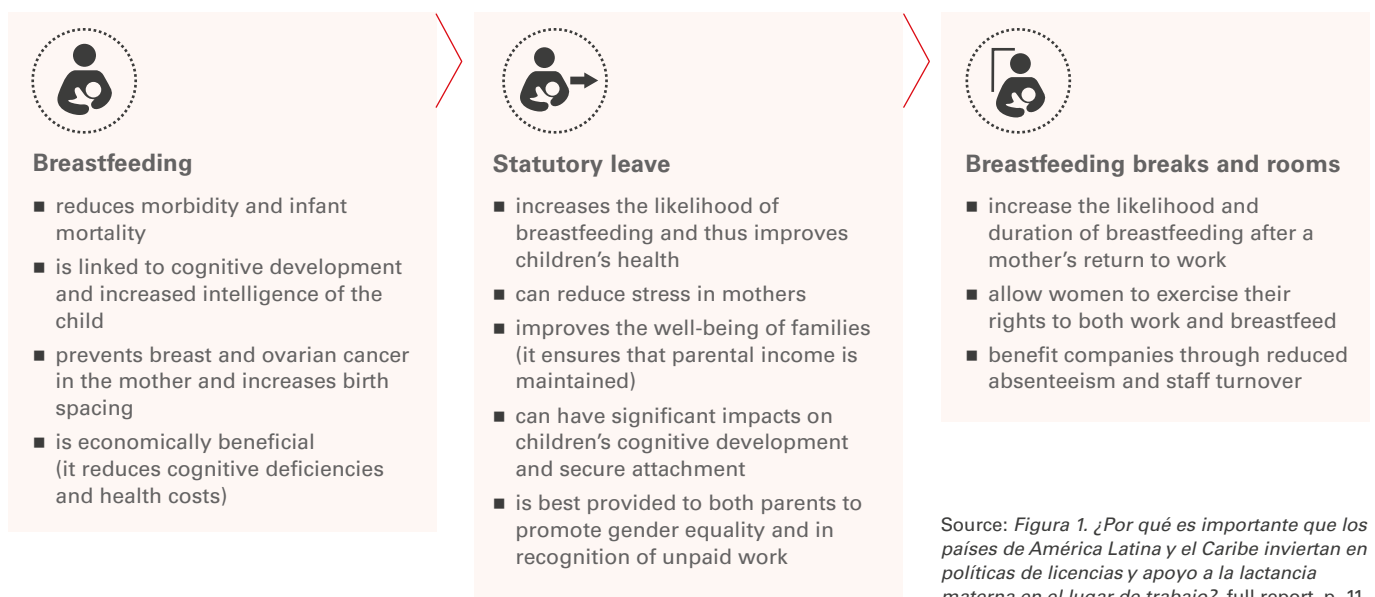
This research by the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and the UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO) reviewed national policies regarding parental leave and breastfeeding in 24 countries across the region. The result is an up-to-date comparative analysis that can serve as a basis to inform policy action in areas of inclusivity, monitoring and fundraising.

PURPOSE

There is solid evidence that adequate maternity, paternity and parental leave improves the health, cognitive development and secure attachment of children. This statutory leave also provides wider benefits such as reduced stress in mothers, increased economic well-being for families and the promotion of gender equality.

Similarly, it is well known that breastfeeding can give children the healthiest start in life, while positively affecting maternal health. As well as reducing infant morbidity and mortality, breastfeeding has been shown to influence children's cognitive development and intelligence.

FIGURE 1
Why do Latin American and Caribbean countries need to invest in breastfeeding?



Previous research in Latin America and the Caribbean revealed significant shortfalls in the region's policies on maternity, paternity and parental leave, and breastfeeding in the workplace. In a 2014 analysis, the International Labour Organization (ILO) found that only three countries (Chile, Cuba and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) provided a full 18 weeks of leave as stipulated in ILO Recommendation No. 191, and only two countries (Chile and Cuba) offered parental leave allowing either or both parents to care for their children. The ILO analysis also found that less than half of Latin American and Caribbean countries required workplaces to provide breastfeeding rooms, and only 69 per cent of the region's countries had legislation on breastfeeding breaks for workers. On this latter point, Latin American and the Caribbean was tied with Asia as the world region with the lowest proportion of such legislation.

In 2019, research by UNICEF found that, contrary to World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines, only 38 per cent of infants in Latin America and the Caribbean are exclusively breastfed for the first six months of life and just 31 per cent of infants receive breast milk up to 2 years of age. These rates are below the global averages of 41 and 46 per cent respectively.

This limited provision for parental leave and breastfeeding among the region's countries is linked, in part, to a structural lack of protection measures for workers. In this context, the present research by IPC-IG and UNICEF LACRO aims to present a detailed analysis of relevant policies in force across the majority of countries in the region (24 out of 33) and compare these with global standards and best practices. The objective is to provide clear recommendations for reforming the policy infrastructure at both national and regional levels to better support working parents.

APPROACH

The analysis drew data on maternity, paternity and parental leave policies and breastfeeding policies in the 24 countries, from national legislation and regulations, national databases and social security profiles. The research team also reviewed a breadth of recent studies from the region to further examine the characteristics of these policies and related programmes, including their effects on children's health, development and mortality. Consultations with the 24 relevant UNICEF country offices complemented this review.

Analysis of current policies was comparative in nature. Each policy was assessed against international standards established by the ILO; international and regional agreements; and best practices for the policy type worldwide, which were assembled from a literature review.

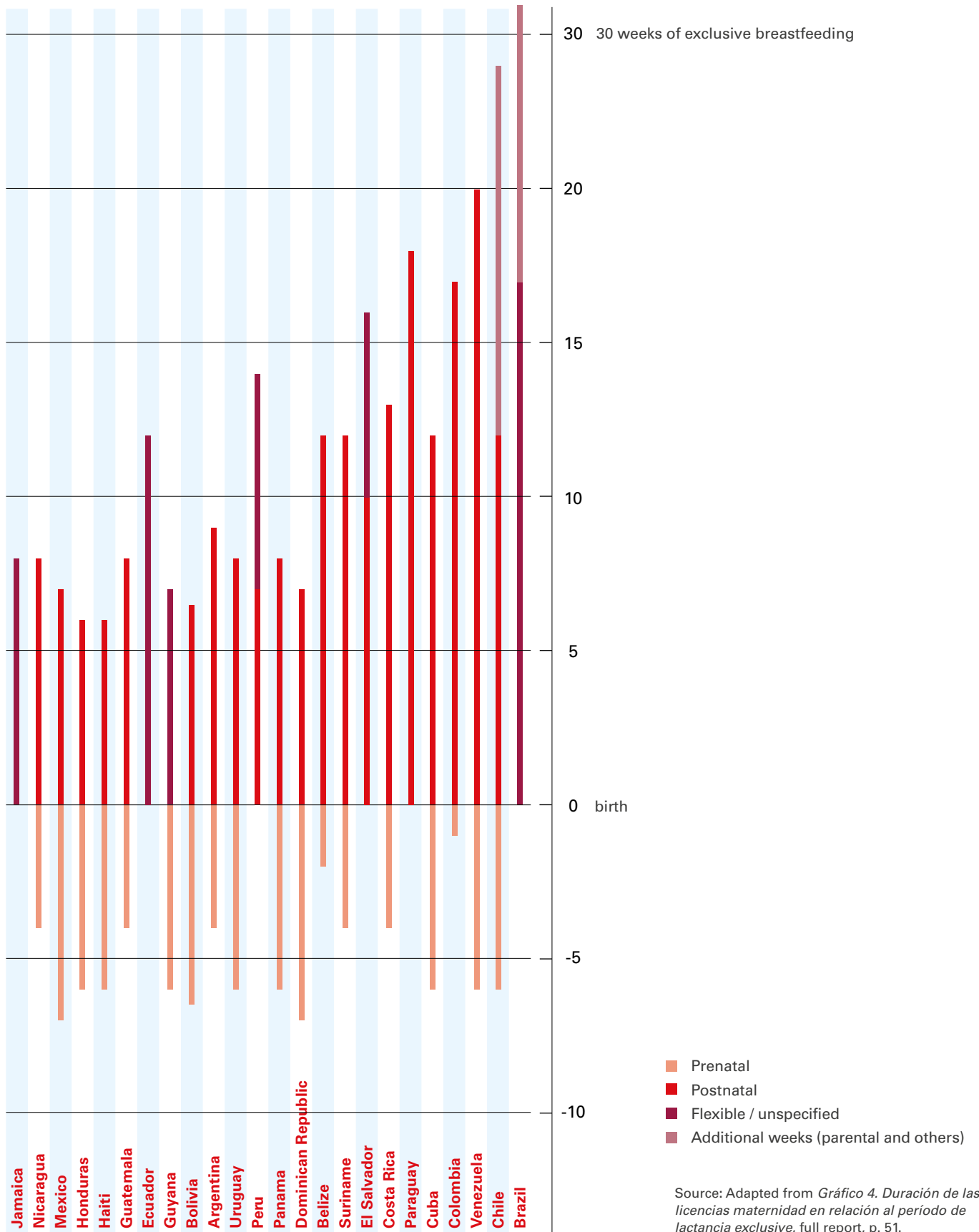


Some countries, such as Chile, El Salvador and Peru, have made considerable advances in encouraging conditions that allow women to continue breastfeeding after their return to work. These three countries, along with Bolivia and Guatemala, are also the countries with the highest rates of breastfeeding.

– Research report



FIGURE 2
Period of exclusive breastfeeding versus duration of maternity leave (in weeks)



KEY FINDINGS

Shortfalls in statutory leave policies

Nine of the 24 countries analysed do not provide the minimum 14 weeks of maternity leave established in ILO Convention No. 183. Seven countries grant no paternity leave whatsoever, and in most countries, paternity leave is five days or less – limiting the opportunities for fathers in the region to play a significant part in the care of their infants. Only Chile, Cuba and Uruguay currently offer paid leave that can be used by either parent.

Breastfeeding breaks and facilities

Apart from Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname, all of the countries studied offer paid daily breaks for breastfeeding or breast pumping, enabling mothers to exclusively breastfeed their infants for the first six months of life. Very few workplace policies permit women to continue taking such breaks beyond this time, however. Only Chile enables mothers to take breastfeeding breaks right up until the child is 2 years of age.

Legislation on breastfeeding rooms has not yet been enacted in Belize, Cuba, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica or Suriname. Most other countries specify a minimum number of eligible employees before the requirement takes effect, which means that many women do not benefit. Where legislation is in place, only a small number of rooms have been made available, and data on their use are limited. There is also little information on the environment and comfort of such rooms – important considerations because women can have difficulty expressing milk when under stress.

Despite this, some countries have made considerable progress in promoting conditions for women to continue breastfeeding after returning to work. Half of the 24 countries studied require the provision of day care services in addition to, or instead of, breastfeeding rooms. Not only can day care play an important part in facilitating breastfeeding, but it is also essential for women's equal participation in the labour market.

Policy coverage and funding

An estimated 54 per cent of women and 52 per cent of men in Latin America and the Caribbean work in the informal sector. Many, if not most, parents therefore do not benefit from the social security policies that only apply to those in the formal labour market. Although progress has been made in assimilating vulnerable groups of workers (such as domestic workers) into the formal economy, a large proportion are still overlooked by parental policies.

Even where work is regularized, many employers are reluctant to extend parental support because of the costs involved, low awareness of policies and bureaucratic barriers. Some countries require employers to cover part of the cost of maternity leave; in Jamaica, employers are liable for the full cost. Paternity leave is typically paid for by employers. Few countries stipulate the use of public funds to support the creation of breastfeeding rooms in workplaces. This results in high costs for employers that, along with significant bureaucratic barriers to policy implementation, make them less willing to hire workers with family commitments and can lead to hiring practices that discriminate against women.

Monitoring, assessment and awareness of policies

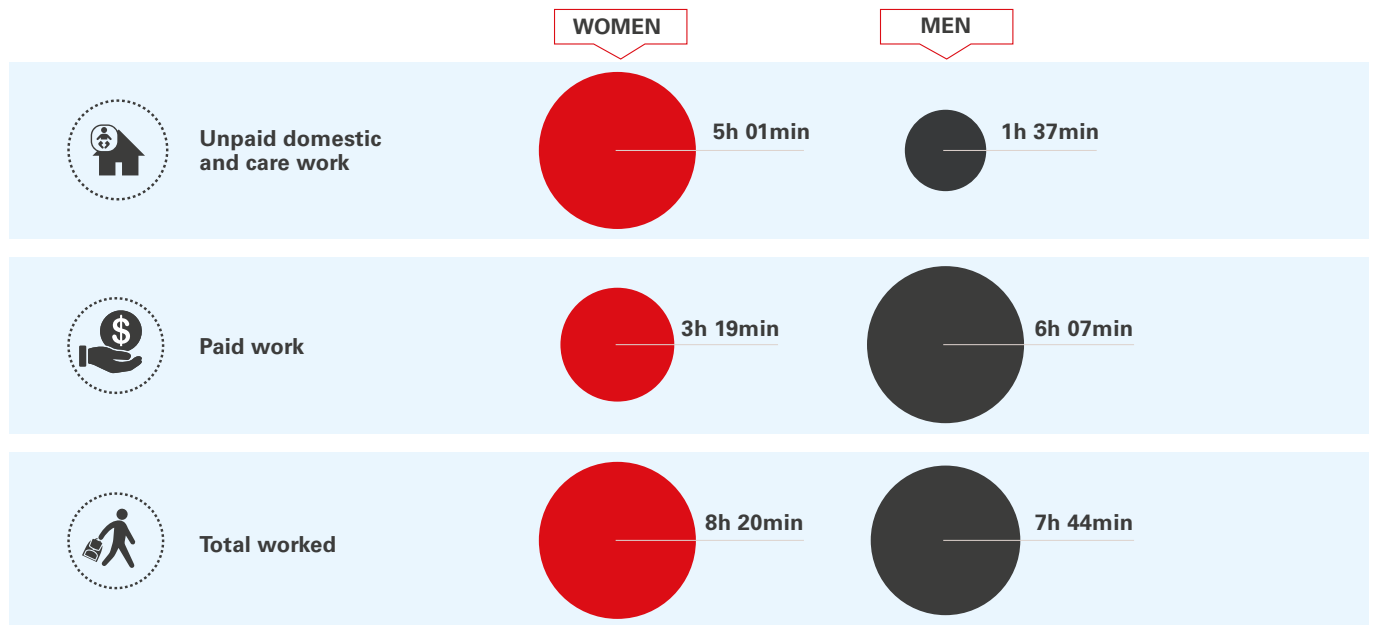
Only preliminary impact assessments of parental policies in the region have been conducted to date. Employers and workers by and large lack awareness of the legal rights that exist, and deficits in supervision, sanctioning and monitoring capacities have been observed. These are significant impediments to increasing the coverage and quality of existing policies to benefit parents and children.

The extension of social security to workers who are especially vulnerable, such as those working in domestic services, is fundamental to improving the coverage of maternity protection.

– Research report



FIGURE 3
Average time spent per day by women and men on work across 24 Latin American and Caribbean countries



Source: Adapted from *Figura 3. Distribución del uso de tiempo en una selección de países de América Latina y el Caribe (promedio)*, full report, p. 30.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

The research report proposes a wide range of recommendations for governments based on international standards and best practices. The recommendations cover policies on maternity, paternity and parental leave and support for breastfeeding in the workplace, as well as improvements in monitoring and assessment.

Maternity, paternity and parental leave

Governments are recommended to extend the duration of statutory leave – particularly those countries that do not yet meet the 14-week minimum requirement. To allow workplaces to adapt to the new standards, the report proposes that the duration of leave is extended gradually. While it will be important to attract more people to formal employment and expand social security system coverage, governments must also explore support options for the most vulnerable groups of informal workers (e.g., through tax reforms).

The report points to best practice examples to help achieve equitable participation in childcare by both parents, benefiting the individual child's development and gender equality overall. In Brazil, which offers the greatest paternity benefits in the region, greater use of parental leave, in combination with other family-friendly policies, has been associated with economic benefits for families. The report recommends introducing incentives for fathers to become more involved in childcare (e.g., 'use-it-or-lose-it' quotas for parental leave).

Breastfeeding support

The report calls for entitlements to daily breastfeeding breaks, and requirements for employers to set up breastfeeding rooms, to be introduced where these are not yet in place. The researchers also recommend extending the right to breastfeeding breaks until a child is 2 years of age, as per WHO advice. Government financing to incentivize employers to establish breastfeeding rooms should be considered. For informal workers, introducing public breastfeeding rooms could be a solution.





BOX 1

KEY PARENTAL POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Statutory leave

- Extend maternal leave to 18 weeks and introduce/improve paternity or parental leave.
- Extend coverage of statutory leave to informal workers.
- Reduce the cost to employers of statutory leave through social security provision.
- Study the impacts of extending leave duration in those countries already providing leave.
- Use cost-effectiveness studies and simulations to advocate for the benefits linked to implementing leave policies.

Breastfeeding at work

- Introduce entitlements to daily breastfeeding breaks, and requirements for breastfeeding rooms, in countries where these are not yet in place.
- Extend women's rights to breastfeeding breaks until a child is 2 years of age.
- Consider public financing for workplace breastfeeding rooms, as well as public breastfeeding rooms for informal workers.
- Raise awareness of workers' rights and the **benefits** of breastfeeding.

LOOKING AHEAD

It is hoped that the report's up-to-date information and actionable recommendations on parental policies and legislation in Latin America and the Caribbean will provide an excellent basis to inform future policy development in the region.

International organizations, such as UNICEF, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) and ILO, are encouraged produce more comparative data on coverage in the region of social protection systems, including leave policies. National monitoring and supervisory mechanisms should be strengthened by setting up independent commissions for their oversight. Finally, more research is needed, both on the effects of policies supporting breastfeeding in Latin America and the Caribbean and to generate data on the real costs of establishing and maintaining breastfeeding rooms.

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Father reads a book to his one-year-old son in the community of San Juancito, Monjas, Jalapa, Guatemala.



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THAILAND

Thailand Child Support Grant (CSG) Impact Assessment Endline Report

How will Thailand counteract intergenerational poverty with its child support grant?

Evaluation Manager: Tomoo Okubo, Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF Thailand

Authors: Economic Policy Research Institute and Thailand Development Research Institute



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

The panel commended this highly influential evaluation for generating evidence that allowed UNICEF to engage with policymakers at the highest levels. This influence ultimately led to the Government of Thailand's decision to extend its Child Support Grant to benefit an additional 1.1 million children in the country. The panel was also impressed by the exemplary and innovative advocacy and partnerships strategy that followed the evaluation to ensure the adoption of its findings and implementation of its recommendations.

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Suriya, 33, and his three-month-old daughter Monluckis in Samoeng district of Chiang Mai, Thailand, are among those who benefit from the Thailand Child Support Grant.



With its achievement of upper-middle-income status, Thailand has made considerable progress in improving the health of women and children. However, about 30 per cent of children in the country still suffer from developmental delays caused by malnutrition, poor child-rearing practices, and inadequate and ineffective early childhood education.

Child support grants (CSGs) have a strong track record in breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty, and have produced human development benefits in low-, middle- and high-income countries alike. In 2015, the Government of Thailand launched an unconditional monthly grant for pregnant women and women with children under 12 months old living in poor and near-poor households. The CSG was intended to improve the status, and particularly the nutrition, of young children. In 2016, the Government extended the grant to support children up to 3 years of age living in eligible households.

This evaluation found that the CSG programme had a positive impact on the situation of young children in Thailand, including by improving feeding practices and reducing stress for mothers. It also revealed, however, the exclusion of significant proportions of families eligible for the grant. The evaluation has informed an expansion of the programme, increasing the number of children who could benefit from 700,000 to 1,800,000.

PURPOSE

Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Yongyuth Yuthavong approved implementation of the CSG programme in 2015, stressing the importance of collecting credible data to guide future planning. He emphasized the need for evidence that could link the grant to poverty reduction, child health and access to social services. This prompted the design of a country-led impact evaluation intended to provide policy inputs for improving the efficiency and efficacy of grant delivery and maximizing the benefits for children, based on the experience of the programme's initial years. The evaluation aimed to assess the programme's achievements against expectations established in the original theory of change, and to pinpoint areas for improvement as the programme gained momentum.

The evaluation effort rapidly brought together UNICEF Thailand, Thailand's Department of Children and Youth, the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, the Economic Policy Research Institute and the Thailand Development Research Institute. This public-private evaluation partnership was able to gather a rich mix of data as the grant programme unfolded. By 2019, the coalition had acquired insights on who was and was not receiving the grant; what beneficiaries were using the grant for; how children and their mothers benefited; and factors holding back the programme.

Evaluating the implementation processes of a new programme to provide a verdict on its effectiveness is neither helpful nor accurate. The focus must be on identifying bottlenecks and suitable corrections/improvements.

– Evaluation report



APPROACH

The evaluation's multi-stakeholder arrangement, though complex, was key to its success. Broad ownership of the results was maintained, and the coalition's considerable combined resources made it possible to study more than 5,000 households over the course of two years – twice the sample size typically used in cash transfer evaluations.

Given the momentum of the CSG programme, the evaluation needed to be started quickly. The evaluation design included a non-experimental impact assessment methodology as an alternative to a time-consuming randomized approach. It employed a matching strategy, whereby a treatment group of households receiving the grant was matched with a credible comparison group of households. Based on propensity scores, the comparison group was determined similar to the treatment sample in every respect apart from grant programme participation. A team of evaluators from four regions of Thailand carried out quantitative and qualitative fieldwork, initially speaking with pregnant women about to give birth (rolling baseline) and then returning to survey each mother with child one year later (endline).

Through these methods, the evaluators pursued three lines of inquiry. An impact assessment component investigated the benefits of the CSG for children and mothers included in the treatment sample, and used qualitative interviews and focus group discussions to explain impact pathways. A targeting assessment measured inclusion and exclusion errors affecting how well the grant reached targeted households, and explored possible reasons for these errors. Finally, a process review traced the efficacy of programme implementation, including eligibility and enrolment processes.

KEY RESULTS

Measurable impacts

The evaluation found that the CSG programme has produced some significant impacts. Notably, it has reduced acute malnutrition, as demonstrated by a lower incidence of wasting, especially among very poor households. Measured at 26 per cent in the comparison group of very poor households, the prevalence of wasting fell to just 9 per cent among those receiving support.

Support improves feeding practices, as expected. In particular, the prevalence of breastfeeding in very poor households has increased, as the grant allows new mothers to stay at home for longer before returning to work. The money is used to pay for better health care as well as developmental resources such as books and toys.

Just as crucially, the grant improves the household environment by reducing stress and improving power dynamics, particularly women's decision-making power. Mothers – and especially those in very poor households – reported using the grant money, which they received directly, to make important decisions and investments regarding their own lives and those of their children.



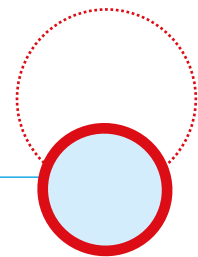
Impacts not visible in the data

Conversely, the evaluation was unable to prove significant impacts across some dimensions in which these had been predicted by the theory of change. Differences between treatment and comparison groups in overall expenditure, food expenditure or incidence of underweight children were not statistically significant. Anticipated spillover effects for other children in the household were likewise not apparent, and the report concludes that these effects would likely only become significant with a larger grant.

One factor that may have dampened impacts was an unplanned interruption to benefit payments, which paused the grant for seven months during the evaluation.

Targeting hits and misses

The targeting analysis estimated that 30 per cent of children eligible for the grant were not receiving it, due to inadequate training of implementers, complex targeting processes and poor communication of eligibility rules. An inclusion error was also found, whereby some households received the grant despite being above the income threshold for eligibility (though, in most cases, only slightly). The data show that this error could be almost eliminated by raising the income threshold to absorb more of these borderline households, in which children also appear to be vulnerable to deprivation.



Usually my husband makes decisions for the money he earns, but for the grant I decided how to use the grant, because this belongs to the child.

– Focus group participant

© UNICEF/UN056407/Thuentap
Three-month-old baby Kanrawee and his mother, Yaowaluck, in Thailand receive the Child Support Grant initially intended to improve young children's nutritional status.

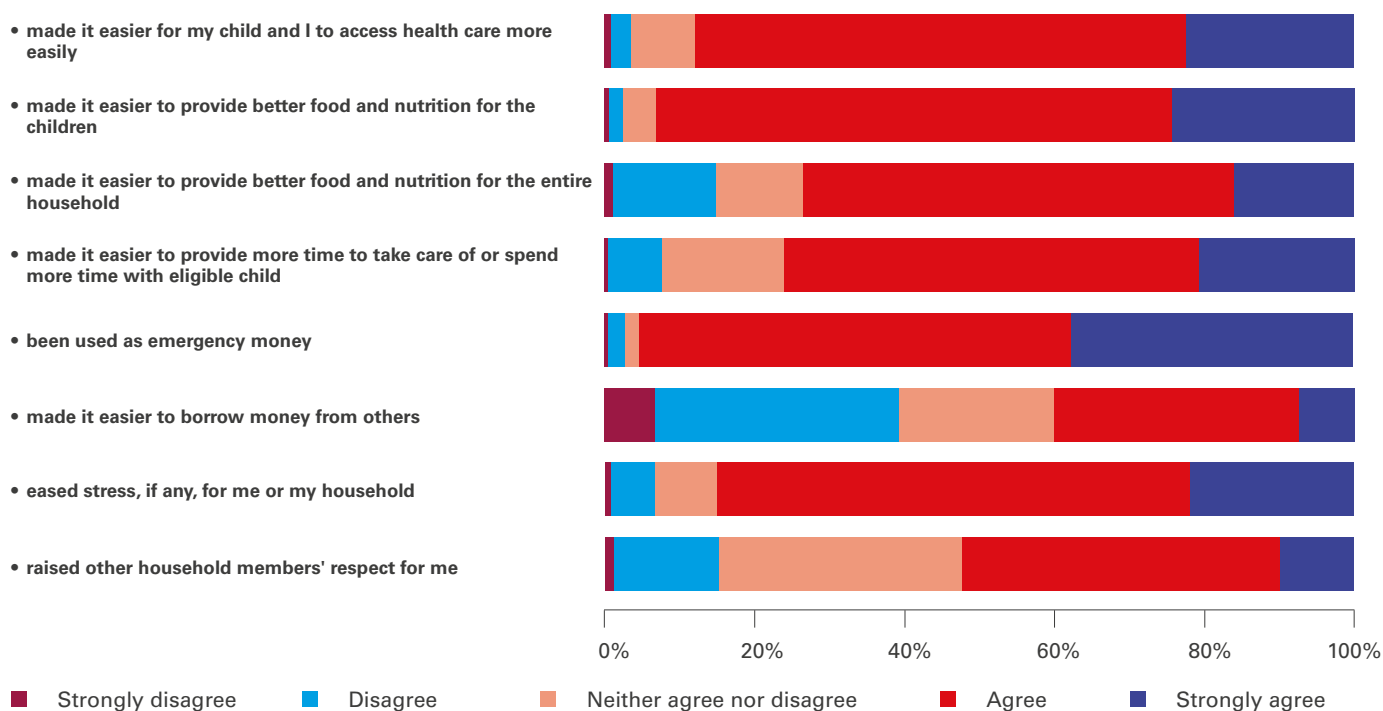


FIGURE 1
Impact on breastfeeding practices

| | Mean values for eligible children residing in: | | Impact | Absolute value of t-statistic | Interpretation |
|----------------------|--|-------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------|--|
| | Treatment households | Matched comparison households | | | |
| All households | 0.79 | 0.73 | 0.06 | 2.23** | CSG receipt increases the prevalence of breastfeeding for the first six months of life by six percentage points |
| By income level | | | | | |
| Households <THB 1500 | 0.85 | 0.73 | 0.12 | 2.68*** | CSG receipt increases the prevalence of breastfeeding for the first six months of life by twelve percentage points |
| Households <THB 3000 | 0.82 | 0.8 | 0.02 | 0.73 | Not statistically significant |
| Households <THB 600 | 0.8 | 0.72 | 0.08 | 3.01*** | CSG receipt increases the prevalence of breastfeeding for the first six months of life by eight percentage points |

Note: Child Support Grant (CSG)
Source: Based on a single difference analysis

FIGURE 2
Mothers report: The child support grant has ...



Source: Adapted from Figure 6. Use and effect of CSG on households, full report, p. 49.



Problems of process

Implementation was found to be imperfect. Interviews revealed that the CSG programme suffered from inadequate training of implementers and a lack of coordination between the two ministries responsible for implementation and monitoring processes. Application and enrolment processes presented gaps, around targeting, poor communication of rules and operational glitches for households setting up bank accounts.

Delayed payments occurred when a shortage of funds led to many households not receiving benefits for seven months. This did, however, produce an interesting evaluation finding. When the delayed payments finally reached households as a large lump sum, many reported using the grant money differently from other times, directing it to major investments such as agricultural equipment purchases or engaging the services of agricultural workers.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Expanding what works

The evaluation report calls on the Government of Thailand to progressively expand the CSG programme to age-eligible beneficiaries within a larger income band, thus minimizing inclusion and exclusion errors. It also recommends raising the age threshold to increase lifelong benefits for children, and emphasizes the need to regularly revise the grant value, at least in line with inflation, to maintain impact.

Evidence generated by the evaluation coalition directly influenced the Government's decision in 2019 to expand the reach of the CSG. This raised the eligible age threshold from children under 3 years to children under 6 years and the annual household income threshold from 36,000 Thai baht (US\$1,166) to 100,000 Thai baht (US\$3,240). With these changes, the benefits of the grant, previously available to 700,000 children, will now reach as many as 1,800,000 children.

How the message was delivered

This immediate result shows the positive influence that an evaluation can have when it is well timed and responds to a specific need for evidence. Equally, the outcome owes much to groundwork previously laid by UNICEF Thailand and its partners. Investments in advocacy and strategic coalition building created a receptive environment to the evaluation findings and recommendations.

For over a decade, UNICEF Thailand has built a case for introducing a universal CSG as part of the country's social protection efforts. When the Government initially extended grant support to children up to 3 years (from the previous threshold of 12 months), UNICEF Thailand seized the momentum to continue advocating for more inclusion. Meanwhile, reports from the field indicated how poor households could benefit. These efforts had strong political backing, including from the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister for Social Affairs and members of the Cabinet.



It's hard to measure income. For example, someone who works in agriculture doesn't know how much they earn per year – they only know that they can survive. But the criteria for this programme are fixed.

– Key informant in local administrative organization





BOX 1

ADVOCACY AND EVIDENCE RESPONDING TO CONTEXTUAL NEEDS

The evaluation has had a direct impact on the situation of young children in Thailand by:

- informing a long-term advocacy strategy to complement the evidence compiled, with a media campaign to generate public consensus in support of extending benefits to more children
- expanding the CSG in 2019 by increasing the eligible age threshold as well as the household income threshold
- prompting alliance building with partners such as civil society organizations, in particular the Coalition on Universal Child Support Grant.

The evaluation provided these decision-makers with meticulously compiled evidence. Knowing that a report alone was not enough, however, UNICEF Thailand also developed various creative instruments to disseminate the findings: op-eds for print and online channels, infographics, and a video featuring ‘faces of exclusion’ (children who did not receive the grant). It engaged the Coalition on Universal Child Support Grant, which used media efforts, policy briefs and a Facebook campaign to generate public consensus for extending support. In November 2018, the Coalition organized a public event to present the key evaluation results to politicians and call for the grant to cover children up to 6 years of age – which soon became a reality.

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Three-month-old baby Kanrawee, in Samoeng district of Chiang Mai, Thailand.

LOOKING AHEAD

The evaluation report highlights considerable work to be done beyond expanding coverage of the CSG programme, and this work is ongoing. The report reveals an urgent need to overcome the implementation barriers resulting from inadequate interdepartmental and interministerial coordination. It calls on the Government of Thailand to pursue training and capacity building for local-level implementers and to build a cadre of officials with the knowledge to support programme implementation.

Finally, the report asserts that cash alone is not enough to generate widespread impact. Ultimately, the grant should be complemented by high-quality provision of essential services for children and their families.



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CROSS-CUTTING



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How can understanding children's online behaviour inform protection strategies in East Asia?

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How do unaccompanied and separated children reach adulthood in Italy?







EAPRO

Our Lives Online: Use of social media by children and adolescents in East Asia – opportunities, risks and harms

How can understanding children’s online behaviour inform protection strategies in East Asia?

Research Managers: Rachel Harvey, Regional Advisor Child Protection and Emma Day, Online Child Protection Consultant

Authors: Patrick Burton and Monica Bulger (Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention)



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

Reviewers commended this piece of research for its innovative appraisal of social media use in the East Asia region, its focus on hard-to-reach children and its child-centred perspective, giving voice to children and providing them with appropriate mechanisms to share their experiences.

Reviewers also valued the study’s design, its presentation of nuanced findings – outlining necessary trade-offs in a stimulating manner – and its attempt to change how we understand the issue of social media in a child’s life, by balancing both risks and opportunities. In the context of COVID-19 and the expansion of online experiences for children worldwide, the study was considered by reviewers to have significant potential for policy impact.

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Young people attend the 2019 Asia Children’s Summit.



One in three internet users is a child, and every day more than 175,000 children go online for the first time. Social media platforms are central to children's daily lives, but while online platforms can provide a gateway to opportunity, they can also expose children to potential abuse and exploitation, including cyberbullying, grooming and 'sextortion.'

Despite the prevalence of internet use by children and adolescents in East Asia, little is known about how they engage with online technology or their understanding of risks. Even less is known about online engagement among children from hard-to-reach groups. Understanding how children interact with social media, their perceptions of risk and the steps they take to mitigate online risks is essential to the development of effective strategies to prevent and address online sexual abuse and exploitation.

In 2019, the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO) led a pioneering study with the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention (CJCP) to plug gaps in the understanding of online behavioural patterns of children in East Asia.

PURPOSE

Although existing survey data broadly describe social media use by young people, this study aimed to provide a holistic and nuanced understanding of everyday practice. In this way, it sought to identify how children in East Asia could most effectively benefit from support and interventions to mitigate online risks.

Specifically, the research explored the following questions:

- How are children in East Asia using social media applications?
- What opportunities are children accessing online?
- What risks do children face online, and how do these relate to risks in the offline environment, across different social groups?
- What measures exist in the region to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse online, and what protective factors can reduce harm and foster resilience?
- How can children's rights be more effectively protected and promoted online?

A primary goal of the work was to interview children usually excluded from this type of research. In capturing the experiences of children from Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand on their use of social media and online safety, the study explicitly attempted to include the voices of marginalized and vulnerable children.

APPROACH

The study comprised two components: a comprehensive desk review undertaken prior to commencement of primary data collection, and in-country data collection, using a primarily qualitative approach.

You know what is happening all over the world, even when you're not there.

– Student from refugee school in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



A child-centred perspective

Taking a child-centred, participatory approach, the researchers interviewed 301 social media users aged 11–19 across the four countries. Of this total, 121 participants were from marginalized and 'hard-to-reach' groups, including children with disabilities, children living or working on the street, refugee children, juvenile offenders, and children who had survived sexual exploitation or trafficking. An important facet of the methodology was to involve in-country youth leaders as focus group facilitators.

TABLE 1
Total participants by country and gender

| COUNTRY | GIRLS | BOYS | TOTAL |
|-----------|-------|------|-------|
| Malaysia | 69 | 58 | 127 |
| Indonesia | 55 | 22 | 77 |
| Cambodia | 22 | 39 | 61 |
| Thailand | 17 | 19 | 36 |
| Total | 163 | 138 | 301 |

Source: Authors' calculations from attendance sheets.

Qualitative data were also supplemented by a confidential, anonymous, self-administered questionnaire about negative experiences online. This offered children an opportunity to safely disclose sensitive or upsetting experiences, and provided an indication of exposure to and interaction with online sexual content.

Children's privacy, well-being and safety were prioritized throughout. Focus group discussions followed a protocol designed in line with the Global Kids Online methodology and previous CJCP work, and approved by an international ethics review board.

The research was framed within the socioecological approach, which layers interventions in terms of the community and systems in a child's life. As such, frontline practitioners (e.g., psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, teachers, youth activists), parents, caregivers and grandparents, and policymakers were also interviewed. Local internet service providers and software application developers were also consulted.

KEY FINDINGS

Online behaviour and social media use

Nearly all research participants reported having access to a smartphone, irrespective of their economic situation and vulnerability profile. While high-speed broadband is relatively inexpensive in East Asia, cost was still identified as a barrier. Children are resourceful in their attempts to get online – for example, sharing wireless hotspots and logging into school wireless networks, despite official restrictions.



TABLE 2
Smartphone ownership and social media use among internet users aged 16–24 years

| COUNTRY | SMARTPHONE OWNERSHIP | SOCIAL MEDIA USE |
|-----------|----------------------|------------------|
| Cambodia | 48.0% | 48.0% |
| Indonesia | 98.3% | 90.7% |
| Malaysia | 99.7% | 87.8% |
| Thailand | 98.7% | 90.1% |

Source: Global Media Intelligence Report 2018, eMarketer, New York; Mobile Phones and Internet Use in Cambodia 2016, Open Institute, USAID's Development Innovations, and the Asia Foundation.

Social media use is widespread. Many children reported managing multiple accounts – public and private – across different groups of friends, family and acquaintances.

Social media is primarily used for information-seeking, communication and entertainment. Children reported using social media applications for 'general education' (e.g., how to dance, cook, craft or learn English). Gaming is popular with children at all economic levels. A major attraction of social media for children is the opportunity to meet people beyond their immediate environment, including potential romantic partners.

Demonstrating how social media can open up opportunities for marginalized children, children with disabilities reported that such platforms enable them to form friendships and relationships with other children like them. Similarly, refugee children reported being able to maintain contact with families and friends.

In Cambodia, Indonesia and Malaysia, older teenagers reported using virtual private networks to access websites blocked for political, moral or religious reasons (e.g., international news and social news sites). Others use social media to generate income through the sale/resale of goods, and many use online platforms to express themselves, share content they have developed and explore creative pursuits.

Risks, harms and online protection

About two thirds of girls and boys, regardless of social strata, reported adverse or upsetting experiences online, ranging from cyberbullying to attempts at sexual exploitation. Two in five focus group participants said they would not want to tell anyone about bad experiences online.

Adolescents in all four countries reported having been contacted online by strangers. Unlike frontline practitioners and caregivers, however, children do not inextricably associate the word 'stranger' with danger. Most did not consider someone they met online a stranger unless they had engaged in 'creepy' behaviour. The default is for children to accept chat and friend requests from strangers, particularly women, only to block them if the conversation is steered in a direction the child dislikes. Only a few children had reported such negative experiences to their peers, parents or other trusted adults.

Both girls and boys reported that they had been sent sexual messages and images via social media. Around 1 in 20 children had unwillingly shared sexually explicit photos or videos of themselves, though most children resisted or blocked unsolicited requests of this nature. More than half of the adolescent focus group participants had met offline someone whom they had initially met online. Among those willing to share

The majority of focus group participants, regardless of gender, reported encountering some form of adverse experiences online.

- Research report



their experiences, such meetings were for the most part benign, involving someone of their own age who went to a school locally, or other peers.

However, teachers and counsellors recounted incidents of children being kidnapped, abused or killed by people they had met online. Boys in an emergency centre in Bangkok, Thailand, who had been sexually exploited, explained the role that social media had played in meeting 'clients' and selling sex, live streaming and cybersex. Children in juvenile shelters shared their experiences of surviving trafficking attempts by strangers met online.

Self-harm linked to social media use was highlighted by practitioners and a few focus group participants. Girls and boys described carving a former romantic partner's name on their arm or leg, which they had then photographed and shared on social media. Counsellors and social workers in Cambodia, Indonesia and Malaysia reported that LGBTQI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex) children are especially vulnerable to self-harm.

The issue of bullying, specifically cyberbullying, was a lesser concern for interviewed children. While some spoke of being upset when witnessing bullying online, the bullying did not seem to be usually directed at them, rather at their peers. Both children and frontline professionals highlighted incidents of cyberbullying related to racism and sexuality.

In all four countries, social workers, educators and other frontline professionals expressed similar concerns regarding potential risks of abuse associated with engaging with strangers, as well as the risks of excessive screen time and exposure to extreme violence online, through both gaming and videos. Psychologists and social workers noted the tension between social media platforms both isolating children in the online world and providing a platform for support, particularly for marginalized groups.

Psychologists also highlighted the risks of online gaming. Gaming platforms such as PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds and Mobile Legends were experienced by children as an opportunity to connect and unwind. Psychologists viewed seeking online validation from peers as potentially harmful however, especially for children for whom this rarely occurs offline (e.g., for autistic children).

Parents, caregivers and teachers were found to typically respond to online risk by restricting children's internet access or confiscating phones, rather than engaging children in conversation to help them to manage risks.

Questions about data privacy revealed the broadest differences between children and adults in awareness and understanding. Overall, children are more focused on contextual privacy than data privacy. Most reported that their parents are unaware of their multiple, private accounts – a way for children to control which areas of their lives they want keep private from their parents. Educators demonstrated a lack of understanding about online privacy and protection.



He said, you're going to die tonight, so I went private.

– Boy, aged 14, describing his experience on Instagram, Jakarta, Indonesia





© UNICEF/UN0140085/Humphries
School friends look at a smartphone as they have lunch at a restaurant in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

BOX 1

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT SAFE INTERNET USE AMONG CHILDREN

- Ensure that strategies and programmes to tackle online risks align with national and regional frameworks to address violence against children.
- Improve support for digital parenting, by integrating technology and social media into national parenting strategies and by building digital literacy skills among parents and caregivers.
- Ensure that interventions are based on evidence of patterns of use, and of 'what works' in keeping children safe.
- Foster offline resilience among children to improve their coping mechanisms, conflict resolution skills and social skills both offline and online.
- Urge technology companies to responsibly promote safe use of their platforms, including making profiles private, restricting communications to 'friends only' by default and restricting sharing/receipt of content to contact list members.
- Establish data systems to monitor progress and establish benchmarks, with data disaggregated by gender, age, location and key socioeconomic variables.



INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

The research report was launched at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Conference on Child Online Protection in February 2020. Discussions included how to implement the Declaration on the Protection of Children from all Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse in ASEAN (2019). The research will inform the realization of the Declaration, including through shaping the Regional Plan of Action on the Protection of Children from all Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse, currently under development.

The research findings have also prompted the design of a regional social media campaign on key online risks for children and young people. This covers the risks of online grooming, sextortion and self-generated images, as well as recommendations on how to keep safe online. The campaign, fronted by pop star and UNICEF EAPRO Regional Ambassador Siwon Choi, went live in the run-up to the report launch. Furthermore, UNICEF EAPRO, in collaboration with the CJCP, used the research findings in early 2020 to shape key messages and guidance on the COVID-19 pandemic, both for young people and for parents and caregivers.

LOOKING AHEAD

A key recommendation of the research report is to ensure that responses by teachers, caregivers and other adults to protect children's safety online are based on 'what works'. The research findings are contributing to a major UNICEF regional initiative to understand what works for messaging and educational materials to help children in East Asia protect themselves online. Launched in 2020, in collaboration with a think tank comprising leading institutions, academics, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations and private sector partners, the initiative will generate new evidence of how children use online platforms, and perceive and mitigate risks. Securing this in-depth understanding will help to maximize the efficacy of investments in keeping children safe online.



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EVALUATION OFFICE HQ

Evaluation of the Coverage and Quality of the UNICEF Humanitarian Response in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies

How can UNICEF provide more effective and equitable coverage in complex humanitarian emergencies?

Evaluation Manager: Jane Mwangi, Senior Evaluation Specialist, Evaluation Office

Authors: Andy Featherstone, Tasneem Mowjee, David Fleming, Katie Tong, Clemens Gros, Leonora Evans-Gutierrez. Assisted by Abhijit Bhattacharjee, Kate Hale and Richard Burge



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

This high-quality, ‘high-stakes’ evaluation helped UNICEF to tackle tough issues and take stock of the effectiveness of its response to crises in high-profile and high-threat environments. This evaluation enabled a deeper and more systematic analysis of how to better reach affected populations in complex humanitarian emergencies while maintaining principled and high-quality programming.

The panel commended the evaluation’s comprehensive and rigorous approach, including the analysis of a huge amount of information (more than 2,000 documents, 11 country case studies and over 500 key informant interviews, plus focus group discussions). Also commended were its well-presented recommendations, which propose practical solutions that are currently being implemented. Internally, the evaluation continues to inform updates to UNICEF’s current Strategic Plan, as well as its humanitarian programming and investments in partnerships.

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Women and children gather at a UNICEF-supported mobile health unit in Fafin tented camp, Syrian Arab Republic.



Each year, UNICEF responds on average to 300 humanitarian situations across more than 90 countries, partnering with governments, civil society and other United Nations agencies to help children in need of emergency aid.

Complex humanitarian emergencies often result from a combination of conflict, extreme weather events, hunger and infectious disease outbreaks. These intensely challenging situations threaten hardship and suffering for millions of children and their families, who require rapid assistance, protection and advocacy support. In 2018, UNICEF humanitarian funding rose substantially to US\$2.8 billion. Currently, UNICEF allocates more than half of its humanitarian expenditure to emergency situations.

To provide coverage and quality support for those most in need during complex humanitarian emergencies, responses must be agile and context specific. A multidimensional evaluation conducted in 2018, which drew on 11 country case studies, identified UNICEF as a key provider of humanitarian assistance, with impressive coverage in some of the world's most challenging locations. The evaluation also observed, that current reporting mechanisms reinforce the tendency of UNICEF – and the humanitarian sector in general – to prioritize coverage over equity.

PURPOSE

The World Humanitarian Summit 2016 highlighted an increased demand for UNICEF to better address the challenges of complex humanitarian emergencies. In response, UNICEF commissioned this evaluation, which sought to:

- assess the organization's performance in achieving coverage and quality
- identify internal and external enabling factors
- identify, from case studies, good practices and innovations that could be applied more widely
- make recommendations to help UNICEF build on and deepen its substantial achievements.

APPROACH

The evaluation addressed five key questions:

- Is UNICEF achieving coverage and quality in an equitable way?
- Is it influencing others to do so?
- How has UNICEF worked in the field to gain principled access and improve coverage and quality, and how has it forged partnerships to do so?
- Is the UNICEF humanitarian response relevant and adaptable?
- How do the organization's inputs help or hinder coverage and quality?

The evaluation comprised two stages: a pilot phase to test the approach and examine initial findings, and a synthesis review. The mixed methods approach included analysis of more than 2,000 documents, 6 field missions (Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia and Ukraine), 5 desk reviews (Burundi, Mali, Pakistan, the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic) and over 500 key informant interviews with staff and representatives of UNICEF, governments, civil society partners and United Nations agencies. Focus



UNICEF showed organizational courage and tenacity in sustaining its work in complex humanitarian challenges, despite significant challenges.

– Evaluation report



group discussions were also held with over 400 members of communities receiving UNICEF assistance. Additionally, a quantitative data analysis was conducted.

The synthesis review phase enabled the building of knowledge based on past evaluations. Using 30 evaluations of UNICEF humanitarian action (from 2010 to 2016), the evaluation assessed the extent to which the organization had achieved its targets and provided high-quality, equitable coverage; examined the strengths and weaknesses of its approach; and commented on the adequacy of its inputs.

UNICEF has responded to complex humanitarian emergencies through the development of a range of measures to boost operational capacity. These include the Level 3 (L3) Corporate Emergency Activation Procedure, Simplified Standard Operating Procedures, fast-track recruitment processes, Humanitarian Performance Monitoring indicators and, in 2013, a comprehensive review of the organization's performance as the Cluster Lead Agency coordinating partnerships in three sectors.

Limitations

This wide-ranging evaluation was restricted by the limited availability of data, the paucity of documentary evidence on the reasoning behind key decisions and the departure of staff members. Changes in the participation of some UNICEF country offices during the evaluation also proved challenging.

KEY FINDINGS

Lack of adequate data reinforcing coverage over equity

Although UNICEF has provided humanitarian services to a great number of communities in need, accurately calculating coverage according to need is not possible owing to insufficient data collection, disaggregation and reporting. Historically, UNICEF has prioritized collection of age- and sex-disaggregated data, but has been less consistent in analysing other factors contributing to vulnerability. In striving for a balance between coverage and equity, UNICEF country offices typically opt to reach larger, more accessible populations.

Boldly advocating for children

UNICEF has strengthened the coverage and quality of other agencies' responses, mainly through its role as Cluster Lead Agency for water, sanitation and hygiene; nutrition; and education (working in partnership with Save the Children). Progress has included the identification of gaps, promotion of locally relevant standards and boosting of partners' capacity. Nevertheless, despite these achievements, the evaluation highlights issues regarding cluster monitoring and data quality. It notes a common perception that UNICEF is more focused on securing its own access than on working with other agencies to secure access for all.

Limited interpretation of humanitarian principles

Although UNICEF has developed diverse approaches to provide assistance to affected people while conforming to the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, the evaluation found that these approaches are applied inconsistently. Instead, UNICEF staff tend to prioritize the principle of humanity over the other principles. A more nuanced interpretation of what constitutes 'principled access' is needed, which would also influence the work of partners on the ground.



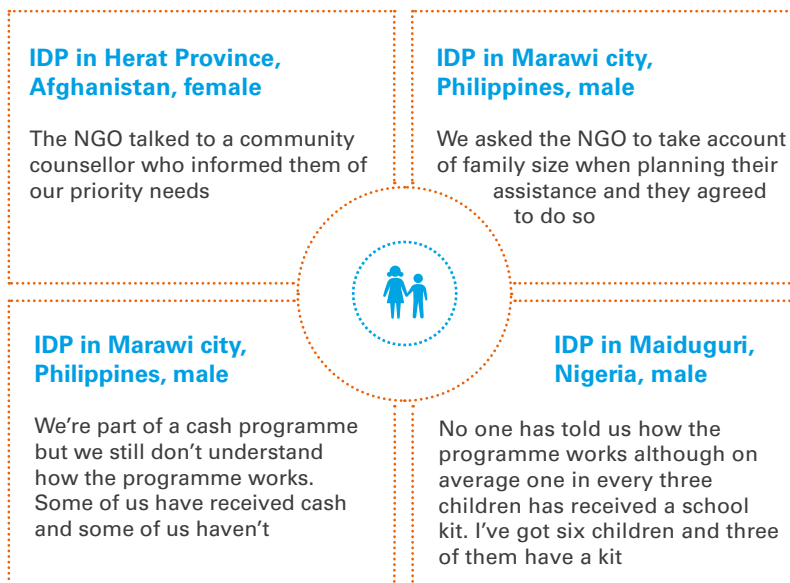
UNICEF often has a good mix of partners. But to maintain principled access, it must develop a better understanding of how these partnerships can be adapted to the dynamic contexts found in complex humanitarian situations. This can be problematic in the context of an integrated United Nations presence, especially when the security management pathway laid out by the United Nations Department for Safety and Security restricts the ability of UNICEF to *stay and deliver*.

Room for improved preparedness and community engagement and humanitarian–development linkages

The evaluation found that UNICEF has a range of tools for formal strategic analysis. However, as a result of the recent shift to operations-oriented analysis, greater alignment with the local context is now needed. Consequently, UNICEF must improve engagement with the communities it supports. Strengthened linkages between humanitarian and development programmes will help to reduce vulnerability and risks over the longer term. Preparedness platforms should help UNICEF to strengthen its planning and adopt a ‘no-regrets’ procurement process that benefits from a more thorough assessment of suppliers up front.

FIGURE 1

Examples of community engagement in humanitarian programmes



Source: Author's design

IDP: internally displaced people; NGO: non-governmental organization

Decentralized and empowered, but with constraints

The decentralized structure of UNICEF empowers country offices to take decisions with the support of regional offices. Despite this strong foundation, staff selection, recruitment and retention – particularly of high-performing teams and female staff – have proved difficult. Another constraint emerged in relation to funding: UNICEF has experienced success in managing donor conditions for unearmarked funds, but has been less successful where conditions apply.



INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

This first organizational evaluation of humanitarian assistance successfully navigated the complexities of the humanitarian landscape. By facilitating stakeholder dialogues, it probed tough issues such as the difficulties in gaining access to and reporting on vulnerable target populations, as well as limitations posed by donor conditionality.

UNICEF strategy and positioning

The evaluation recommends pursuing a strategic vision that can achieve a balance between coverage, quality and equity in humanitarian assistance. To meet this vision will require clarification of commitments at the policy level, and more consistent positioning and capacity in UNICEF engagement, both internally and externally. The UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021 was developed prior to the evaluation, but the evaluation informs the organization as it continues to revisit and update policies and procedures – including the UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes' strategic review of humanitarian action and the *Humanitarian Action for Children 2020* report.

At the country office level, UNICEF has a wealth of good practice in accessing those in greatest need, which is either transferable or which can be taken to scale.

– Evaluation report

Influence on learning

Several countries requested that the country case studies be expanded into full evaluation reports, and the Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Nigeria and Somalia country offices went ahead with this. This ripple effect of the evaluation should result in a deeper understanding of humanitarian action in these countries and enhanced ownership of the issues and potential solutions.

Generating and using evidence

Shortcomings in monitoring and data collection can hinder decisions regarding humanitarian practice. To address these shortcomings, the evaluation recommends that UNICEF and its partners calculate targets based on assessments of people in greatest need, and consistently and transparently report on changes in these targets. The evaluation also suggests that UNICEF can focus attention on equity by clarifying its expectations, including through context-specific vulnerability and conflict analyses, and assessing its performance against the balance of coverage and equity achieved.

In line with the evaluation's recommendations, the UNICEF Executive Board has encouraged country offices to carry out vulnerability analyses. Discussions between evaluation and programme staff have helped to both clarify the strategic vision and, in particular, obtain disaggregated data to assess the needs of vulnerable populations. These data demonstrate promising progress to date in balancing coverage and equity.



Ethical decision-making

Structured, ethical decision-making regarding access relies on a critical understanding of humanitarian principles. The evaluation recommends that staff engaged in sensitive negotiations with state and non-state actors should be adequately supported, as should those partners who may take on additional security risks in delivering support. In engaging with governments (which may be parties to conflict), the evaluation underlines the importance of adhering to humanitarian principles and international law.

Improving accountability

By acting on its commitments to the people it serves and the partners which help it to do so, UNICEF could earn community acceptance as well as valuable community feedback on the relevance of its support. According to the evaluation, this could strengthen access and programme quality and lead to a longer-term improvement in partner capacity. In turn, this could inform better localization of humanitarian action, with the involvement of local partners throughout the programme cycle. The Executive Board has made specific requests to UNICEF, in response to the evaluation, around developing improved approaches to accountability.

Influencing external humanitarian architecture

The evaluation urges UNICEF to promote greater consistency in the United Nations security management system as it applies in a humanitarian context, and to employ UNICEF security officers until such reforms take place. As recommended by the evaluation, UNICEF has shared the evidence and lessons learned from the integrated approach it took with the World Food Programme and World Health Organization in Somalia in 2019.

Adapting internal approaches and systems

The evaluation recommends more consistent and widespread application of the Simplified Standard Operating Procedures adopted by UNICEF to streamline and clarify the humanitarian response to complex emergencies. This recommendation has also been implemented by the Executive Board.



BOX 1

A PIONEERING OVERVIEW OF THE HUMANITARIAN LANDSCAPE

Statutory leave

By tackling difficult questions head on, the evaluation has been able to contribute to:

- embedding evidence generated through the evaluation in key strategies, plans and reports such as *Humanitarian Action for Children 2020*
- clarification of commitments in relation to coverage, quality and equity, through the revision of the CCCs
- updates of policies and procedures within UNICEF's Strategy for Humanitarian Action
- shaping approaches to accountability towards affected populations
- support for vulnerability analyses to better inform targeting and equity.





© UNICEF/UN0211158/Rezayee
Two girls at the Accelerated Learning Centre in Nili district, Darikundi, Afghanistan.

LOOKING AHEAD

UNICEF is in a strong position to advocate for a strategy for accessing in a timely and principled way those people in greatest need of assistance – who are often caught up in complex, high-risk situations, for which limited funding exists. The evaluation's recommendations for more effective and equitable coverage in complex humanitarian emergencies apply not only to UNICEF, but also to the humanitarian system as a whole.

New avenues for capacity development

The evaluation recommends strengthening the capacity of programme staff at all levels, as an essential component for meeting strategic objectives. COVID-19 restrictions caused the planned 2020 launch of a new UNICEF Humanitarian Capacity and Leadership course to be rescheduled for 2021. Rapid evolution and uptake of digital learning tools have already accompanied purposeful collaboration within UNICEF and, through community websites, will support future capacity development initiatives.



[Download original report](#)







ITALY

At a crossroads. Unaccompanied and separated children in their transition to adulthood in Italy

How do unaccompanied and separated children reach adulthood in Italy?

Research Manager: Sarah Martelli, Youth and Adolescent Development Specialist

Author: Iniziative e Studi sulla Multietnicità



EDITORIAL INSIGHT

Reviewers commended this piece of research for its original topic and its innovative and nuanced conceptualization. It provides an excellent example of how to enhance and amplify children's voices in a participatory and youth-led manner, recognizing their best interests and the right to express their views on decisions that affect them personally.

Reviewers also commented on the report's engaging writing, its well-articulated and actionable policy recommendations, and the excellent application of ethical standards. The research also ranked high on the 'potential for impact' criterion as reviewers saw it as a welcome and topical addition to the evidence base on the current international politics of child migration.

© UNICEF/UN0264440/De Luigi VII Photo
Fatouma, a young participant of UNICEF's entrepreneurship programme UPSHIFT, in Sicily. In 2017, the Italian Region hosted around 40 per cent of all unaccompanied minors in Italy.



From 2014 to 2018, more than 70,000 unaccompanied and separated children arrived in Italy by sea. Ninety per cent of them were aged 15–17 years, and many have since reached the legal threshold of adulthood – their 18th birthday – in Italy. Such a significant presence of current and former unaccompanied and separated children demands a better understanding of how to ensure their protection and social inclusion as they transition to adulthood.

This research, commissioned by UNICEF, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), presents an overview of trends and possible pathways to adult life for this group of children in Italy. Rather than applying a simplistic age threshold, the research introduces the concept of 'triple transition': the transition from adolescence to adulthood; the dislocating transition of migration; and the transition to overcoming traumas experienced during or after the journey.

Recognizing children's right to participate in decisions affecting them, and taking care to protect their best interests, the study engaged former unaccompanied and separated children in the role of interviewers. This participative approach led to a comprehensive understanding of the multiplicity of situations, subjective difficulties, structural bottlenecks and support factors that determine their transition to adulthood.

PURPOSE

The research aimed to build evidence on factors – at both the individual and structural level – that help or hinder the transition to adulthood of unaccompanied and separated children in Italy. Its objectives were to identify trends underpinning this transition, and the dangers young people face, alongside their expectations and aspirations. The research further identified best practices in protection, care and social inclusion that could be supported by United Nations agencies, Italian and European institutions, and civil society.

Development of the innovative project design was led by the Foundation for Initiatives and Studies on Multi-ethnicity (ISMU Foundation) in collaboration with the University of Roma Tre and University of Catania. Focusing on Sicily, Lombardy and Latium – the regions hosting the majority of unaccompanied and separated children in Italy – the research examined seven areas sharply influenced by a young person's legal status:

- access to education and vocational and on-the-job training
- access to the job market, and risks related to informal labour and exploitation
- access to adequate housing solutions
- experiences with volunteer guardians
- the role of formal and informal relationships
- relationships with families of origin and possibilities of family reunification
- the risk of onward movements.

Migration is experienced by these boys and girls as an undertaking that establishes the full entry into adult life and the journey as a rite of passage.

– Research report



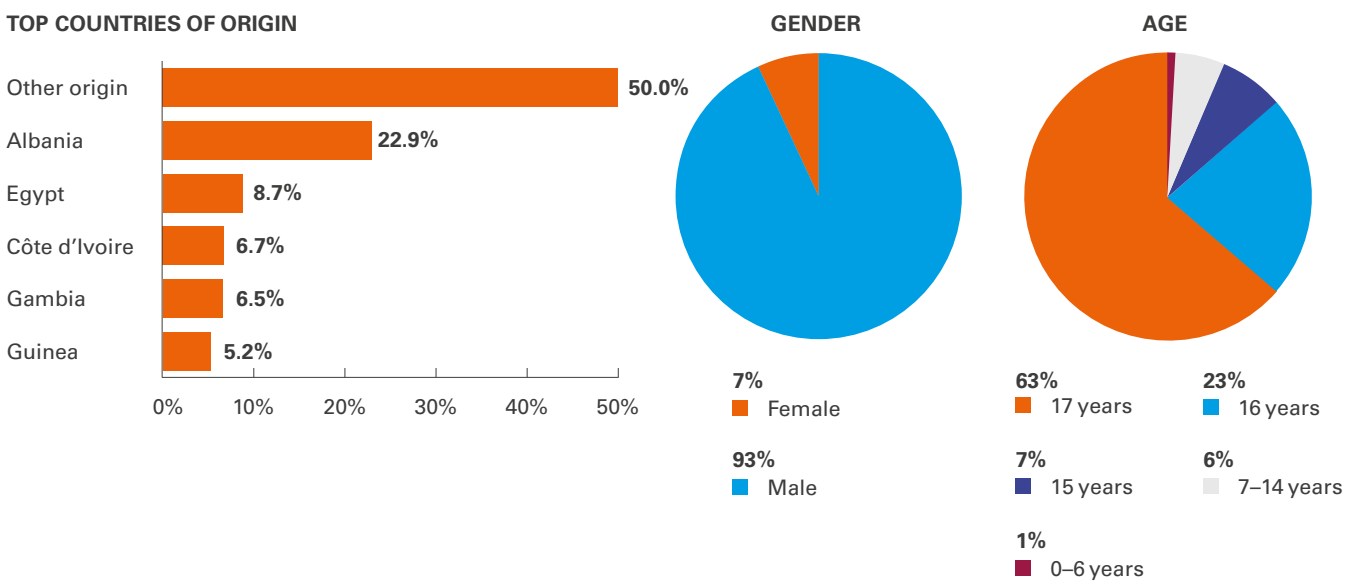
APPROACH

Mixed methods

The research design adopted a mixed methods approach. On the quantitative side, the research drew primary and secondary data from national and regional sources, to analyse sociodemographic characteristics and school attendance of current and former unaccompanied and separated children. The research also used online polls conducted via the U-Report On The Move platform, which captured the opinions of these young people on the education and training they received in Italy.

Qualitative data collection involved interviewing educators, social workers, volunteer guardians, and representatives of local institutions, Italian ministries and United Nations agencies. Three case studies analysed the positive impact of alternative housing solutions in Lombardy, youth centres in Latium and the volunteer guardianship system in Sicily.

FIGURE 1
Unaccompanied and separated children registered in Italy's reception system



Source: Adapted from Figure 1. UASC registered in the reception system as at 30 June 2019 by main nationality, gender and age, full report, p. 25.

Sharing life stories with peers

Central to the research was the use of a participatory biographical approach, including peer-to-peer interviews and focus groups with 166 young male and 19 young female participants. In line with this approach, and to achieve a comfortable, peer-to-peer interview setting, part of the interviews were conducted by a group of former unaccompanied and separated children. Eighty-five unaccompanied and separated children and 100 former unaccompanied and separated children shared their biographical histories in confidence, exerting full control over their own narratives. A multiplicity of legal statuses, backgrounds and migration pathways pursued was documented.



Limitations

Only participants who could speak Italian, English or French were interviewed. While this streamlined data collection, it excluded some voices from the research.

Another limitation was the inability to document the stories of children who had absconded from reception facilities. Children in the system have volunteer guardians who can sign consent forms allowing their participation in research; absconded children do not. Only three absconders who had subsequently re-entered the system participated in the research, giving an indication of this group's experiences.

KEY FINDINGS

The best interests of children in Italy are enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and in Law 47/2017, which codifies child rights and protections for unaccompanied and separated children up to the age of 21. The Italian law includes provisions and support for social inclusion, education and health, but delays in related implementation decrees mean it has not been well applied.

The research found that bureaucratic procedures had left frustrated young people in limbo. Arriving in Italy aged 16 or 17, a child had little time to acquire a residence permit or international protection and begin a path to social inclusion and independence. Difficulties in receiving residence permits were common, resulting from slow, complex and often incorrect age assessments and long waiting times to obtain documentation.

Turning 18 years of age leads to a loss of rights enjoyed as a minor, with longer waiting times to convert the unaccompanied and separated child's residence permit into an adult permit for job-seeking, study or work.

Access to education and jobs

The great majority of the children interviewed came to Italy with dreams of education, employment and a life beyond poverty. But they faced difficulties in acquiring training and literacy skills to foster their independence in adulthood. Furthermore, even those well prepared to enter the job market reported prejudice and discrimination.

Some children, especially girls, had left their countries of birth to escape forms of exploitation such as gender-based violence, family abuse or child marriage. Unfortunately, they found that exploitation was also prevalent in the Italian labour market. This could take many forms, from 'off-the-books' work as waiters, dishwashers or gardeners to exploitative jobs in agriculture or as caregivers, with uncertain payment and no contract. Criminal networks pushed the exploitation further, recruiting young people into drug markets and prostitution. Nevertheless, the young people's stories of work also revealed their ability to exercise agency and seize opportunities.

Access to adequate housing

Both young women and men expressed a desire to live with dignity and without burdening anyone. While supervised independent living and family foster care generally proved to be positive experiences, stereotyping and mistrust on the part of property owners prevented individuals from renting homes independently.



Relationships in the reception system

Violence had damaged the mental and physical health of many unaccompanied and separated children. Children had fled from torture, trafficking, sexual violence, exploitation in transit or after arrival, and other situations resulting in trauma. Their complex needs were often neglected owing to lack of formal support and specialized staff within the national reception system.

Young participants recognized the important role of formal relationships, such as those offered by the volunteer guardianship system and by other educational pathways. Female participants in particular appreciated the guidance of friendly and supportive educators.

Onward movements

Structured support services for children ceased upon leaving reception facilities. The desire for better employment, to be reunited with family or friends, or for relief from overcrowded reception centres influenced children's moves from southern regions to central and northern Italy, or to other European countries, exposing them to the risks of an illegal journey.

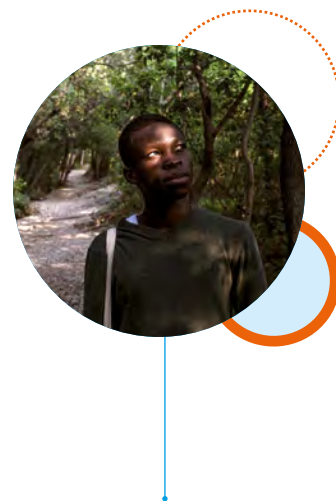
Some children re-entered reception facilities elsewhere in Italy, believing they could access better services and opportunities there.

INFLUENCE ON POLICY AND PROGRAMMING

Discussions at the international, national and subnational level were shaped by the research report, which was launched in Rome, Catania and Milan. Through its 45 points of recommendation, the report urges a coordinated, intersectoral approach to help children navigate the triple transition.

The report's three regional case studies also highlight some best practices with potential for replication. Social cooperatives in Lombardy offer independent apartments, where the continued protection of children is combined with gradually increasing autonomy. In Latium, youth centres help young people build their social skills and networks alongside peers in an intercultural environment of theatre, music and photography. Meanwhile, a system of volunteer guardianship in Sicily involves children in creating tailor made solutions while supporting guardians in their role.

Findings were shared via UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM workshops and policy briefs, and through scientific journals and stakeholder mailing lists. The IMISCOE (International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe) Annual Conference, Ruppin International Conference, *Mondi Migranti* journal, Istituto degli Innocenti, Oxfam Italia and the University of Milan also disseminated the report.



I have collected many different stories, but all united by two strong feelings: the pain and the desire to start again.

– Participatory interviewer



BOX 1**SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS****Italian authorities**

- Adopt policies that address the specific needs of young people who arrive in Italy as unaccompanied and separated children (including those who have since reached 18 years of age).
- Ensure effective coordination at the national and local level between institutions, develop an intersectoral strategy with the involvement of civil society, and improve data collection.
- Recognize the best interests of the child by fully enacting Law 47/2017.
- Promote safe and appropriate family- or community-based alternative care arrangements, as well as supervised independent housing solutions.
- Promptly identify unaccompanied and separated children, issue residence permits, and assign volunteer guardians with structured support.
- Ensure harmonization of standards in reception centres.
- Ensure all young people have access to information relating to, inter alia, their rights and obligations.
- Develop a national action plan against racism, xenophobia and discrimination.
- Combine training and professional opportunities with life skills building courses, improvement of Italian language skills and ongoing job market guidance.

European Union

- Ensure the timely, systematic and correct implementation of the Dublin Regulation with regard to age assessment and family reunification.
- Ensure effective cooperation between Member States in securing full and effective respect for the principle of the best interests of the child and continuity in protection interventions across European states, by, inter alia, adopting harmonized and appropriate procedures and an exhaustive data collection system.
- Ensure that Member States safeguard the rights and opportunities of young refugees in the transition to adulthood, taking into consideration, drawing from and providing effective implementation of Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)4 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States.

Civil society

- Increase opportunities for peer networking.
- Continue piloting and scaling up supervised independent living and youth centres.
- Continue managing services for those with specific needs, including survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, in collaboration with public authorities.
- Promote young migrants' and refugees' participation in decision-making.



© UNICEF/UN0264452/De Luigi VII Photo Omar, 17, in his reception center in Naro, Sicily, is a U-Reporter involved in the UPSHIFT entrepreneurship programme.

Source: Adapted from full report.





LOOKING AHEAD

The research continues to inform discussions within United Nations agencies, Italian and European institutions, and civil society organizations about unaccompanied and separated children. The interviews with 19 girls informed another UNICEF analysis report published in 2020: *Making the Invisible Visible: The identification of unaccompanied and separated girls in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy and Serbia*.

Thanks to its interagency nature the research has been embedded in UNICEF, UNHCR and IOM efforts to improve the protection and care afforded to children and young people in migration.

For UNICEF, these efforts include:

- the preparation of a note to Italy's Parliamentary Inquiry on Asylum and Immigration on child protection-related issues
- advocacy to highlight to the country's National Ombudsperson for Childhood and Adolescence the new needs of migrant and refugee children during the COVID-19 pandemic
- participation in an anti-trafficking round table to make recommendations on Italy's national anti-trafficking plan.

The three organizations continue to strengthen their collaboration in evidence generation in this area. Ultimately, this work will enable better-informed policymaking that not only respects but also helps to realize refugee and migrant children's rights to protection and inclusion.



[Download original report](#)



INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANELS

THE BEST OF UNICEF RESEARCH 2020

DINA CRAISSATI

*Independent Education
and Development Advisor*

Dina Craissati has over 20 years of experience in the fields of education and education sector reform, social movements and social development, democracy and democratic governance, and crisis response and post-conflict reconstruction.

She worked for UNICEF for 15 years as a Senior Advisor in Education (primarily in the Middle East and North Africa, and West and Central Africa regions, but also globally) and provided technical assistance to diverse multilateral agencies, bilateral donors and non-governmental organizations.

Dina has substantive knowledge and field experience in the Arab world and in the Middle East and North Africa region, including a specific focus on countries affected by the Syrian crisis, as well as in the West and Central Africa region and Afghanistan. She holds a PhD in political sociology.

ASSEFA BEQUELE

*Founder and Distinguished Fellow,
African Child Policy Forum*

Assefa Bequele is an internationally recognized authority on child rights and child well-being. During his long years of service within the United Nations system, Assefa was responsible for the design of the International Labour Organization (ILO) International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour and the development of the now universally ratified ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.

He holds a PhD in economics and has published widely on child rights and economic development. Assefa has served, or continues to serve, various international and continental bodies as an expert, advisor or board member, including the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Youth Advisory Council of Mastercard Foundation, Plan International and, currently, TrustAfrica, an independent organization committed to good governance, justice and equity in Africa.

RAVI VERMA

*Director, International Center
for Research on Women,
Asia Regional Office*

As Director of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Asia Regional Office, Ravi Verma leads local and regional efforts to conduct research, provide technical support, build capacity and participate in policy dialogue on an array of issues. These include reproductive health; family planning; domestic violence; child marriage; engaging men and boys to empower women; HIV/AIDS; and economic development.

Ravi has a PhD in social sciences and more than three decades of experience in programmatic research and evaluation in the areas of family planning and reproductive health, gender mainstreaming and HIV/AIDS, both in India and in other countries throughout Asia.

His input at ICRW has included leading the groundbreaking Gender Equity Movement in Schools programme, which aimed to reduce

violence and promote equitable gender norms among girls and boys in Bangladesh, India and Viet Nam. With his colleagues, Ravi also led the ICRW evaluation of India's Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) and is presently engaged in research on preventing child marriage that spans numerous Asian countries.

ANDREA ORDÓÑEZ LLANOS

*Director and Research Coordinator,
Southern Voice*

Andrea Ordóñez Llanos is Director and Research Coordinator of Southern Voice, a network of 50 think tanks across Africa, Latin America and Asia.

The aim of Southern Voice is to enhance debate on the Sustainable Development Goals and increase the impact of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the Global South by addressing the existing 'knowledge asymmetry' and 'participation deficit' in the dialogue on development. It does so by disseminating evidence-based policy analysis by researchers from countries in the Global South.

Andrea, who holds an MA in economics, was previously Research Director at Grupo FARO and an advisor to OnThink Tanks. She has research expertise in economics and public finance, and co-edited the book *Southern Perspectives on the Post-2015 International Development Agenda*. She is currently a board member of Publish What You Fund.



MOST INFLUENTIAL EVALUATIONS 2020

A. K. SHIVA KUMAR

Development Economist and International Evaluation Expert

A. K. Shiva Kumar is a New Delhi-based development economist and evaluator. Shiv has served as a Senior Policy Advisor to UNICEF India (1992–2017) and has undertaken evaluations and assessments of country-level development results for the independent evaluation offices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). He is also a member of the UNICEF Evaluation Office Evaluation Advisory Panel.

Shiv is a board member of the Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children, co-chair of Know Violence in Childhood and a member of the leadership councils of both ICRW and the Global Women's Institute at the George Washington University, Washington, D. C.

Until 2014, Shiv was a member of the National Advisory Council in India, a role to which he was appointed by the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. In this role, Shiv helped to advocate for and formulate social policy and legislation, which led, for instance, to India's introduction of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), Right to Information Act (2005), National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (2005) and National Food Security Act (2013).

NANCY MACPHERSON

International Evaluation Expert

Nancy MacPherson's experience spans three decades of leadership in international development in strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation in various countries across Asia and Africa, and in Canada and the United States of America.

From 2008 to 2017, Nancy was Managing Director for Evaluation at the Rockefeller Foundation in New York. In this role, she established and managed the Foundation's monitoring and evaluation system across grant and investment portfolios in climate change, impact investing, resilient urban development, renewable energy, agriculture, health and inclusive economies.

Currently, Nancy is advising a range of organizations and philanthropic initiatives, as well as supporting Slum Dwellers International's measurement, learning and evaluation work and its KnowYour City data platform, and helping to explore new finance solutions for the urban poor. Prior to turning her focus to philanthropy, she worked for 25 years in leadership positions with international development and not-for-profit organizations, and bilateral and United Nations agencies.

ADA OCAMPO

Senior Evaluation Specialist, UNICEF

Ada Ocampo has over 25 years of experience in evaluation, notably in evaluation capacity development, networking, evaluation management and partnerships.

She has worked at the international level since 1996, mainly with United Nations agencies, including the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF. She holds a master's degree in social development planning and management.

From 2009 to 2014, Ada was a Regional Evaluation Advisor for the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office. Her responsibilities included national evaluation capacity development for country-led evaluations; technical assistance to UNICEF country offices and partners, including governments and civil society organizations; and development of training in partnership with academic institutions.

Ada is currently working as a Senior Evaluation Specialist at the UNICEF New York Headquarters and leads the Partnerships and Coherence Unit. Her main responsibilities include national and global evaluation capacity development, inter-United Nations agency activities and establishing global partnerships. She represents UNICEF on the EvalPartners platform and co-chairs EVALSDGs.



PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

Full titles of the original reports are used here. The views expressed in the report summaries do not necessarily represent the views of the partners listed.

BELARUS

Commitment to Equity for Children: Redistributive effects and efficiency of social assistance to households with children in Belarus

Partners and funders: World Bank; Economy Research Institute, Ministry of Economy, Belarus; UNICEF Belarus

BULGARIA

Evaluation of the Family for Every Child Project in the Region of Shumen, Bulgaria

Partners and funders: The VELUX Foundations; UNICEF Bulgaria

CHAD

Impacts de la baisse des prix du pétrole de 2014–2016 sur le bien-être des enfants au Tchad: Analyse à l'aide d'un modèle EGC dynamique avec microsimulations totalement intégrées

Partners and funders: Ministry of Finance and Budget, Chad; UNICEF Chad

EAST ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Our Lives Online: Use of social media by children and adolescents in East Asia – Opportunities, risks and harms

Partners and funders: End Violence Fund; Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention; UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office

EL SALVADOR

Evaluación del programa Triple E: Educación y desarrollo integral de

primera infancia, empoderamiento de familias y jóvenes y entorno protector comunitario en comunidades seleccionadas

Partners and funders: Ministry of Education, El Salvador; Salvadoran Institute for the Integral Development of Children and Adolescents; Ministry of Health, El Salvador; National Institute of Youth (INJUVE); Ilopango, Ciudad Delgado, San Martín and Cuscatancingo municipalities; Family Support Foundation (FUNDAFAM); Educo El Salvador; UNICEF El Salvador

ETHIOPIA

Child Labour Analysis in Ethiopia

Partners and funders: Central Statistical Agency, Ethiopia; UNICEF Ethiopia

ETHIOPIA

Impact Evaluation of Improved Nutrition through Integrated Basic Social Services and Social Cash Transfer Pilot Program (IN-SCT) in Oromia and SNNP Regions, Ethiopia. Endline Impact Evaluation Report

Partners and funders: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ethiopia; UNICEF Ethiopia

ITALY

At a Crossroads: Unaccompanied and separated children in their transition to adulthood in Italy

Partners and funders: UNICEF; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR); International Organization for Migration (IOM);

Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Education, University and Research, Italy; SIPROIMI (Sistema di protezione per titolari di protezione internazionale e per minori stranieri non accompagnati); Italian Authority for Children and Adolescents; municipal prefectures, social services departments, tribunals, regional education bureau and civil society organizations

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Maternidad y paternidad en el lugar de trabajo en América Latina y el Caribe: Políticas para la licencia de maternidad y paternidad y apoyo a la lactancia materna

Partners and funders: International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth; UNICEF Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office

MALAWI

Evaluation of the Community Led Total Sanitation and Hygiene Programme in Malawi

Partners and funders: Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief; Catholic Relief Services; Hygiene Village Project; Synod of Livingstonia Development Department; Organization for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development Initiative; Participatory Development Initiative; Participatory Rural Development Organization; Malawi Red Cross Society; Population Services International; Water Mission; United



Purpose; GOAL Malawi; World Vision; Pump Aid; Water For People; Water and Environmental Sanitation Network; Development Aid from People to People; Engineers Without Borders; World Relief; Icelandic International Development Agency; Government of Malawi; European Commission; UK Department for International Development; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; UNICEF Malawi

MOZAMBIQUE

Evaluation of the UNICEF Mozambique Accelerated School Readiness Pilot Programme: Final Report

Partners and funders: American Institutes for Research; UNICEF Mozambique

NEPAL

Evaluation of the National Early Childhood Development Program

Partners and funders: National Planning Commission, Nepal; Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Ministry of Health and Population, Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizen, and Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration, Nepal; UNICEF Nepal

NIGERIA

Impact Evaluation of the UNICEF Supported 'Birth Registration Programme' in Nigeria (2012–2016)

Partners and funders: European Commission; UNICEF Nigeria

STATE OF PALESTINE

Evaluation of Family Centres as Community Level Service Delivery Mechanisms Reaching Vulnerable Children in Gaza for the Period June 2015 to October 2017

Partners and funders: MA'AN Development Center; Tamer Institute for Community Education; Ministry of Social Development, State of Palestine; UNICEF State of Palestine

THAILAND

Thailand Child Support Grant (CSG) Impact Evaluation Report

Partners and funders: Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Thailand; Economic Policy Research Institute; Thailand Development Research Institute; Khon Kaen University, Thailand; Thailand Health Promotion Foundation (which funded the costs associated with data collection); UNICEF Thailand

UGANDA

Strengthening Community Linkages to Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) Outbreak Preparedness in Uganda: Report on anthropological research on the socio-cultural context of EVD in the most-at-risk districts in Uganda

Partners and funders: UK Department for International Development; Ministry of Health, Uganda; UNICEF Uganda

UNICEF EVALUATION OFFICE

Evaluation of the Coverage and Quality of the UNICEF Humanitarian Response in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies

Partners and funders: UNICEF Evaluation Office

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Office of Research – Innocenti
Via degli Alfani, 58
50121 Florence, Italy
Tel: (+39) 055 20 330
Fax: (+39) 055 2033 220
florence@unicef.org
www.unicef-irc.org
Twitter: @UNICEFInnocenti