

EVALUATION REPORT

July 2014

UNICEF's Upstream Work in Basic Education and Gender Equality 2003-2012

VOLUME I ■ ■ **Synthesis Report** ■

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UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN BASIC EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY (2003-2012)

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	4
Acronyms and Abbreviations	6
Executive Summary	8
Résumé analytique	16
Resumen ejecutivo	25
SECTION I BACKGROUND	34
Chapter 1 Introduction	35
1.1 UNICEF Mandate and structure	35
1.2 Evaluation Report	36
1.3 Evaluation features	37
Chapter 2 International development context	40
2.1 Overall international development context	40
2.2 International education sector context	41
SECTION II UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION	50
Chapter 3 Global and regional strategy and practice in upstream work in education	51
3.1 Upstream work in UNICEF global strategic documentation	51
3.2 UNICEF's global and regional education programme	53
3.3 Financing upstream work: an expenditure perspective	58
3.4 Capacity building for upstream work	59
Chapter 4 Upstream Work in Country Programmes and Strategies	60
4.1 Typology of in-country upstream work	60
4.2 Upstream work in education: in-country practice	61
4.3 Upstream work in education: in-country strategies	65
4.4 Financing of and expenditure on upstream work at the country level	66
4.5 Capacity building for upstream work in education	66

SECTION III	THE QUALITY OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK	67
Chapter 5	The relevance of UNICEF's upstream work in education	68
	5.1 Relevance of upstream work as a way of working	68
	5.2 Relevance of upstream focus areas	69
Chapter 6	The results of UNICEF's upstream work in education	72
	6.1 Results at global level	72
	6.2 Results at country level	74
	6.3 Unintended results	83
Chapter 7	The internal coherence of UNICEF's upstream work in education	85
	7.1 Shared understanding of upstream work	85
	7.2 Targeting and monitoring upstream work coherently	86
	7.3 Collaboration across UNICEF sectors	88
	7.4 Collaboration between UNICEF Headquarters and the regional and country levels	89
Chapter 8	The external coherence of UNICEF's upstream work in education	90
	8.1 Communication of approaches	90
	8.2 Partnerships and coordination	90
	8.3 Complementarity in use of resources	95
	8.4 Willingness of donors to fund upstream work in education	95
Chapter 9	The efficiency and capacity of UNICEF's upstream work in education	96
	9.1 Efficiency of resource utilization for upstream work	96
	9.2 UNICEF staff capacity and skills	97
Chapter 10	The sustainability of UNICEF's upstream work in education	101
	10.1 Sustainability of UNICEF inputs	101
	10.2 Sustainability of programmatic interventions	102
	10.3 Sustainability of results	102
SECTION IV	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	104
Chapter 11	Summative assessment and lessons learnt	105
	11.1 UNICEF's upstream work in education	105
	11.2 How well did UNICEF translate its upstream work into results?	105
	11.3 Which factors can explain UNICEF's achievement of results in upstream work in education?	109
Chapter 12	Recommendations	111
Reference Documents		117

Boxes		
Box 1	Evidence base	39
Box 2	Gender in Upstream work in Education	55
Box 3	UNICEF's role in GPE grants and upstream work	93
Box 4	Summary assessment: UNICEF's work in post-conflict and emergency countries	107
Figures		
Figure 1	Upstream versus downstream work in the education sector	38
Figure 2	Income classification of UNICEF countries (2003–2012)	41
Figure 3	Total ODA to Education and Basic Education 2003–2011	43
Figure 4	Distribution of bilateral aid to education by channel, 2008 and 2011	45
Figure 5	Earmarked bilateral aid to education channelled through multilaterals, 2007–2011	45
Figure 6	UNICEF funding for BEGE	47
Figure 7	Composition of BEGE funding 2006–2012	48
Figure 8	Regular Resources and Thematic Other Resources for BEGE 2006–2012	48
Figure 9	BEGE thematic funding 2006–2012 (volume and contributions)	49
Figure 10	Theory of Change findings for upstream work at global level	73
Tables		
Table 1	Public spending on education by region	46
Table 2	Per cent change on BEGE upstream expenditure	58
Table 3	Typology of upstream work	60
Table 4	Assessment of baseline and UNICEF contribution to upstream results observed	76
VOLUME II – ANNEXES		2
Annex 1: Terms of Reference		3
Annex 2: Note on approach and methods		29
Annex 3: Survey methodology and data		48
Annex 4: Context of the evaluation: a chronology		72
Annex 5: Upstream work in UNICEF strategies		79
Annex 6: UNICEF upstream work in education: country examples by key result area		80
Annex 7: Summaries of in-depth country case studies		87



PREFACE

Over the past decade, UNICEF has placed increased emphasis on upstream support to national policy, capacity and partnerships to underpin and sustain scaled-up programme delivery. UNICEF's work in the education sector has followed this approach, giving increased attention to upstream activities of this kind. Have these efforts been successful? This evaluation set out to provide an answer to this question by examining UNICEF's upstream work in basic education and gender equality in the period 2003 to 2012.

At the global level, UNICEF's upstream education work entails engagement with governments and partner organizations to set the education policy agenda and leverage the resources required to achieve the goals of the Education For All (EFA) initiative and the Millennium Development Goals relating to education (MDGs 2 and 3). At the national level, UNICEF contributes to development of sector policies, strategies and programmes, and facilitates the national dialogue on education policy and priorities. UNICEF also works with government and partners to mobilize funding sources within a sector-wide national programme framework and to strengthen capacities ensure proper allocation and management of budgets.

The purpose of the evaluation was to examine UNICEF's upstream work in education and assess the extent to which UNICEF has engaged strategically in education sector policy articulation and advocacy. It also assessed how far upstream engagement efforts have supported better policy and practice in the education sector and helped to strengthen systems across the sector. The evaluation was executed in three phases: (i) an in-depth desk review of key concepts, trends and issues around 'upstream work' in education, as well as a review of documents from 14 UNICEF Country Offices; (ii) field-based case studies in Afghanistan, Brazil, Cambodia, and Zimbabwe; and, (iii) a survey among UNICEF Country Office staff, key partners and professionals responsible for education programmes.

The evaluation found that UNICEF's global engagement in upstream work in education has indeed achieved results at the global and country levels. Drawing on its mandate, priorities and experience at the country level, UNICEF has been able to influence partners and partnerships at the global and country level. It has also made important technical contributions, such as defining standards for education in emergencies and the measurement of learning standards. Global upstream efforts have similarly influenced attitudinal change, policy content and legal reforms at the country level. Working at these two levels strengthens UNICEF's efforts at each level: UNICEF's participation in global partnerships strengthens its policy influence at country level while its engagement at country level informs its global engagement.



While recognising the good results achieved through UNICEF's upstream work, the evaluation also makes recommendations for further strengthening UNICEF's approach. Attention should be given to consolidating and further strengthening the approach as well as enhancing the capacity of UNICEF's education specialists to engage effectively in upstream work.

The evaluation was ably conducted by Mokoro Limited. On behalf of the Evaluation Office, I would like to express my appreciation to Alta Folscher for her leadership of the evaluation and to the Mokoro evaluation team consisting of Stephen Lister, Janet Geddes, Abby Riddell, George Taylor, Masooda Bano, John Kruger, Anna Haas, Chris Tanner, Muriel Visser, Anthea Gordon, Beth Hodson, Chris Colclough, Steve Packer, Susie Prince and Zoe Driscoll. Maria Judith Sucupira Lins (Brazil), Isaac Makanani (Zimbabwe), Prak Polla (Cambodia), and Habiba Wahaj (Afghanistan) enriched the evaluation team with their extensive knowledge of critical education sector issues and national perspectives, as well as making connections with key institutions and interlocutors in each of their countries. We are also grateful to colleagues from UNESCO, the World Bank and the Global Partnership for Education as well as the many development partners and education sector specialists who were generous with their time. We also thank all respondents to the survey.

I would also like to express our gratitude to our colleagues, Mark Waltham and Aarti Saihjee, for coordinating technical inputs in the Education Section. Colleagues in the UNICEF Country Offices in Afghanistan, Brazil, Cambodia, and Zimbabwe and their government partners provided invaluable support during field visits. As always, their inputs and cooperation are appreciated.

Lastly, I would like to thank my colleagues in the Evaluation Office for their work on this challenging evaluation. Kathleen Letshabo developed and managed the evaluation throughout, bringing her own expertise in education to bear; Tina Tordjman-Nebe also provided technical support in the early stages of the evaluation; and Celeste Lebowitz and Dalma Rivero provided strong administrative support throughout.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAA	Accra Agenda for Action	EAPRO	East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa	ECCD	Early childhood care and development
AFD	French Development Agency	ECD	Early Childhood Development
AGEI	African Girls' Education Initiative	ECE	Early Childhood Education
AREF	Regional Education and Training Academy	EEPCT	Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition
BE	Bilingual Education	EFA	Education for All
BEGE	Basic Education and Gender Equality	EFA-GAP	Education for All – Global Action Plan
BTS	Back to School	EiE	Education in Emergencies
CCA	Common Country Assessment	ELDS	Early Learning and Development Standards
CCC	Core Commitments for Children	EMIS	Education Management Information System
CCS	Country Case Studies	EPI	Education Parity Index
CCT	Conditional cash transfer	EQ	Evaluation Question
CDPF	Capacity Development Partnership Fund	ESARO	East and Southern Africa Regional Office
C/DRR	Conflict/ Disaster Risk Reduction.	ETF	Education Transition Fund
CECC-SICA	The Central American Integration System and its Commission on Education and Culture	EU	European Union
CEE/CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States	FNDP	Fifth National Development Plan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	FTI	Fast Track Initiative
CES	Cost-Effective Schools	GCE	Global Campaign for Education
CF	Catalytic Fund	GCPEA	Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack
CFE	Child-Friendly Education	GEC	Global Education Cluster
CFS	Child-Friendly Schools	GEFI	Global Education First Initiative
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency	GEROS	Global Evaluation Report Oversight System
CP	Country Programme	GMR	Global Monitoring Report
CPS	Community Pre-Schools	GPE	Global Partnership for Education
CPD	Country Programme Document	HIV/AIDS	Human immunodeficiency virus infection / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child	HQ	Headquarters
CSO	Civil Society Organization	IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
CtC	Child-to-Child Approach	IECD	Integrated Early Childhood Development
DFID	Department for International Development	ILO	International Labour Organization
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	INEE	International Network for Education in Emergencies



INGO	International nongovernmental organization	SELO	Municipal Seal of Approval
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards	SEPPPIR	Secretariat for the Promotion of Racial Equality Policies
IR	Intermediate Result	Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
KPI	Key Performance Indicator	SFAI	School Fee Abolition Initiative
KRA	Key Result Area	SLIP	School Level Improvement Plans
LIC	Lower Income Country	SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
LSBE	Life Skills in Basic Education	SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
LSE	Life-Skills Education	TA	Technical Assistance
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation	LACRO	Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office
MDG	Millennium Development Goal	TOC	Theory of Change
MENARO	Middle East and North Africa Regional Office	TOR	Terms of Reference
MIC	Middle-Income Country	UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey	UNCT	United Nations Country Team
MoE	Ministry of Education	UNDAF	United Nations Development Action Framework
MOPAN	Multilateral Organization Performance Assessment Network	UNDG	United Nations Development Group
MORES	Monitoring Results for Equity Systems	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
MTSP	Medium-term strategic plan	UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
NGO	Non-governmental organization	UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization
NOAM	Note on Approach and Methods	UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	UNGEI	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
ODA	official development assistance	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee
OECD-DAC	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
OSISA	Open Society Initiative of Southern Africa	UNSAS	United Nations Systems Accounting Standards
OSCI	Out-of-School Children's Initiative	UPE	Universal Primary Education
PCR	Programme Component Result	USD	United States Dollar
PIU	Programme Implementation Unit	UWE	Upstream work in education
PNG	Papua New Guinea	WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy	WBI	World Bank Institute
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper	WCARO	West and Central Africa Region
ROSA	Regional Office South Asia	WFP	World Food Programme
SDG	Sustainable development goals	WHO	World Health Organization
SE	Supervising Entity	WinS	WASH in Schools initiative
SEE	Simulation for Equity in Education		



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE EVALUATION'S AIMS AND APPROACH

E.1 This evaluation examines how, and how well, UNICEF engaged in upstream work in basic education and gender equality (BEGE) between 2003 and 2012, and draws lessons for UNICEF's future work. Upstream work is contrasted with downstream work, though the distinction is not always clear-cut. The evaluation adopted a formal definition of upstream engagement as

"UNICEF activities which were intended to have or had a system-wide, sustainable effect on the national capacities of public sector duty bearers in the basic education sector for fulfilling children's rights, directly or indirectly."

E.2 The evaluation identified five types¹ of potential effects for upstream work: attitudinal change, discursive commitments, procedural change (changing education sector processes), formal policy change, and behavioural change (implementing changed policies). There is an obvious hierarchy in this typology, with changed behaviour more likely to have an effect on education outcomes than changed attitudes.

E.3 Upstream work is not new to UNICEF; it has always been the essence of UNICEF's activities at global level, but 2006 brought a notable shift in organizational emphasis. Upstream work was articulated for the first time as a key component of UNICEF's strategy in the Medium-term Strategic Plan (MTSP 2006–2009²), where in addition to the four programmatic focus areas, a new cross-cutting theme of 'policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights' was introduced. This change in emphasis, how

it manifested itself and with what results, is the central line of enquiry of this evaluation. The evaluation sets out to assess the extent to which UNICEF has lived up to the MTSP promises and to identify good practices and lessons learned in relation to its upstream work in the education sector. The evaluation utilized a theory of change and outcome mapping, coupled with contribution analysis, to gather and assess evidence on the results that the UNICEF education programme has achieved through upstream work. This work was guided by an evaluation framework which translated the theory of change into a series of questions, underpinned by the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency and sustainability.

E.4 The evaluation collected data in three distinct phases. The inception phase developed a description of upstream work, a detailed methodology and a desk-based review of documents from 14 country programmes across all seven UNICEF regions; the fieldwork phase comprised further collection of evidence at the global and regional levels and four in-depth country case studies (for Afghanistan, Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe); and the analysis and review phase included a survey to test the fieldwork findings.³

UNICEF'S GLOBAL AND REGIONAL UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

E.5 The intention to move to upstream work as a key component of organizational strategy was clearly targeted in the MTSP 2006–09(13), and articulated further in the 2007 Education Strategy. At the global level the UNICEF

¹ Drawing on Jones, 2011.

² Later extended to 2013.

³ A full discussion of the evaluation process is provided in the Note on Approach and Methods (Annex 2).



Education team proposed to measure its success by the number of countries adopting standards, models and policies promoted by UNICEF, such as Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) or Child Friendly School (CFS) models.

E.6 There is indicative evidence that financial resources were provided to support UNICEF's upstream ambitions. Upstream work in basic education and gender equality is financed in large part from BEGE thematic funding – resources that have been soft-earmarked by donors to support activities in the education focus area. This source of income grew by 24 per cent between 2006 and 2012. At the same time, indicative analysis of BEGE expenditures reveal a shift towards upstream work. The precise magnitude of this shift however could not be determined with certainty, as the coding of financial data over the evaluation period did not allow a conclusive analysis of spending on upstream work.

E.7 At the global level UNICEF's upstream work increased over time. The portfolio consisted of development of analytical and evidence-based approaches to upstream work; there has been a growing involvement in key global education partnerships, such as the Global Education Cluster, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI); the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI), and the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). UNICEF's roles range from leadership positions, to convening partners, providing coordination and funding, as well as contributing technical outputs. In addition, UNICEF's global upstream activities in education included the development of best practice models and analytical frameworks on key education policy issues, such as early learning, fee abolition, child-friendly schools and education in emergencies, to inform regional and country programmes.

E.8 Responsibilities for upstream work in regional offices span the provision of support for country-level upstream work, directly

and through capacity building, as well as for upstream initiatives commissioned by regional offices. For instance, UNICEF Regional Education Advisers (REAs) work closely with country Education Chiefs to provide direct support to in-country upstream processes. Regional offices also act as 'clearing houses' for knowledge on upstream work, putting countries in contact with one another and arranging workshops and knowledge exchange meetings. In terms of programmatic work, regional offices initiate and coordinate studies providing evidence to support UNICEF policy advocacy. Regional offices also provide tools for upstream work, such as guidelines and toolkits, and frameworks for country studies, such as country status reports. Finally, regional offices undertake regional education initiatives with partners.

UNICEF UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION AT COUNTRY LEVEL

E.9 Country-level upstream work was assessed through a series of country desk reviews, as well as the four in-depth country case studies. The reviews showed that country offices operationalized the areas of cooperation targeted by UNICEF globally, but also undertook upstream activities that were specific to their country.

E.10 UNICEF's upstream country work portfolio in the education sector mainly comprises:

- *Advocacy* to influence policies, legislation, education sector guidance, official standards and budgets among other elements;
- *Technical assistance* to shape policies, legislation, guidance, standards and curricula, as well as to improve available data, build capacity and strengthen education management and technical systems, and establish sector training capacity;
- *Piloting approaches and models* by financing and managing their implementation for demonstration effects;



- *Undertaking studies and analytical work* to strengthen the evidence base and support its advocacy and policy influence;
- *Undertaking sector coordination and leadership roles*, coupled with the facilitation of external financing to the sector.

E.11 Country case studies – Afghanistan, Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe – afforded the evaluation the opportunity to look more closely at how UNICEF's upstream work in education evolved in four contrasting country contexts. Data collection was built around the selection of three to four mini-case studies per country, which were examined for UNICEF's contribution to the results observed.

E.12 In all four countries UNICEF's upstream work and its role within the country programmes evolved over the evaluation period: its focus and share in the country education programme was responsive to changes in country context. However, there is also evidence of initiatives and approaches that are spearheaded by the global education team, driving in country-level upstream work. For example, CFS approaches were present in three of four country cases; analytical work on equity in three, and early childhood learning standards in one. UNICEF's increasing sector coordination roles are also evident in the country cases.

E.13 It was also clear that UNICEF undertook more upstream work to affect education policy than to change budgeting practices, or for implementation of policies.

E.14 The evaluation also noted that education teams in Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe consider their current country programme as being 'upstream'. Where downstream education service delivery or projects were still undertaken or supported by UNICEF, these were seen as part of testing/piloting and gathering evidence to ultimately affect the capacity of the state. In Afghanistan – which among the four case studies remained the closest to an emergency setting by the end of the evaluation

period – UNICEF's programme has remained a combination of downstream programming with upstream work.

RESULTS AT GLOBAL AND COUNTRY LEVEL

E.15 UNICEF's global engagement in education upstream work has had discernible results at the global and country level. Drawing on its mandate, priorities and experience at the country level, UNICEF is able to influence what these global partnerships and other partners at country level can do. It has also made key technical contributions, such as the standards for education in emergencies and to the learning standards metric processes and outputs. Results of global upstream efforts have similarly registered attitudinal change and discursive commitments at the country level, realized through progressive policy content and legislative reform. Working at these two levels has mutual benefits; UNICEF's participation in global partnerships strengthens its position at country level for policy influence while its engagement at country level informs its global engagement.

E.16 Ten mini-cases in the four fieldwork countries were analysed to provide an assessment of the strength of the results achieved, and the degree of UNICEF's arguable contribution to the results.

E.17 In three cases the results were assessed as "strong" – meaning that there was evidence of behavioural change – achieved with strong UNICEF contribution: Literacy at the right age campaign and the Municipal SELO programmes in Brazil led to federal uptake of initiatives, and increased budgets to education in partnering localities, among other things. In Zimbabwe the Education Transition Fund brought about procedural change, and changes in sector practice. Each of these interventions was context-specific and did not depend on HQ-endorsed UNICEF initiatives and approaches in education, even though aligned with UNICEF's mandate and priorities.



E.18 In the two instances where UNICEF's upstream work involved the adoption of HQ-endorsed official UNICEF approaches – CFS in Zimbabwe and early childhood education (ECE) in Cambodia – the evaluation found that UNICEF made a strong contribution to policy content change, but that significant behavioural change did not occur.

E.19 A further three cases were found to involve strong UNICEF contributions to medium results. In the bilingual education case in Cambodia, government officially adopted the policy change, but the implementation of these policies remained dependent on UNICEF and other development partner funding. In its upstream work to strengthen the Education Management Information System (EMIS) in Zimbabwe, UNICEF had contributed strongly to maintaining and strengthening the system. However, dependency on technical assistance remained and as data had not been released formally, its use in planning and monitoring was limited to informal access by government, donors and other stakeholders. In Afghanistan where UNICEF developed standardized school designs for cost-effective reconstruction, these were adopted by government but with limited implementation.

E.20 Two of the three cases in which UNICEF took on responsibility for managing funds did not achieve high results, in one case on account of a mix of UNICEF capacity and contextual factors (Afghanistan GPE) and in the other on account of contextual factors (Cambodia Capacity Development Fund). The Afghanistan GPE case was the only case study in which UNICEF made a weak contribution to weak results, because of the complex context and relatively small GPE funding as well as limited country office capacity for leveraging a GPE Supervising Entity role. In the case of Cambodia, UNICEF was found to have made a strong contribution to medium results.

E.21 The mix of results from the country case studies suggested that education upstream work more often achieved results related to

policy commitments/change, and changes in education sector procedures, than results further down the chain, such as governments financing the new commitments and policies, and changed sector practices. This aligns with the perception of respondents in a confirmatory survey that UNICEF undertakes work aimed at these 'deeper impact' levels less often.

E.22 UNICEF results when undertaking capacity building – most often technical capacity building in the sector such as for EMIS or education planning – were mixed. In the country cases, Cambodia came the closest to sustainable capacity development interventions.

E.23 A number of unintended results were also identified, which potentially undermine UNICEF's upstream work in education. These include the risk that technical assistance provided by UNICEF (as with many donors) may create dependency in government, that there may be trade-offs in partner relationships (e.g. closer relationship with government diminishing links with NGOs, or compromising UNICEF's perceived neutrality).

ASSESSING UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION AGAINST THE EVALUATION CRITERIA

E.24 UNICEF's upstream work was generally found to be highly **relevant** in terms of its consistency with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and UNICEF's policies. The increased focus on upstream work has meant a shift to building the capacities of duty bearers, rather than UNICEF taking on the role of fulfilling the rights of education rights holders itself. This response is an appropriate adaptation to changes in global and country contexts (i.e., as more countries achieve middle-income status and international funding for downstream activities becomes scarcer).

E.25 Equally, in all three low-income, post-conflict or emergency country case studies (Afghanistan, Cambodia and Zimbabwe)



the shift by UNICEF – from directly fulfilling educational needs to working with and through government to develop policies and address system gaps and weaknesses – was found to be highly relevant to the countries' needs. Similarly, creating space for dialogue and convening stakeholders around issues of shared concern is also a highly relevant form of upstream work which global and country respondents have highlighted as an important contribution by UNICEF.

E.26 The evaluation was not able to assess how **efficiently** UNICEF has converted inputs to results, as systematic financial and results data were not available. However, interview and survey respondents perceived UNICEF to be efficient in its upstream work. The evaluation accepts the common view that upstream work is a more efficient use of development resources than downstream work, insofar as it potentially can affect the lives of more education rights holders through system-wide changes. This however ties efficiency to achieving results in terms of shifting government budgets and fully implementing new policies, something that UNICEF has been less effective at compared to policy change.

E.27 There is some evidence that UNICEF's human resource systems are not well adapted to upstream work. Shorter rotations for international staff in emergency contexts may not allow sufficient time for investment in building relationships to bear fruit efficiently. Furthermore, as country programmes are revised every five years with a mid-term review, opportunities for adjusting staff profiles are limited which means that at times UNICEF may carry staff whose skill profiles are not suited for upstream work.

E.28 There exists a degree of **internal coherence** in UNICEF's upstream work in education, through a broadly shared understanding of what constitutes upstream work in the education portfolio. However, there are differences between how different levels of UNICEF understand the most strategic pathways to upstream results. Also, clear organizational guidelines

for what constitutes the spectrum of upstream work are required for UNICEF's education programme to enable translation of this work into coherent and detailed strategies, objectives and targets. If differences in country pathways were understood better, as well as the different types of upstream work and associated results, and then key performance indicators were adjusted to take better account of how countries perform in upstream work, this would in turn improve framing and monitoring of upstream work.

E.29 At the global level there is evidence of task teams for upstream work operating across units, and an emphasis on the expectation of cross-unit upstream work at the country level. At country level, however, while the teams did find some evidence of upstream collaboration across sectors, it was not systematic. One factor in the lack of collaboration is separate streams of funding.

E.30 In terms of collaboration between UNICEF Headquarters and the regional and country levels, country offices were consistent in seeing their independence as a key factor in effective upstream work. At the same time, however, almost all of them saw support from the regional level as important.

E.31 **External coherence:** UNICEF developed constructive partnerships with other partners and UN agencies at the global and country levels, drawing on the relative strengths of different organizations. When UNICEF collaborates with key partners in policy dialogue, significant upstream results can be achieved. Inevitably, however, tensions do arise over turf and approaches to upstream work.

E.32 UNICEF's role in partnerships became more significant over the evaluation period, at the global and country level. At the global level there was a high level of consensus among the UNICEF partners interviewed that UNICEF is a critical player – in the sense that it adds value to debates and decisions and is credible – through its leadership and participation in partnerships. At the country level, its country-wide reach, its



perceived strength in emergency contexts, and perceptions of UNICEF as a trusted or neutral partner, were commonly seen as giving it credibility and differentiating it from other players.

E.33 The volume of development resources associated with UNICEF can make a difference in the strength of its partnership role. In Afghanistan, UNICEF's earlier capability to coordinate development partner inputs diminished towards the end of the period, as agencies such as the World Bank managed resource pools that were much bigger than those UNICEF commanded. The Zimbabwe case demonstrates that UNICEF managing funds other than its own funds can enhance its role, but only if it has sufficient capacity in the country office to do so.

E.34 **Sustainability:** The evaluation found that UNICEF upstream work can result in fully sustainable upstream results when it goes beyond raising awareness and policy results to work for behavioural change. Procedural changes such as those observed in Zimbabwe, Cambodia and Afghanistan are vulnerable to changes in the context, such as political change. Discursive commitments are transitory, as staff changes occur in government and partners, and new actors often usher in new priorities. Policy and legislative change is more durable, as governments are slow to withdraw policies once they are formalized and reversing legislative change comes with high transaction costs. Behavioural changes, such as governments financing policy change and effective implementation, have the lowest risk of benefit flows reducing over time. It is only when results at this level are realized that full sustainability is achieved. The evaluation has shown that UNICEF can achieve this level of sustainable results in BEGE upstream work, for example in the Brazil and Zimbabwe case studies, but that it more often aims at policy change only. This affects the sustainability and efficiency of its upstream work.

E.35 Like most donors, UNICEF has struggled to ensure the sustainability of capacity building efforts. A common argument is that investment

is focused too much on the capacity building of individuals rather than institutions.

E.36 The evaluation also identified sustainability concerns linked to declining funding and vulnerability of funding sources for upstream work arising from single-funder dependency (whether the funder was a donor as in thematic funding globally or in Cambodia, or the host government as in Brazil). In terms of human resources, the country case studies found some evidence of inadequate budgeting for upstream work, perhaps because it is perceived to be 'low-cost'. The perception of upstream work as low cost contributes to it not being properly conceptualized in country strategies, as if its design and evaluation does not require the same investment as in other work areas. Changeovers in staff were identified as a risk factor which could be mitigated by better targeting, measuring and monitoring of upstream work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: UNICEF Strategic Policy and Strategy Division needs to develop an organization-wide framework for defining, targeting, measuring and reporting on the results of upstream work.

E.37 Such a framework should ultimately target behavioural change, whilst still measuring intermediate changes in policy, legislation and procedures. It should not be linked to the specific focus areas, models or frameworks of UNICEF, but should rather enable organization-wide consistent targeting of upstream results, whatever the substantive focus of the upstream intervention. This could allow for the aggregation of results across countries in a way that is currently not possible, addressing donor concerns about UNICEF not reporting systematically on the work supported by Thematic Funding.

Recommendation 2: UNICEF's introduction of multi-dimensional budget and expenditure codes in 2014 is commended. However, UNICEF



Headquarters should ensure that the Generic Intervention Codes in the new coding system comprehensively and clearly denote and are linked to upstream work.

E.38 The new coding system introduced in 2014 enables simultaneous tracking of expenditure by UNICEF objective, programme areas and intervention strategies, amongst other things. UNICEF can enhance its capacity to track upstream work further, and measure its effectiveness and efficiency through this work, by ensuring that the intervention strategies (or Generic Intervention Codes) offer a high level but comprehensive typology of upstream work with mutually exclusive categories, and that upstream work categories are linked clearly to the codes for planning, budgeting and reporting purposes. This would further enhance reporting to donors on upstream work.

Recommendation 3: UNICEF Headquarters needs to develop mechanisms to manage pooled or third-party funds in ways that are more aid-effective, including the use of country systems.

E.39 UNICEF increasingly undertakes managing and supervising entity roles for pooled funding. While UNICEF faces constraints in terms of its status as a UN organization and its financial management arrangements, it should seek to develop mechanisms that will allow it to manage funds on behalf of other donors to finance country education programmes, while using country systems to the maximum extent. This would include developing risk assessment tools, decision thresholds, decision processes, and a common pathway to the use of country systems for country offices to use.

Recommendation 4: The UNICEF Global Education team should consider requesting a global formative evaluation of capacity building/system strengthening work so as to build its understanding of what works when and where.

E.40 Building the capacity of education systems is a key component of UNICEF's upstream work. The UNICEF Global Education team should learn from its own experiences how it as an organization best undertakes this work, be it human resource capacity building or institutional strengthening. A theory-of-change-based evaluation would be an appropriate mechanism for the learning.

Recommendation 5: UNICEF BEGE needs to expand its efforts to build country education team capacity for upstream work. This has implications at the global, regional and country levels.

E.41 This involves the Education Section at Headquarters urgently putting in place formal training in the technical and analytical skills for upstream work, as well as reviewing the current standardized job description for the Chief of Education position to have a central focus on upstream skills and requirements.

E.42 In an effort to maximize continuity and sustain relationships in the face of international staff rotation, Country Representatives should ensure that key positions do not fall empty at the same time, and UNICEF Regional Education Advisors should monitor this. Country offices should also look at appointing national citizens to fulfil key roles in upstream work.

E.43 The Sharepoint platform for knowledge exchange on upstream work is a step in the right direction, but the Education Section at Headquarters and the regional level should look at short and medium term knowledge management and peer learning initiatives that go beyond it. This could involve support across countries by education teams, and institutionalizing regional upstream peer learning forums and events. Regional Offices should place additional experienced staff in regions who could provide direct support to countries on a full-time basis, as UNICEF takes on more GPE roles this capacity would be used well.



E.44 The country office leadership and Education Chief should more explicitly budget for and build capacity for upstream work. This includes far better collaboration between sectors to share experiences and resources for upstream work. In particular, much more collaboration with Social Policy Advisors to strengthen UNICEF Education teams' capacity to engage on sector budgets.

Recommendation 6: The 2007 UNICEF Global Education Strategy approach of balancing upstream and downstream work at the country level was appropriate. UNICEF Education should continue to seek this balance: country offices and education teams should target and link upstream and downstream work appropriately, depending on their circumstances.

E.45 UNICEF's downstream presence and capability in education is important to its effectiveness in upstream work as it provides exposure and the capability to pilot and build evidence. The appropriate balance between downstream and upstream work should be determined by country offices, but the UNICEF Global Education team should continue to support such an approach through its strategic guidance.fs

E.46 In non-emergency contexts the sustainability of UNICEF's overall education work portfolio would be maximized if all downstream work were undertaken to provide support for upstream work, focused on piloting approaches in the field in order to approach government with proposals for scaling up. Even in emergency contexts, UNICEF Education teams should see their first line responses as opportunities to gather evidence for policy influence and systems strengthening, with a view to building back better. In middle-income countries upstream work is possibly the only work that should be undertaken, given that resources are far less of an issue than in low-income countries.



RÉSUMÉ ANALYTIQUE

BUT DE L'ÉVALUATION ET MÉTHODOLOGIE

E.1 La présente évaluation a pour but d'examiner comment l'UNICEF a mené son action en amont en faveur de l'éducation de base et de l'égalité des sexes entre 2003 et 2012, les succès remportés, et d'en tirer des enseignements pour les futurs travaux de l'UNICEF. L'action en amont se démarque des travaux en aval, bien que la distinction ne soit pas toujours évidente. Pour l'évaluation, l'engagement en amont a été défini officiellement de la manière suivante :

« Les activités de l'UNICEF qui avaient pour but d'avoir ou qui ont eu un effet durable, à l'échelle du système, sur les capacités nationales des responsables du secteur public à faire respecter les droits de l'enfant, directement ou indirectement, dans le secteur de l'éducation de base. »

E.2 L'évaluation a permis d'identifier cinq types d'effets potentiels pour l'action en amont : changements d'attitudes, engagements discursifs, changement de procédures (changement des mécanismes du secteur de l'éducation), changement de politique officielle, et changement de comportement (mise en œuvre de politiques modifiées). Une hiérarchie évidente apparaît dans cette typologie, avec des changements de comportement plus susceptibles d'avoir un effet sur les résultats de l'éducation que les changements d'attitudes.

E.3 L'action en amont n'est pas nouvelle pour l'UNICEF ; elle a toujours constitué l'essence des activités de l'UNICEF au niveau mondial, mais 2006 a profondément modifié les priorités de l'organisation. L'action en amont apparaît pour la première fois comme un volet essentiel de la stratégie de l'UNICEF dans son plan

stratégique à moyen terme (PSMT 2006–2009⁴), où, en plus des quatre domaines d'intervention programmatiques, un nouveau thème transversal « activités de sensibilisation, et établissement de partenariats en faveur des droits de l'enfant » a été introduit. Ce changement d'orientation, la manière dont il s'est manifesté et les résultats obtenus, forment la trame de cette évaluation, laquelle vise à déterminer la mesure dans laquelle l'UNICEF a tenu les promesses inscrites dans le PSMT, et à identifier les bonnes pratiques et les enseignements tirés en relation avec son action en amont dans le secteur de l'éducation. L'évaluation se fonde sur une théorie du changement et une cartographie des résultats accomplis, couplées avec une analyse des contributions afin de réunir des informations sur les résultats obtenus par les programmes d'éducation de l'UNICEF grâce aux actions en amont et de les évaluer. Ces travaux se sont appuyés sur un cadre d'évaluation qui traduit la théorie du changement en une série de questions, sous-tendues par les critères de pertinence, d'efficacité, de cohérence, de rentabilité et de durabilité de l'évaluation.

E.4 L'évaluation a permis de réunir des données pendant trois phases distinctes. La phase de départ a permis de décrire l'action en amont, d'élaborer une méthodologie détaillée et un examen des documents portant sur 14 programmes de pays appliqués dans les sept régions de l'UNICEF ; la phase de terrain a permis de continuer à réunir des informations aux niveaux mondial et régional et de mener à bien quatre études de cas approfondies (pour l'Afghanistan, le Brésil, le Cambodge et le Zimbabwe) ; quant à la phase d'analyse et d'examen, elle a compris une enquête visant à tester les conclusions issues des travaux de terrain⁵.

⁴ Élargi par la suite jusqu'en 2013.

⁵ Le processus d'évaluation est expliqué en détail dans la Note relative à l'approche et aux méthodes.

LES ACTIVITÉS EN AMONT DE L'UNICEF DANS LE SECTEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION AUX NIVEAUX MONDIAL ET RÉGIONAL

E.5 L'intention d'intégrer l'action en amont et de la considérer comme un volet essentiel de la stratégie organisationnelle a été clairement établie dans le PSMT 2006–09(13), et peaufinée dans la Stratégie de l'éducation de 2007. Au niveau mondial, l'équipe chargée de l'éducation à l'UNICEF a proposé de mesurer le succès au nombre de pays adoptant les normes, les modèles et les politiques préconisés par l'UNICEF, tels que les normes en matière d'apprentissage et de développement précoces (ELDS) ou les modèles d'Écoles amies des enfants.

E.6 Il apparaît que des ressources financières sont venues soutenir les ambitions de l'UNICEF en amont. L'action en amont en matière d'éducation de base et d'égalité des sexes est financée en grande partie par les fonds thématiques affectés à l'éducation de base et à l'égalité des sexes – des ressources qui ont été allouées avec souplesse par les donateurs pour soutenir des activités dans le domaine prioritaire de l'éducation. Cette source de revenu a augmenté de 24 % entre 2006 et 2012. En même temps, une analyse indicative des dépenses encourues dans le cadre de l'éducation de base et à l'égalité des sexes révèle un mouvement en faveur de l'action en amont. L'ampleur précise de ce changement n'a pas pu être déterminée avec certitude, car l'encodage des données financières pour la période de l'évaluation n'a pas permis de déterminer de manière concluante le montant précis des dépenses liées à l'action en amont.

E.7 Au niveau mondial, l'action en amont de l'UNICEF s'est renforcée au fil du temps. Le portefeuille a consisté à élaborer des manières d'aborder l'action en amont de manière analytique et empirique ; on a constaté une participation accrue aux partenariats mondiaux en faveur de l'éducation tels que le Groupe mondial pour l'éducation, le Partenariat mondial pour

l'éducation (GPE), l'Initiative des Nations Unies en faveur de l'éducation des filles (UNGEI), l'Initiative mondiale pour l'éducation avant tout, et le Réseau international pour l'éducation dans les situations d'urgence. L'UNICEF assume divers rôles allant de l'occupation de postes dirigeants, à la convocation des partenaires, la coordination et l'octroi de fonds, ainsi qu'une contribution aux résultats techniques. Par ailleurs, les activités en amont de l'UNICEF au niveau mondial dans le secteur de l'éducation ont englobé l'élaboration de modèles de meilleures pratiques et de cadres analytiques sur des aspects clés des politiques de l'éducation, tels que l'apprentissage précoce, la suppression des frais de scolarité, les écoles amies des enfants et l'éducation lors des situations d'urgence à des fins d'intégration dans les programmes régionaux et de pays.

E.8 Les responsabilités en termes d'actions en amont incombant aux bureaux régionaux vont de l'octroi d'un appui aux activités en amont au niveau du pays, directement et grâce au renforcement des capacités, ainsi qu'aux initiatives en amont commanditées par les bureaux régionaux. Par exemple, les Conseillers régionaux de l'UNICEF en matière d'éducation travaillent en collaboration étroite avec les Chefs de l'éducation au niveau national afin de soutenir directement les processus en amont au niveau du pays. Les bureaux régionaux font également office de « centres d'information » sur des connaissances relatives aux actions en amont, mettant les pays en contact les uns avec les autres et organisant des ateliers et des réunions de partage des connaissances. En termes de travaux programmatiques, les bureaux régionaux lancent et coordonnent les études permettant d'obtenir des données factuelles pour soutenir le plaidoyer politique de l'UNICEF. Les bureaux régionaux fournissent également des outils pour l'action en amont, tels que lignes directrices et trousseaux à outils, ainsi que des cadres pour les études de pays, tels que les rapports de situation des pays. Enfin, les bureaux régionaux entreprennent des initiatives régionales en faveur de l'éducation avec leurs partenaires.



L'ACTION EN AMONT DE L'UNICEF AU NIVEAU DU PAYS

E.9 L'action en amont au niveau du pays a été évaluée grâce à une série d'études nationales, ainsi que quatre études de cas approfondies au niveau du pays. Ces études ont révélé que les bureaux de pays reprenaient les secteurs de coopération ciblés par l'UNICEF à l'échelon mondial, mais entreprenaient aussi des activités en amont spécifiques à leurs pays.

E.10 Le portefeuille d'action de l'UNICEF en amont au niveau du pays dans le secteur de l'éducation comprend essentiellement :

- *Plaidoyer* pour faire évoluer, notamment, les politiques, les législations, les directives dans le secteur de l'éducation, les normes officielles et les budgets ;
- *Assistance technique* pour modeler les politiques, les législations, les directives et les programmes d'étude, pour améliorer la disponibilité des données, renforcer les capacités et améliorer la gestion de l'éducation et les systèmes techniques, ainsi que pour établir des capacités de formation sectorielles ;
- *Tests des approches et des modèles* en finançant et en gérant leur mise en œuvre à des fins de démonstration ;
- *Entreprise d'études et de travaux analytiques* afin de renforcer la base d'informations et de soutenir son plaidoyer et son influence politique ;
- *Entreprise de la coordination sectorielle et mise en place des rôles dirigeants*, couplées avec la facilitation d'un financement extérieur du secteur.

E.11 Les études de cas nationales – Afghanistan, Brésil, Cambodge et Zimbabwe – ont permis, lors de l'évaluation, d'examiner plus étroitement la manière dont l'action en amont de l'UNICEF dans le secteur de l'éducation

a évolué dans quatre contextes nationaux contrastés. La collecte de données a reposé sur la sélection de trois à quatre mini études de cas par pays, examinées à la lumière de la contribution de l'UNICEF aux résultats observés.

E.12 Dans les quatre pays, l'action en amont de l'UNICEF et son rôle au sein des programmes de pays ont évolué pendant la période de l'évaluation : ses priorités et sa participation au programme d'éducation du pays ont reflété les changements intervenus dans le contexte national. Cependant, il est aussi apparu que des initiatives et approches étaient lancées à l'initiative de l'équipe mondiale pour l'éducation, intégrant l'action en amont au niveau du pays. Par exemple, les modèles d'Écoles amies des enfants étaient présents dans trois des études de cas sur quatre ; les travaux analytiques sur l'équité dans trois des études, et les normes d'apprentissage pour le jeune enfant dans une étude. Le rôle croissant de l'UNICEF en matière de coordination sectorielle apparaît également dans les études de cas nationales.

E.13 Il est aussi apparu que l'UNICEF entreprenait davantage d'actions en amont destinées à faire évoluer les politiques en matière d'éducation qu'à changer les pratiques budgétaires, ou à des fins de mise en œuvre des politiques.

E.14 L'évaluation a aussi permis de constater que les équipes chargées de l'éducation au Brésil, au Cambodge et au Zimbabwe estiment que leurs programmes de pays sont « en amont ». Lorsque l'UNICEF entreprenait ou soutenait encore des prestations de services ou des projets en aval relatifs à l'éducation, ceux-ci étaient considérés comme faisant partie des tests ou des projets pilotes et de la réunion d'informations visant à modifier les capacités de l'État. En Afghanistan – des quatre études de cas, c'est celle sur l'Afghanistan qui se rapprochait toujours le plus d'une situation d'urgence à la fin de la période d'évaluation – le programme de l'UNICEF représentait toujours un mélange de programmation en aval et d'action en amont.

RÉSULTATS AU NIVEAUX MONDIAL ET NATIONAL

E.15 L'engagement de l'UNICEF au niveau mondial dans l'action en amont en faveur de l'éducation a eu des résultats visibles aux niveaux mondial et du pays. Prenant appui sur son mandat, ses priorités et son expérience au niveau du pays, l'UNICEF a une influence sur l'action des partenariats mondiaux et des autres partenaires au niveau du pays. Il a également apporté des contributions techniques essentielles, tels que l'établissement de normes en matière d'éducation lors des situations d'urgence, ainsi qu'aux processus métriques et résultats des normes d'apprentissage. Les résultats des mesures en amont prises au niveau mondial sont apparus au niveau du changement d'attitude et des engagements discursifs à l'échelon du pays, obtenus grâce à des contenus politiques progressifs et à des réformes législatives. L'action à ces deux niveaux a des avantages mutuels ; la participation de l'UNICEF aux partenariats mondiaux renforce sa position au niveau du pays à des fins d'influence politique tandis que son engagement au niveau du pays contribue à son engagement mondial.

E.16 Dix mini cas extraits des quatre pays soumis aux activités de terrain ont été analysés pour évaluer l'envergure des résultats accomplis, et l'importance de la contribution discutée de l'UNICEF à ces résultats.

E.17 Dans trois cas, les résultats ont été jugés « bons » – ce qui signifie que le changement de comportement était visible – et atteints grâce à une forte contribution de l'UNICEF : la campagne pour une alphabétisation à l'âge approprié et les programmes « Municipal SELO » au Brésil ont débouché, notamment, sur l'adoption d'initiatives par les municipalités et sur une augmentation des budgets de l'éducation dans les localités partenaires. Au Zimbabwe, le Fonds de transition pour l'éducation a entraîné un changement de procédures et des changements en matière de pratiques sectorielles. Chacune de ces interventions était liée au contexte spécifique et ne dépendait pas

des initiatives et approches de l'UNICEF en matière d'éducation appuyées par le siège, bien qu'elles se soient alignées sur le mandat et les priorités de l'UNICEF.

E.18 Dans les deux cas où l'action de l'UNICEF en amont avait porté sur l'adoption d'approches officielles de l'UNICEF soutenues par son siège – Écoles amies des enfants au Zimbabwe et éducation du jeune enfant au Cambodge – l'évaluation a démontré que l'UNICEF avait largement contribué à l'évolution des politiques mais qu'aucun changement de comportement notable n'était intervenu.

E.19 Dans trois autres cas, on a constaté de fortes contributions de la part de l'UNICEF avec des résultats moyens. Dans le cas de l'éducation bilingue au Cambodge, le gouvernement a officiellement modifié sa politique, mais la mise en œuvre des décisions a fortement dépendu du financement de l'UNICEF et d'autres partenaires du développement. Dans son action en amont visant à renforcer le système d'information sur la gestion de l'éducation au Zimbabwe, l'UNICEF a largement contribué à maintenir et à renforcer le système. Cependant, la dépendance envers l'assistance technique n'a pas diminué, et comme aucune donnée n'a été publiée officiellement, leur utilisation dans la planification et le suivi s'est limitée à un accès informel de la part du gouvernement, des donateurs et autres acteurs. En Afghanistan, où l'UNICEF a élaboré des modèles standards d'écoles à des fins d'économie lors de la reconstruction, le gouvernement a adopté ces modèles mais leur mise en œuvre s'est avérée limitée.

E.20 Dans deux des trois cas où l'UNICEF a assumé la responsabilité de gérer les fonds, les résultats n'ont pas été très bons, dans l'un des cas en raison d'un mélange de facteurs liés aux capacités de l'UNICEF et au contexte (GPE Afghanistan) et dans l'autre cas en raison de facteurs contextuels (Fonds de renforcement des capacités, Cambodge). Le cas du GPE en Afghanistan est la seule étude de cas dans laquelle la contribution de l'UNICEF a été limitée pour des résultats modestes, en raison de



la complexité du contexte et du financement relativement faible de la part du GPE, ainsi que des capacités limitées du bureau qui n'a pas pu convaincre le Partenariat d'assumer le rôle d'entité chargée de la supervision. Dans le cas du Cambodge, il s'est avéré que la contribution de l'UNICEF a été importante pour des résultats médiocres.

E.21 Les différences entre les résultats des diverses études de cas permettent de penser que l'action en amont en faveur de l'éducation apporte plus souvent des résultats liés aux engagements/changement politiques et aux changements de procédures dans le secteur de l'éducation, que des résultats qui se font sentir plus en aval, tels que le financement public de nouveaux engagements et politiques, et le changement de pratiques sectorielles. Ces résultats concordent avec la perception des personnes interrogées dans une étude de confirmation selon laquelle l'UNICEF entreprend moins souvent des travaux axés sur ces « impacts plus profonds ».

E.22 Les résultats de l'UNICEF en matière de renforcement des capacités – le plus souvent des capacités techniques dans le secteur comme le système d'information sur la gestion de l'éducation ou la planification de l'éducation – sont mitigés. Dans les cas par pays, c'est le Cambodge qui se rapproche le plus des interventions durables de renforcement des capacités.

E.23 On a aussi constaté un certain nombre de résultats inattendus, qui peuvent potentiellement porter atteinte à l'action en amont de l'UNICEF en faveur de l'éducation. On peut notamment citer le risque que l'assistance technique fournie par l'UNICEF (et de nombreux autres donateurs) crée une dépendance de la part du gouvernement, entraîne des changements dans les relations entre partenaires (par ex. des rapports plus étroits avec le gouvernement portant atteinte aux liens avec les ONG ou compromettant la réputation de neutralité de l'UNICEF).

ÉVALUER L'ACTION EN AMONT EN FAVEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION PAR RAPPORT AU CRITÈRE D'ÉVALUATION

E.24 On estime généralement que l'action en amont de l'UNICEF est **pertinente** en termes de respect des demandes des bénéficiaires, besoins du pays, priorités mondiales, et politiques des partenaires et de l'UNICEF. La priorité plus élevée accordée à l'action en amont a entraîné un changement en faveur du renforcement des capacités des responsables, au lieu que ce soit l'UNICEF qui se charge de faire respecter le droit à l'éducation des personnes concernées. Cette orientation s'inscrit de manière appropriée compte tenu des changements intervenus au niveau mondial et des pays (par ex., les pays affichant un revenu intermédiaire sont plus nombreux et le financement international des activités en aval se raréfie).

E.25 Également dans les trois études de cas portant sur des pays à revenu faible sortant d'un conflit ou d'une situation d'urgence (Afghanistan, Cambodge and Zimbabwe) le changement d'orientation de l'UNICEF – s'abstenant de satisfaire directement les besoins en matière d'éducation pour collaborer avec le gouvernement à l'élaboration de politiques et à l'élimination des écarts et des faiblesses – s'est avéré très adapté aux besoins des pays. De même, la création d'un espace pour le dialogue et la convocation des acteurs pour discuter de problèmes communs constitue une forme très pertinente de travail en amont que les personnes interrogées aux niveaux mondial et national ont déclaré être une contribution importante de l'UNICEF.

E.26 L'évaluation n'a pas permis de définir efficacement la manière dont l'UNICEF a traduit les apports en résultats car il n'existait pas de données systématiques concernant les financements et les résultats. Cependant, les personnes interrogées dans le cadre des entretiens et des enquêtes ont estimé que l'UNICEF faisait preuve d'efficacité dans son action en amont. L'évaluation conforme l'opinion générale selon laquelle l'action en amont permet d'utiliser les



ressources du développement plus efficacement que les activités en aval, dans la mesure où elle peut potentiellement avoir un impact sur un nombre plus élevé de personnes ayant droit à l'éducation grâce à des changements au niveau du système. Il en résulte toutefois que l'efficacité est liée aux résultats accomplis en termes de réaffectation des budgets publics et d'application systématique des nouvelles politiques, des secteurs où l'UNICEF s'est avéré moins efficace que quand il s'agissait de faire évoluer les politiques.

E.27 Il est apparu que les systèmes appliqués par l'UNICEF aux ressources humaines ne sont pas bien adaptés à l'action en amont. Les rotations plus fréquentes du personnel international lors des situations d'urgence ne permettent pas toujours d'investir dans l'établissement de rapports susceptibles de porter efficacement leurs fruits. Par ailleurs, avec une révision des programmes de pays tous les cinq ans et un examen à mi-parcours, les possibilités d'adapter le profil des fonctionnaires sont limitées, ce qui signifie que l'UNICEF emploie parfois du personnel dont le profil de compétence n'est pas adapté au travail en amont.

E.28 On a constaté un degré de **cohérence interne** dans l'action en amont de l'UNICEF en faveur de l'éducation, grâce à une entente largement partagée sur ce qui constitue l'action en amont dans les projets de l'éducation. Toutefois, il existe des divergences entre la manière dont les différents niveaux, à l'UNICEF, comprennent les méthodes les plus stratégiques pour obtenir des résultats en amont. Également, pour que les programmes d'éducation de l'UNICEF permettent de traduire cette action en stratégies, objectifs et cibles cohérents et détaillés, des directives institutionnelles doivent être établies sur ce qui constitue l'éventail de l'action en amont. Si les différences entre les chemins empruntés par les pays étaient mieux comprises, ainsi que les différents types d'actions en amont et les résultats qui leur sont associés, et si les indicateurs clés des résultats étaient alors ajustés pour mieux rendre compte de la manière dont les pays agissent en amont,

il en résulterait un meilleur cadrage et suivi de l'action en amont.

E.29 Au niveau mondial, on constate que les équipes chargées de l'action en amont couvrent plusieurs unités, et que l'on privilégie une action en amont inter-unités au niveau des pays. Au niveau des pays, toutefois, si les équipes ont bien découvert des éléments de collaboration intersectorielle, celle-ci n'était pas systématique. L'un des facteurs qui explique ce manque de collaboration est la différente provenance des fonds.

E.30 En termes de collaboration entre le siège de l'UNICEF et les niveaux régionaux et nationaux, les bureaux de pays ont constamment estimé que leur indépendance était un facteur clé pour l'efficacité de l'action en amont. En même temps, toutefois, pratiquement tous ont considéré que le soutien régional était important.

E.31 Cohérence externe : l'UNICEF a élaboré des partenariats constructifs avec d'autres partenaires et organismes des Nations Unies aux niveaux mondial et national, compte tenu des atouts relatifs des différentes organisations. Quand l'UNICEF collabore avec des partenaires importants lors des concertations, des résultats significatifs peuvent être obtenus en amont. Inévitablement, cependant, des tensions apparaissent concernant l'étendue et la manière d'aborder l'action en amont.

E.32 Le rôle de l'UNICEF dans les partenariats s'est renforcé pendant la période d'évaluation, aux niveaux mondial et du pays. Au niveau mondial, il y a eu consensus général entre les partenaires de l'UNICEF interrogés pour affirmer que l'UNICEF était un partenaire critique – dans le sens où il ajoute de la valeur aux débats et aux décisions, et où il est crédible – grâce à son rôle dirigeant et sa participation aux partenariats. Au niveau national, son influence sur l'ensemble du pays, la force qu'il dégage lors des situations d'urgence, et l'impression que donne l'UNICEF d'être un partenaire neutre en qui on peut avoir confiance, étaient souvent



perçues comme une source de crédibilité qui différencie l'organisation des autres acteurs.

E.33 Le volume de ressources pour le développement associé avec l'UNICEF peut déterminer l'importance de son rôle dans le partenariat. En Afghanistan, les capacités antérieures de l'UNICEF en termes de coordination des apports des partenaires du développement ont diminué vers la fin de la période étudiée, lorsque des organismes tels que la Banque mondiale ont géré des ressources beaucoup plus importantes que celles qui étaient du ressort de l'UNICEF. Le cas du Zimbabwe prouve que la gestion par l'UNICEF de fonds autres que les siens peut renforcer son rôle, mais uniquement si les capacités de le faire sont suffisantes dans son bureau de pays.

E.34 **Durabilité** : Selon l'évaluation, l'action en amont de l'UNICEF peut entraîner des résultats totalement durables en amont quand elle ne se limite pas à sensibiliser et rechercher des résultats politiques et tend plutôt vers un changement de comportement. Les changements au niveau des procédures, tels qu'observés au Zimbabwe, au Cambodge et en Afghanistan, dépendent du contexte, notamment des changements politiques. Les engagements discursifs sont transitoires, car le personnel change tant au sein du gouvernement que chez les partenaires, et les nouveaux acteurs introduisent souvent de nouvelles priorités. Les changements en termes de politique et de législation sont plus durables, car il faut du temps pour que les gouvernements abrogent des politiques devenues officielles, tandis que la révocation d'un changement de législation s'accompagne de coûts de transaction élevés. Les changements de comportement, tels que le financement des changements d'orientation par les gouvernements et une mise en œuvre efficace, sont les mesures dont les risques de recul des avantages au fil du temps sont les plus faibles. Ce n'est que lorsque des résultats sont obtenus à ce niveau que la durabilité devient réalité. L'évaluation a permis de démontrer que l'UNICEF peut obtenir ce niveau de résultats durables dans l'action en amont en faveur de

l'éducation de base et de l'égalité des sexes, par exemple dans les études de cas du Brésil et du Zimbabwe ; cependant, il privilégie plus souvent les changements d'orientation uniquement, ce qui porte atteinte à la durabilité et à l'efficacité de son action en amont.

E.35 Comme la majorité des donateurs, l'UNICEF a peiné pour garantir la durabilité de ces efforts en matière de renforcement des capacités. Un argument courant est que les investissements privilégient trop souvent le renforcement des capacités individuelles plutôt que le renforcement des capacités institutionnelles.

E.36 L'évaluation a également permis d'identifier des préoccupations en termes de durabilité liées au recul du financement et à la vulnérabilité des sources de financement pour l'action en amont découlant de la dépendance envers une source de financement unique (que la source de financement soit un donateur comme dans le cas des financements thématiques au niveau mondial au Cambodge, ou un gouvernement-hôte comme au Brésil). En termes de ressources humaines, les études de cas nationales ont révélé des financements insuffisants pour l'action en amont, peut-être parce qu'elle est perçue comme étant peu onéreuse. La perception selon laquelle l'action en amont est peu onéreuse explique partiellement pourquoi elle n'est pas conceptualisée correctement dans les stratégies de pays, comme si sa conception et son évaluation n'exigeaient pas le même investissement que les autres secteurs. Les changements de personnel constitueraient un facteur de risque susceptible d'être atténué en ciblant, mesurant et suivant plus efficacement l'action en amont.

RECOMMANDATIONS

Recommandation 1 : la Division de l'UNICEF des politiques stratégiques et de la stratégie doit élaborer un cadre à l'échelle de l'organisation afin de définir, cibler, mesurer et communiquer les résultats de l'action en amont.



E.37 Un tel réseau doit à terme cibler les changements de comportement, tout en mesurant les changements intermédiaires en matière de politiques, de législation et de procédures. Il ne devrait pas être lié à des domaines prioritaires, modèles ou cadres de l'UNICEF spécifiques, mais devrait plutôt favoriser un ciblage régulier de résultats en amont dans l'ensemble de l'organisation, quelle que soit la priorité principale de l'intervention en amont. Il en résulterait une agrégation des résultats obtenus dans les divers pays impossible aujourd'hui, ce qui calmerait les préoccupations des donateurs concernant l'absence de rapports présentés systématiquement sur les travaux soutenus par le financement thématique.

Recommandation 2 : l'introduction par l'UNICEF d'un budget multi-dimensionnel et de codes de dépenses en 2014 mérite d'être mentionnée. Cependant le siège de l'UNICEF doit s'assurer que les codes d'intervention générique dans le nouveau système de codification décrivent clairement et globalement l'action en amont et y sont liés.

E.38 Le nouveau système de codification introduit en 2014 permet simultanément de suivre les dépenses de l'UNICEF en fonction, notamment, de ses objectifs, secteurs programmatiques et stratégies d'intervention. L'UNICEF peut encore renforcer ses capacités de suivi de l'action en amont, de mesure de son efficacité grâce à cette action en s'assurant que les stratégies d'intervention (ou codes d'intervention générique) offrent un bon niveau, bien que global, de typologie de l'action en amont comportant des catégories antinomiques, et que les catégories d'actions en amont sont clairement liées aux codes à des fins de planification, de budgétisation et de présentation de rapports. Il en résulterait un meilleur système de rapports aux donateurs sur l'action en amont.

Recommandation 3 : le siège de l'UNICEF doit élaborer un système de gestion des financements communs ou par des tiers afin de renforcer l'efficacité de l'aide, notamment en ce qui concerne l'utilisation des systèmes nationaux.

E.39 L'UNICEF assume de plus en plus un rôle de gestion et de supervision pour les financements communs. Bien que l'UNICEF soit limité par ses statuts en tant qu'organisation des Nations Unies et au titre de ses arrangements de gestion financière, il doit s'efforcer d'élaborer des mécanismes lui permettant de gérer des fonds au nom d'autres donateurs afin de financer les programmes d'éducation de pays, tout en utilisant au maximum les systèmes nationaux. Il faudra notamment élaborer des outils d'évaluation des risques, des seuils de décision et une voie commune pour l'utilisation des systèmes nationaux à l'usage des bureaux de pays.

Recommandation 4 : l'équipe mondiale pour l'éducation de l'UNICEF doit envisager de demander une évaluation mondiale déterminatrice des actions de renforcement des capacités/renforcement des systèmes de façon à mieux comprendre ce qui fonctionne bien, quand et où.

E.40 Le renforcement des capacités des systèmes d'éducation est un élément clé de l'action de l'UNICEF en amont. L'équipe mondiale de l'UNICEF pour l'éducation doit tirer des leçons de ses expériences sur la meilleure manière d'entreprendre cette action, qu'il s'agisse du renforcement des capacités des ressources humaines ou du renforcement institutionnel. Une évaluation fondée sur la théorie du changement constituerait un mécanisme d'apprentissage approprié.

Recommandation 5 : l'UNICEF, dans le cadre de l'éducation de base et l'égalité des sexes, doit redoubler d'efforts pour renforcer les capacités des équipes nationales responsables de l'éducation en matière d'action en amont, ce qui a des implications aux niveaux mondial, régional et national.

E.41 Il faut pour cela que la Section de l'éducation au siège mette en place de toute urgence une formation officielle en compétences techniques et analytiques de l'action en amont, et procède à une révision de la description de poste actuelle du Chef de l'éducation



permettant à celui-ci de mettre les compétences et exigences de l'action en amont au centre de ses préoccupations.

E.42 Dans un effort visant à privilégier la continuité et des relations durables face à la rotation du personnel international, les représentants de pays doivent s'assurer que tous les postes clés ne sont pas vacants en même temps, et les conseillers régionaux de l'UNICEF en éducation doivent exercer un suivi sur ce point. Les bureaux de pays doivent aussi chercher à nommer des fonctionnaires nationaux pour tenir les rôles clés de l'action en amont.

E.43 Le réseau d'échange en ligne (Sharepoint) de connaissances sur l'action en amont est un pas dans la bonne direction, mais la Section de l'éducation au siège et le niveau régional doivent envisager une gestion des connaissances et des initiatives d'apprentissage entre pairs à court et à moyen terme qui aillent plus loin. On peut envisager un soutien entre pays par les équipes de l'éducation et une institutionnalisation des manifestations et forums régionaux en amont d'apprentissage entre pairs. Les bureaux régionaux devraient placer des fonctionnaires expérimentés supplémentaires dans les régions ; ils pourraient apporter un soutien direct et à plein temps aux pays, et à mesure que l'UNICEF assume davantage de rôles dans le GPE, ces capacités doivent aussi être utilisées.

E.44 Les cadres du bureau de pays et le Chef de l'éducation doivent établir un budget plus explicite en faveur de l'action en amont tout en renforçant les capacités à cet égard. Pour cela, une bien meilleure collaboration devra être établie entre les secteurs pour partager les expériences et les ressources nécessaires à l'action en amont. En particulier, une coopération beaucoup plus étroite devra être établie avec les conseillers en politique sociale afin de renforcer les capacités des équipes de l'UNICEF pour l'éducation de s'engager sur les budgets sectoriels.

Recommandation 6 : selon la Stratégie mondiale de l'UNICEF pour l'éducation de 2007, il serait approprié de trouver un équilibre entre l'action en amont et en aval au niveau du pays. L'UNICEF doit continuer à rechercher cet équilibre dans le domaine de l'éducation : les bureaux de pays et les équipes chargées de l'éducation doivent cibler et lier de manière appropriée l'action en amont et en aval, compte tenu des conditions.

E.45 La présence de l'UNICEF en aval et ses capacités en matière d'éducation sont importantes à des fins d'efficacité de l'action en amont dans la mesure où elles sont synonymes d'exposition et de capacité d'agir et de réunir des données. Ce sont les bureaux de pays qui détermineront l'équilibre approprié entre action en amont et en aval, mais l'équipe mondiale de l'UNICEF pour l'éducation devra continuer à soutenir cette approche en apportant des orientations stratégiques.

E.46 Dans des contextes autres que les situations d'urgence, la durabilité des projets globaux d'action en faveur de l'éducation de l'UNICEF serait maximisée si tous les travaux en aval étaient entrepris dans le but de soutenir l'action en amont, privilégiant l'adoption d'approches sur le terrain afin de présenter au gouvernement des propositions d'élargissement. Même dans les contextes d'urgence, les équipes de l'UNICEF pour l'éducation devraient considérer leurs interventions de première ligne comme des possibilités de réunir des données pour agir sur les politiques et renforcer les systèmes, afin de mieux reconstruire. Dans les pays à revenu intermédiaire, l'action en amont est peut-être la seule qui devrait être entreprise, puisque les ressources posent un problème beaucoup moins important que dans les pays à revenu.



RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

OBJETIVOS Y ENFOQUE DE LA EVALUACIÓN

E.1 Esta evaluación examina cómo, y en qué medida, UNICEF participó en la labor en la etapa preliminar (o de política general) en la educación básica y la igualdad de género entre 2003 y 2012, y apunta una serie de lecciones para la labor de UNICEF en el futuro. La labor en la etapa preliminar contrasta con el trabajo en la etapa posterior, aunque la distinción no siempre es clara. La evaluación ha adoptado la siguiente definición oficial del compromiso preliminar:

“Las actividades de UNICEF realizadas con la intención de tener o haber tenido un efecto sostenible, a nivel de todo el sistema, sobre las capacidades nacionales de los titulares de obligaciones del sector público en el sector de la educación básica para el cumplimiento de los derechos del niño, directa o indirectamente.”

E.2 La evaluación identificó cinco tipos⁶ de efectos potenciales del trabajo preliminar: un cambio de actitud, compromisos discursivos, cambios de procedimiento (que cambian los procesos del sector de la educación), cambios de políticas oficiales, y cambios de comportamiento (la ejecución de las políticas que han sido transformadas). Hay una jerarquía obvia en esta tipología, ya que el cambio de comportamiento tiene más posibilidades a ejercer un efecto sobre los resultados educativos que el cambio de actitudes.

E.3 La labor en la etapa preliminar no es nueva para UNICEF; siempre ha sido una base de las actividades de UNICEF a nivel mundial, pero desde principios de 2006 se produjo un cambio notable en el enfoque institucional. La labor

en la etapa preliminar se articuló por primera vez como componente clave de la estrategia de UNICEF en el Plan Estratégico de Mediano Plazo (PEMP 2006-2009⁷), donde, además de las cuatro esferas prioritarias, se incorporó un nuevo tema transversal de “promoción de políticas y asociaciones en favor de los derechos de la infancia”. Este cambio en el enfoque, la forma en que se manifiesta y sus resultados, son la línea central de la investigación de esta evaluación. La evaluación pretende analizar el alcance en que UNICEF ha cumplido las promesas del plan estratégico e identificar las buenas prácticas y las lecciones aprendidas en relación con la labor en la etapa preliminar en el sector de la educación. La evaluación ha utilizado una teoría del cambio y el mapeo de resultados, junto con un análisis de la contribución, para recopilar y analizar pruebas empíricas sobre los resultados que el programa de educación de UNICEF ha logrado a través de la labor en la etapa preliminar. Este trabajo se basó en un marco de evaluación que tradujo la teoría del cambio en una serie de preguntas, respaldadas por el criterio de la evaluación sobre la pertinencia, la eficacia, la coherencia, la eficiencia y la sostenibilidad.

E.4 La evaluación recopiló datos en tres fases diferentes. En la primera fase se estableció una descripción de la labor en la etapa preliminar, una metodología minuciosa y un análisis de documentos de 14 programas de país en siete de las regiones de UNICEF: la fase sobre el terreno incluyó una nueva recopilación de pruebas empíricas en los niveles mundiales y regionales, y cuatro estudios de caso en profundidad (para el Afganistán, el Brasil, Camboya y Zimbabwe); y la fase de análisis y exámenes incluyó un cuestionario para poner a prueba las conclusiones derivadas de la labor sobre el terreno⁸.

⁶ Drawing on Jones, 2011.

⁷ Ampliado posteriormente a 2013.

⁸ Un debate completo sobre el proceso de la evaluación se ofrece en la Nota sobre el enfoque y los métodos (anexo 2).



LA LABOR DE UNICEF EN LA ETAPA PRELIMINAR A ESCALA MUNDIAL Y REGIONAL EN LA EDUCACIÓN

E.5 La intención de cambiar de dirección hacia una labor en la etapa preliminar como elemento clave de la estrategia de la organización se estableció claramente en el PEMP 2006–09(13), y se articuló de nuevo en la estrategia de 2007 sobre la educación. En el plano mundial, el equipo de educación de UNICEF propuso medir sus resultados sobre la base del número de países que habían adoptado normas, modelos y políticas promovidos por UNICEF, como las normas sobre aprendizaje y desarrollo en la primera infancia o los modelos de escuelas amigas de la infancia.

E.6 Hay pruebas empíricas que indican que se proporcionaron recursos financieros para apoyar las ambiciones preliminares de UNICEF. La labor en la etapa preliminar en la educación básica y la igualdad entre los géneros se financió en gran parte con los fondos temáticos para educación básica y la igualdad de género, que son recursos que han sido asignados con flexibilidad por los donantes para apoyar actividades en la esfera prioritaria de la educación. Esta fuente de ingreso aumentó en un 24% entre 2006 y 2012. Al mismo tiempo, el análisis indicativo de los gastos para la educación básica y la igualdad de género revelan un cambio hacia la labor en la etapa preliminar. Sin embargo, la magnitud precisa de este cambio no se pudo establecer con certidumbre, ya que la codificación de los datos financieros durante el período de la evaluación no facilitó un análisis concluyente de los gastos realizados durante la labor en la etapa preliminar.

E.7 A escala mundial, la labor de UNICEF en la etapa preliminar aumentó con el tiempo. El portafolio consistió en el desarrollo de enfoques analíticos y basados en pruebas empíricas de la labor en la etapa preliminar; se ha producido una participación cada vez mayor en alianzas mundiales clave de educación, como

el Grupo temático mundial sobre educación, la Alianza mundial para la educación, la Iniciativa de las Naciones Unidas para la Educación de las Niñas (UNGEI), la Primera iniciativa mundial sobre educación (GEFI), y la red internacional para la educación en situaciones de emergencia (INEE). Las funciones de UNICEF oscilan desde posiciones de liderazgo a posiciones de aliados convocantes, proporcionando coordinación y fondos, así como aportes técnicos. Además, las actividades mundiales preliminares de UNICEF en la educación incluyeron la creación de modelos de mejores prácticas y Marcos analíticos sobre cuestiones clave de las políticas sobre educación, como el aprendizaje temprano, la eliminación de las tasas, las escuelas amigas de la infancia y la educación en situaciones de emergencia, para dotar de contenido los programas regionales y de país.

E.8 Las responsabilidades de la labor en la etapa preliminar en las oficinas regionales abarcan la prestación de apoyo a la labor en la etapa preliminar a nivel de país, tanto directamente como a través del fomento de la capacidad, y a las iniciativas preliminares encargadas por las oficinas regionales. Por ejemplo, los asesores regionales de educación de UNICEF trabajan estrechamente con los jefes de educación del país para proporcionar un apoyo directo a los procesos preliminares en los países. Las oficinas regionales actúan también como centro de coordinación de los conocimientos sobre la labor en la etapa preliminar, al poner a los países en contacto entre ellos y organizar talleres y reuniones de intercambio de conocimientos. En lo que se refiere a la labor programática, las oficinas regionales inician y coordinan estudios para proporcionar datos que apoyen la promoción de políticas de UNICEF. Las oficinas regionales proporcionan también instrumentos para la labor en la etapa preliminar, como directrices y manuales, y marcos para los estudios de país, como los informes sobre la situación del país. Finalmente, las oficinas regionales llevan a cabo iniciativas regionales de educación con diversos aliados.

LA LABOR DE UNICEF EN LA ETAPA PRELIMINAR DE LA EDUCACIÓN A ESCALA DE PAÍS

E.9 La labor en la etapa preliminar a nivel de país se evaluó por medio de una serie de análisis documentales en los países, así como por medio de cuatro estudios de caso en profundidad sobre otros tantos países. Los análisis indicaron que las oficinas de país hicieron operativas las esferas de cooperación que UNICEF había seleccionado a nivel mundial, pero también llevaron a cabo actividades preliminares con un enfoque específico de su país.

E.10 El portafolio de la labor de UNICEF en la etapa preliminar en el sector de la educación a nivel nacional comprende sobre todo:

- *Promoción* para influir en las políticas, la legislación, la orientación del sector de la educación, las normas oficiales y los presupuestos, entre otros elementos;
- *Asistencia técnica* para configurar las políticas, la legislación, la orientación, las normas y los planes de estudio, así como para mejorar los datos disponibles, fomentar la capacidad y reforzar la gestión y los sistemas técnicos de la educación, así como establecer capacidad de formación para el sector;
- *Pilotar enfoques y modelos* mediante la financiación de la gestión de su aplicación a efectos demostrativos;
- *Llevar a cabo estudios y trabajo analítico* para fortalecer la base de pruebas y apoyar su promoción y su influencia en las políticas;
- *Llevar a cabo una coordinación del sector y funciones de liderazgo*, que complementen la coordinación de la financiación externa al sector.

E.11 Los estudios de caso de los países – Afganistán, Brasil, Camboya y Zimbabwe – permitieron una evaluación de la oportunidad para observar más estrechamente cómo

evoluciona la labor de UNICEF en la etapa preliminar en la educación en cuatro contextos nacionales diferentes. La recopilación de los datos se estableció en torno a la selección de tres o cuatro mini estudios de caso por país, que se examinaron para analizar la contribución de UNICEF a los resultados observados.

E.12 En los cuatro países, la labor de UNICEF en la etapa preliminar y su papel en los programas de país evolucionaron durante el período de la evaluación: su enfoque y su participación en el programa de educación del país respondió a los cambios en el contexto nacional. Sin embargo, también hay pruebas de iniciativas y enfoques que fueron dirigidos por el equipo mundial de educación, y que se basaron en una labor en la etapa preliminar a nivel de país. Por ejemplo, los enfoques de las escuelas amigas de la infancia estaban presentes en tres de los cuatro casos de país; la labor analítica sobre la equidad en tres, y las normas de aprendizaje en la primera infancia en uno. En los casos de país son también evidentes las funciones cada vez mayores de coordinación del sector por parte de UNICEF.

E.13 También estaba claro que UNICEF la labor en la etapa preliminar para influir en la política de educación había sido mayor que para cambiar las prácticas presupuestarias o la ejecución de políticas.

E.14 La evaluación destacó también que los equipos de educación en el Brasil, Camboya y Zimbabwe consideran que su programa de país actual es “preliminar”. Aunque la prestación de servicios o proyectos de educación posteriores se seguía llevando a cabo o seguía recibiendo el apoyo de UNICEF, se consideraban como parte de la labor de puesta a prueba o de proyectos piloto, o de recopilación de pruebas empíricas, con el objetivo de afectar en última instancia la capacidad del Estado. En el Afganistán –que de los cuatro estudios de caso seguía siendo el que más cerca se hallaba aún entorno de emergencia al final del período de evaluación– el programa de UNICEF ha seguido siendo una combinación de programación posterior con una acción en la etapa preliminar.



RESULTADOS A NIVEL MUNDIAL Y DE PAÍS

E.15 El compromiso mundial de UNICEF con la labor en la etapa preliminar en la educación ha tenido resultados discernibles en el nivel mundial y de país. Sobre la base de su mandato, sus prioridades y la experiencia a nivel de país, UNICEF tiene la posibilidad de influir en lo que pueden llegar a realizar estas alianzas mundiales y otros aliados a escala de país. También ha prestado contribuciones técnicas clave, como las normas para la educación en situaciones de emergencia, y los procesos métricos y los resultados de las normas de aprendizaje. Los resultados de las actividades preliminares a nivel mundial han registrado de manera similar el cambio de actitudes y los compromisos de discurso a nivel de país, realizados por medio de un contenido de políticas progresivo y una reforma legislativa. La labor a estos dos niveles tiene beneficios mutuos; la participación de UNICEF en las alianzas mundiales fortalece su posición a nivel de país para ejercer influencias en las políticas, mientras que su participación a nivel de país sirve de base a su compromiso mundial.

E.16 En los cuatro países donde se realizó una labor sobre el terreno se realizaron diez mini casos para ofrecer una evaluación de la solidez de los resultados logrados, y el grado en que puede afirmarse que UNICEF contribuyó a los resultados.

E.17 En tres casos los resultados se consideraron como “sólidos” –lo que significa que había pruebas de un cambio de comportamiento logrado con una firme contribución de UNICEF: la campaña de alfabetización a la edad adecuada y los programas municipales SELO en el Brasil llevaron a que se emprendieran de iniciativas a escala federal, y al aumento en los presupuestos para la educación en los lugares donde se establecieron alianzas, entre otras cosas. En Zimbabwe, el Fondo de transición hacia la educación generó un cambio en los procedimientos y las prácticas del sector. Cada una de estas intervenciones se adaptó al

contexto específico y no dependía de iniciativas ni enfoques sobre la educación patrocinados por la sede de UNICEF, a pesar de que estaban alineados con el mandato y las prioridades de UNICEF.

E.18 En las dos ocasiones en que la labor de UNICEF en la etapa preliminar conllevó la aprobación de enfoques oficiales de UNICEF patrocinados por la sede –escuelas amigas de la infancia en Zimbabwe y educación en la primera infancia en Camboya– la evaluación concluyó que UNICEF había realizado una firme contribución al cambio de contenido de políticas, pero que no se había producido un cambio considerable de comportamiento.

E.19 En otros tres casos se encontraron sólidas contribuciones de UNICEF con resultados medianos. En el caso de la educación bilingüe en Camboya, el gobierno adoptó oficialmente un cambio de políticas, pero la ejecución de estas políticas siguieron dependiendo de UNICEF y de otra financiación de un aliado en el desarrollo. En su labor en la etapa preliminar para fortalecer el sistema de información de la gestión de la educación en Zimbabwe, UNICEF había contribuido firmemente a mantener y fortalecer el sistema. Sin embargo, se mantuvo una dependencia en la asistencia técnica y debido a que los datos no se habían publicado oficialmente, su utilización en la planificación y el seguimiento se limitó al acceso oficioso por parte del gobierno, los donantes y otras partes interesadas. En el Afganistán, donde UNICEF estableció diseños estandarizados de las escuelas para una reconstrucción eficaz con respecto a los costos, el gobierno adoptó estos diseños pero con una ejecución muy limitada.

E.20 Dos de los tres casos en los que UNICEF asumió la responsabilidad de gestionar los fondos no lograron resultados elevados, en uno de los casos debido a una combinación de la capacidad de UNICEF y los factores contextuales (el GPE en el Afganistán) y en el otro debido a los factores contextuales (fondo de desarrollo de la capacidad en Camboya). El caso del GPE en el Afganistán fue el único estudio de casos

en el que UNICEF realizó una contribución insuficiente y logró resultados insuficientes, debido a la complejidad del contexto y a la financiación relativamente escasa del GPE, así como la capacidad limitada de la oficina de país para complementar una función de entidad supervisora del GPE. En el caso de Camboya, se encontró que UNICEF había realizado una sólida contribución pero que los resultados habían sido medianos.

E.21 La combinación de resultados de los estudios de caso de los países sugirieron que la labor en la etapa preliminar en la educación logró más a menudo resultados relacionados con los compromisos/cambios de políticas, y cambios en los procedimientos del sector de la educación, que en los resultados en la parte inferior de la cadena, como la financiación de los nuevos compromisos y políticas por los gobiernos, y los cambios en las prácticas sectoriales. Esto se acomoda a la percepción de las personas que respondieron a una encuesta de confirmación, que indicaron que UNICEF lleva a cabo con menos frecuencia una labor dirigida a estas “repercusiones más profundas”.

E.22 Los resultados de UNICEF cuando lleva a cabo el fomento de la capacidad –más a menudo el fomento de la capacidad técnica en el sector, como por ejemplo en el caso de EMIS o la planificación de la educación– fueron dispares. En los casos de países, Camboya estuvo más cerca de unas intervenciones sostenibles de desarrollo de la capacidad.

E.23 También se determinaron una serie de resultados no intencionales, que menoscaban potencialmente la labor de UNICEF en la etapa preliminar en la educación. Entre ellos cabe destacar que la asistencia técnica que proporciona UNICEF (como muchos otros donantes) puede crear una dependencia del gobierno o que hay muchas contraposiciones en las relaciones con los aliados (por ejemplo, una relación más estrecha con el gobierno reduce los vínculos con las ONG, o compromete la aparente neutralidad de UNICEF).

EVALUAR LA LABOR EN LA ETAPA PRELIMINAR EN EDUCACIÓN CON RESPECTO AL CRITERIO DE LA EVALUACIÓN

E.24 Se encontró que la labor de UNICEF en la etapa preliminar era ampliamente **pertinente** en lo que respecta a su adaptación a los requisitos de los beneficiarios, las necesidades del país, las prioridades mundiales y las políticas de los aliados y de UNICEF. El enfoque cada vez mayor en la labor en la etapa preliminar ha representado un cambio hacia el fomento de las capacidades de los titulares de obligaciones, en lugar de que UNICEF asuma la función de satisfacer los derechos a la educación de los propios titulares. Esta respuesta es una adaptación apropiada a los cambios en los contextos mundiales y nacionales (por ejemplo, a medida que aumenta el número de países que alcanzan una situación de medianos ingresos y escasea la financiación internacional para las actividades posteriores).

E.25 De igual manera, en los tres estudios de caso de los países de bajos ingresos y situación posterior a un conflicto o una emergencia (Afganistán, Camboya y Zimbabwe), se encontró que el cambio de UNICEF –de satisfacer directamente las necesidades educativas trabajar con el gobierno y a través de él para establecer políticas y abordar lagunas y deficiencias en el sistema– era altamente pertinente para las necesidades del país. Igualmente, crear un espacio para el diálogo y reunir a las partes interesadas en torno a temas que preocupan a todos es también una forma altamente pertinente de labor en la etapa preliminar, que las personas que respondieron a la encuesta mundial y del país han destacado como una importante contribución de UNICEF.

E.26 La evaluación no pudo evaluar el grado de **eficiencia** en que UNICEF ha convertido los aportes en resultados, debido a que no había disponibles los datos sistemáticos financieros y de resultados. Sin embargo, las personas que respondieron a las entrevistas y el cuestionario percibieron que UNICEF había sido eficaz



en su labor en la etapa preliminar (o de política general). La evaluación afecta el punto de vista común de que la labor en la etapa preliminar conlleva una utilización más eficiente de los recursos para el desarrollo que la labor posterior, en la medida en que puede afectar potencialmente las vidas de más titulares de derechos a la educación por medio de cambios a escala de todo el sistema. Esto, sin embargo, vincula la eficacia con el logro de resultados en lo que se refiere a cambiar el rumbo de los presupuestos de los gobiernos y aplicar plenamente nuevas políticas, algo en lo que UNICEF ha sido menos eficaz en comparación con el cambio de políticas.

E.27 Hay algunas pruebas empíricas que indican que los sistemas de recursos humanos de UNICEF no están bien adaptados a la labor en la etapa preliminar. Las rotaciones más breves para el personal internacional en los contextos de emergencia no permiten un tiempo suficiente para invertir en el fomento de relaciones que den sus frutos de manera eficiente. Además, debido a que los programas de país se revisan cada cinco años con un análisis de mediano plazo, las oportunidades para ajustar las características del personal son limitadas, lo que significa que a veces UNICEF podría disponer de un personal cuyo perfil laboral no se adapta a la labor en la etapa preliminar.

E.28 En la labor de UNICEF en la etapa preliminar en la educación hay un grado de **coherencia interna** que se deriva de una comprensión, compartida ampliamente, de lo que constituye la labor en la etapa preliminar en el sector de educación. Sin embargo, hay diferencias entre la forma en que los distintos niveles de UNICEF comprenden las vías más estratégicas hacia los resultados preliminares. Asimismo, se necesitan directivas claras de la organización sobre lo que constituye el espectro de la labor en la etapa preliminar para que el programa de educación de UNICEF pueda traducir su labor en estrategias, objetivos y metas coherentes y detalladas. Si se comprendieran mejor las diferencias en las vías de cada país, así como los diferentes tipos de labor en la etapa preliminar

y sus resultados o sociales, y luego los indicadores clave de rendimiento se ajustaran para tener mejor en cuenta la forma en que los países realizan la labor en la etapa preliminar, esto a su vez mejoraría el encuadramiento y el seguimiento de la labor en la etapa preliminar.

E.29 A nivel mundial hay pruebas que indican la existencia de equipos de tareas para la labor en la etapa preliminar que operan en las distintas unidades, y un hincapié en la expectativa de la labor en la etapa preliminar entre las unidades a nivel de país. Sin embargo, aunque los equipos encontraron algunas pruebas de colaboración preliminar en diversos sectores a nivel de país, no se producía de forma sistemática. Un factor en la falta de colaboración es que las corrientes de financiación están separadas.

E.30 Por lo que atañe a la colaboración entre la sede de UNICEF y los planos regional y nacional, las oficinas de país mantuvieron una opinión uniforme al considerar que la independencia era un factor clave para que la labor en la etapa preliminar fuese eficaz. Al mismo tiempo, sin embargo, casi todas consideraron que el apoyo a nivel regional era importante.

E.31 **Coherencia externa:** UNICEF estableció alianzas constructivas con otros aliados y organizaciones de las Naciones Unidas en los niveles mundial y de país, aprovechando las ventajas relativas de las diferentes organizaciones. Cuando UNICEF colabora con sus aliados clave en el diálogo de políticas, se pueden lograr considerables resultados preliminares. Sin embargo, es inevitable que surjan tensiones sobre las responsabilidades y los enfoques con respecto a la labor en la etapa preliminar.

E.32 La labor de UNICEF en las alianzas aumentó su significancia durante el período de evaluación en los niveles mundial y de país. En el nivel mundial se produjo un alto grado de consenso entre los aliados de UNICEF entrevistados, que indicaron que UNICEF es un participante fundamental –en el sentido de que añade valor a los debates y las decisiones, y es creíble– por medio de su liderazgo y su participación en las alianzas. A nivel de país, su alcance en todo

el territorio nacional se considera una ventaja en los contextos de emergencia, y las percepciones de UNICEF como un aliado de confianza o neutral fueron consideradas frecuentemente como un factor de credibilidad y de diferenciación con respecto a otros agentes.

E.33 El volumen de los recursos para el desarrollo asociados con UNICEF puede marcar la diferencia sobre su solidez en la función de aliado. En el Afganistán, la capacidad temprana de UNICEF para coordinar los aportes de los aliados en el desarrollo se redujo hacia el final del periodo, a medida que organismos como el Banco Mundial gestionaron recursos compartidos que eran mucho mayores que los que comandaba UNICEF. El caso de Zimbabwe demuestra que cuando UNICEF gestiona fondos diferentes a los suyos propios puede mejorar su función, pero solamente si tiene la suficiente capacidad en la oficina de país para hacerlo.

E.34 **Sostenibilidad:** La evaluación determinó que la labor de UNICEF en la etapa preliminar puede dar lugar a resultados preliminares totalmente sostenibles cuando se va más allá de la sensibilización y la política de los resultados y se trabaja en favor del cambio de comportamiento. Cambios de procedimiento, tales como los observados en Zimbabwe, Camboya y el Afganistán, son vulnerables a los cambios en el contexto, como el cambio en las políticas. Los compromisos discursivos son transitorios, ya que se producen cambios de personal en el gobierno y los aliados, y los nuevos actores suelen impulsar nuevas prioridades. El cambio de políticas y legislativo es más duradero, ya que los gobiernos no actúan con rapidez para eliminar las políticas cuando se han oficializado, e invertir el cambio legislativo conlleva unos altos costos de transacción. Los cambios de comportamiento, como cuando los gobiernos que financian el cambio de políticas y la aplicación eficaz, presenta el menor riesgo de que los flujos de beneficios se reduzcan con el tiempo. Es sólo cuando se alcanzan los resultados a este nivel que se logra la plena sostenibilidad. La evaluación ha demostrado que UNICEF puede alcanzar este nivel de resultados

sostenibles en la labor en la etapa preliminar de la educación básica y la igualdad de género, como por ejemplo en los estudios de caso del Brasil y Zimbabwe, pero que con más frecuencia el principal objetivo es un cambio de políticas. Esto afecta la sostenibilidad y la eficiencia de la labor en la etapa preliminar.

E.35 Como muchos donantes, UNICEF ha tratado de garantizar la sostenibilidad de los esfuerzos de fomento de capacidad. Un argumento frecuente es que la inversión se centra demasiado en el fomento de la capacidad de los individuos, en lugar de las instituciones.

E.36 La evaluación identificó también las preocupaciones sobre la sostenibilidad en relación con el descenso en la financiación y la vulnerabilidad de las fuentes de financiación para la labor en la etapa preliminar que surgen debido a la dependencia en una sola fuente de financiación (ya sea el caso de un solo donante, como sucede en la financiación temática mundial o en Camboya, o el gobierno de acogida, como en el Brasil). Por lo que se refiere a los recursos humanos, los estudios de caso de los países encontraron algunas pruebas que revelan una presupuestación inadecuada para la labor en la etapa preliminar, tal vez porque se percibe como de "bajo costo". La percepción de la labor en la etapa preliminar como de bajo costo contribuye a que no se conceptualice apropiadamente en las estrategias de país, como si su diseño y su evaluación no requiriera la misma inversión que otras esferas de trabajo. La rotación del personal se consideró un factor de riesgo que puede mitigarse por medio de un mejor enfoque, medición y seguimiento de la labor en la etapa preliminar.

RECOMENDACIONES

Recomendación 1: La División de Políticas y Estrategia de UNICEF tiene que desarrollar un marco a escala de toda la organización para definir, seleccionar, medir e informar sobre los resultados de su labor en la etapa preliminar.



E.37 Dicho marco debe enfocarse en última instancia en el cambio de comportamiento, sin dejar de medir los cambios intermedios en las políticas, la legislación y los procedimientos. No debe estar vinculado a las esferas temáticas específicas, los modelos o los marcos de UNICEF, sino que debe facilitar una selección uniforme de los resultados preliminares a escala de toda la organización, independientemente del enfoque sustantivo de la intervención preliminar. Esto podría facilitar la agregación de los resultados entre los distintos países de una manera que no es posible actualmente, abordando las preocupaciones de los donantes sobre el hecho de que UNICEF no informe sistemáticamente sobre la labor que recibe apoyo de la financiación temática.

Recomendación 2: Es una medida acertada que UNICEF haya incorporado en 2014 un presupuesto multidimensional y códigos de gastos. Sin embargo, la sede de UNICEF debe garantizar que los códigos de intervención genérica en el nuevo sistema de codificación describan clara y ampliamente la labor en la etapa preliminar y estén vinculados con ella.

E.38 El nuevo sistema de codificación incorporado en 2014 permite simultáneamente realizar un seguimiento de los gastos de UNICEF en función de sus objetivos, sus sectores programáticos y sus estrategias de intervención, entre otros. UNICEF puede reforzar aún sus capacidades de seguimiento de la labor en la etapa preliminar, y de medir su eficacia y eficiencia mediante esta labor, garantizando que las estrategias de intervención (o códigos de intervención genérica) ofrezcan una tipología de alto nivel, y al mismo tiempo amplias, de la labor en la etapa preliminar con categorías mutuamente exclusivas, y que las categorías de la labor en la etapa preliminar estén claramente vinculadas a los códigos de planificación, de presupuestación y de presentación de informes. Esto daría como resultado un mejor sistema de información a los donantes de la labor en la etapa preliminar.

Recomendación 3: La sede debe elaborar un sistema de gestión de la financiación común o de fondos de terceros a fin de reforzar la eficacia de la asistencia, incluido el uso de los sistemas nacionales.

E.39 UNICEF asume cada vez menos una función de gestión y de supervisión de la financiación común. Aunque UNICEF está limitado por su situación como organización de las Naciones Unidas y sus procedimientos de gestión financiera, debe esforzarse por elaborar mecanismos que le permitan gestionar fondos en nombre de otros donantes para financiar los programas de educación de país, utilizando al máximo los sistemas nacionales. Esto incluirá elaborar instrumentos de evaluación del riesgo, de límites de decisión, de procesos de decisión y una vía común para la utilización de los sistemas nacionales a fin de que las oficinas de país puedan utilizarlos.

Recomendación 4: El equipo mundial sobre educación de UNICEF debe considerar la solitud de una evaluación mundial de la labor de fortalecimiento del fomento de la capacidad y los sistemas a fin de comprender mejor lo que da resultados, cuándo y cómo.

E.40 Fomentar las capacidades de los sistemas de educación es un elemento de la acción preliminar de UNICEF. El equipo mundial sobre educación de UNICEF debe obtener lecciones de sus experiencias sobre la mejor manera de llevar a cabo esta labor, tanto si se trata de fomento de la capacidad de recursos humanos o de reforzamiento institucional. Una evaluación basada en la teoría del cambio sería el mecanismo apropiado para este tipo de aprendizaje.

Recomendación 5: UNICEF, en el marco de la educación de base y la igualdad entre los géneros, debe redoblar sus esfuerzos para reforzar las capacidades de los equipos nacionales responsables de la educación de la labor en la etapa preliminar. Esto tiene implicaciones a nivel mundial, regional y nacional.



E.41 Esto requiere que la Sección de Educación de la sede ponga en marcha urgentemente una formación oficial sobre aptitudes técnicas y analíticas de la labor en la etapa preliminar, y lleve a cabo una revisión de la descripción actual del puesto de Jefe de Educación, a fin de que se centre en las aptitudes y los requisitos de la labor en la etapa preliminar.

E.42 En un esfuerzo por reforzar la continuidad y mantener las relaciones con respecto a la rotación del personal internacional, los representantes de país deben asegurarse de que todos los puestos clave no queden vacantes al mismo tiempo, y los asesores regionales de educación de UNICEF deben supervisar esta cuestión. Las oficinas de país deben también considerar la idea de nombrar a ciudadanos nacionales para que asuman una función clave en la labor en la etapa preliminar.

E.43 La red de intercambio de conocimientos (Sharepoint) sobre la labor en la etapa preliminar es una medida en el sentido adecuado, pero la Sección de Educación en la sede y a nivel regional deberían considerar una gestión del conocimiento a corto y mediano plazo, así como iniciativas de aprendizaje entre pares que vayan más lejos. Esto podría requerir el apoyo de los equipos de educación a varios países, y la institucionalización de los foros y eventos regionales de aprendizaje de la labor en la etapa preliminar entre pares. Las oficinas regionales deberían nombrar funcionarios suplementarios experimentados en las regiones, que podrían proporcionar un apoyo directo los países a tiempo completo; a medida que UNICEF asume más funciones en el GPE, también podría utilizarse esta capacidad.

E.44 Los cargos superiores de las oficinas de país y el Jefe de Educación debe establecer un presupuesto más explícito en favor de la labor en la etapa preliminar, al mismo tiempo que se refuerzan las capacidades para esta labor. Esto incluye mejorar la colaboración entre los sectores para compartir las experiencias y los recursos necesarios para la labor en la etapa preliminar. En particular, se debería establecer

una cooperación más estrecha entre los consejeros de política social a fin de reforzar las capacidades de los equipos de educación de UNICEF para participar en la elaboración de presupuestos sectoriales.

Recomendación 6: Según la estrategia mundial de UNICEF para la educación de 2007, sería apropiado encontrar un equilibrio entre la labor en la etapa preliminar y posterior a nivel de país. UNICEF debe seguir buscando este equilibrio en la esfera de la educación: las oficinas de país y los equipos encargados de la educación deben seleccionar y vincular la labor en la etapa preliminar y posterior de manera apropiada, según las circunstancias.

E.45 La presencia y la capacidad de UNICEF en la labor posterior en el sector educativo es importante para los fines de eficacia de la labor en la etapa preliminar en la medida en que proporciona la exposición y la capacidad para gestionar y recopilar pruebas empíricas. Son las oficinas de país quienes deben determinar el equilibrio apropiado entre la acción preliminar y posterior, pero el equipo mundial de educación de UNICEF deberá seguir sosteniendo este enfoque, aportando orientaciones estratégicas.

E.46 En los contextos en que no hay una situación de emergencia, la sostenibilidad de la labor general de UNICEF sobre la educación podría alcanzar su máximo valor si todos los trabajos se llevaron a cabo para proporcionar apoyo a la labor en la etapa preliminar, centrándose en los enfoques de puesta a prueba sobre el terreno a fin de presentar a los gobiernos proposiciones de ampliación de escala. Incluso en los contextos de emergencia, los equipos de educación de UNICEF deberían considerar sus respuestas de primera línea como oportunidades para recopilar pruebas empíricas a fin de influir en las políticas y reforzar los sistemas, y de este modo reconstruir mejor. En los países de medianos ingresos, la labor en la etapa preliminar es posiblemente la única que se debería llevar a cabo, dado que los recursos presentan un problema mucho menos importante que en los países de bajos ingresos.



SECTION I

BACKGROUND

This section summarizes the evaluation purpose, scope, methodology and process, and discusses the UNICEF and international context for UNICEF's upstream work in the education sector.



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background and context for UNICEF's upstream work, a definition for upstream work in education, and the evaluation approach.

1.1 UNICEF MANDATE AND STRUCTURE

UNICEF's mandate from the United Nations General Assembly is to "advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential" (UNICEF 2013a). UNICEF is guided in doing this by the provisions and principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), as acknowledged in its mission statement. The mission statement also targeted building developing countries' capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services, and working with partners towards the attainment of sustainable development goals.

Other key guiding documents for UNICEF during the evaluation period were the Millennium Summit Declaration of the General Assembly, containing the Millennium Development Goals, and the Declaration and Plan of Action (A World Fit for Children) adopted by the General Assembly Special Session on Children in 2002 (UNICEF 2005).

Guiding and monitoring all of UNICEF's work is a 36-member Executive Board of government representatives. They establish policies and approve programmes, administrative and financial plans and budgets. Members are elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, usually for three-year terms.

The global leadership of UNICEF shapes global policy for children. Management and administration of UNICEF takes place at Headquarters, which is organized in several divisions including a Division of Policy and Strategy and the Programmes Division. Headquarters prepare global strategic positions that influence the children's rights agenda in country programmes. The medium term strategic plan (MTSP) which was in place for most of the evaluation period is the MTSP 2006–09, which was extended to 2013 (referred to as the MTSP 2006–09 (13) in this document).

UNICEF is however a highly decentralized organization. It has a presence in 190 countries across the globe, and country offices in 155 countries. Country offices are largely autonomous and develop five-year country programmes – including education programmes – on a cycle that is unique to each country. Country programmes are developed in response to country needs, in cooperation with the government and in coordination with other UN agencies. At the beginning of each programme cycle UNICEF undertakes a country situation analysis to assess the country's needs: this analysis is reviewed during the mid-term reviews of country programmes. Country offices set their own staff complement in line with their country programmes, receive funds allocation from the global centre, and raise funds in-country as a supplement (see discussion on financing of UNICEF's education work in Chapter 2).



Regional offices guide and support country level work. UNICEF is organized in seven regions, namely East and Southern Africa (ESARO), East Asia and the Pacific (EAPRO), Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CEE/CIS), Middle East and North Africa (MENARO), South Asia (ROSA), Latin America and the Caribbean (LACRO) and West and Central Africa (WCARO).

1.2 EVALUATION REPORT

This synthesis report of the independent evaluation of UNICEF's upstream work in BEGE examines how UNICEF engaged in education sector policy advocacy, articulation and strengthening between 2003 and 2012 and with what results. The evaluation period is marked by UNICEF adopting an upstream strategy in 2005, for implementation from 2006 onwards. This switch to an explicitly more upstream strategy did not signal a radical adjustment for UNICEF. Much of its work, particularly at the global level, had long been aimed upstream at influencing the policy direction and activities of global actors and states. The key interest for the evaluation, however, is the change in emphasis, how it manifested itself and with what results.

As set out in the Terms of Reference (see Annex 1, in Vol 2):

"It has been several years since UNICEF declared its strategic intent to shift "towards a greater relative emphasis on upstream support to national policy, capacity and partnerships for scaled-up programme delivery"... Country Programmes (CPs) have taken on the challenge of aligning these strategies with national objectives, at least since 2006, and as such an investigation of the usefulness of this approach is warranted. This evaluation aims to assess the extent to which UNICEF has indeed lived up to these MTSP promises, and to identify good practices and lessons learned in relation to its upstream work in education."

Given the strategic nature of the shift, the timing of the evaluation at the start of a new strategic period, and its relevance to all of UNICEF's work across sectors, the evaluation is understood to be important to UNICEF. It is however a challenging evaluation. Evaluating sector policy advocacy and articulation work and efforts at sector strengthening is beset with methodological difficulty, not least because these efforts occur in complex environments with sector impacts that take a long time to manifest themselves and in which many factors are at play. Much of the early phase of the evaluation was therefore focused on agreeing with the UNICEF Evaluation Office a methodology that allows the systematic observation of intermediate results and assessment of UNICEF contributions to these results. This methodology is set out in full in the Note on Approach and Methods provided in Annex 2 (Vol 2), which also reports on how it was implemented.

The main report, however, focuses on setting out the relevant facts and evaluation findings, conclusions, and lessons and recommendations in a way that is accessible to all readers and which is not tied up in the evaluation methodology, apart from the brief outlining of the evaluation objectives, subject and process in the next section of this introductory chapter. The other chapter in Section I covers the international development context (Chapter 2). The rest of the main report is divided into the following parts: Section II looks at UNICEF's upstream work in education, covering global and regional strategy and practice (Chapter 3) and country strategies and programmes (Chapter 4). Section III considers the quality of UNICEF's upstream work, looking in turn at its relevance (Chapter 5), results (Chapter 6), internal coherence (Chapter 7), external coherence (Chapter 8), efficiency and capacity (Chapter 9) and sustainability (Chapter 10). The concluding Section IV provides a summative assessment and lessons learnt (Chapter 11) and recommendations (Chapter 12).



1.3 EVALUATION FEATURES

Evaluation purpose and scope

The Terms of Reference (Annex 1 in Vol 2) describe the purpose of the evaluation as:

“to examine UNICEF’s contribution in “upstream” work in education, to assess the extent to which UNICEF engages strategically in education sector policy articulation and advocacy at the global and regional levels. The evaluation will also determine the extent to which upstream engagement efforts translate to desired transformations in education sector policy and practice, and national systemic strengthening in programme countries”

The evaluation is descriptive, with the aim of providing an account of UNICEF's upstream work in education at the global, regional and country levels. It is also analytical insofar as it assesses the degree to which UNICEF's engagement contributed to desired results – namely, changes in education sector policy and practice and strengthening of national education systems – and the quality of its upstream engagement using the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, and an additional ‘coherence’ criterion. The relationship between UNICEF's upstream engagement and country education outcomes as such fell outside of the scope of the evaluation.

Within this overall scope, the UNICEF Evaluation Office identified six evaluation themes, or areas in which UNICEF was particularly interested in findings, conclusions and lessons learnt. As set out in Table 2 of the TOR, these are *Shared Definition; UNICEF positioning; Building back better; External partnerships; UNICEF-wide collaboration; and Capacity*. Appendix 1 sets out the associated objectives and key questions posed under each theme and indicates where these are addressed in the main text.

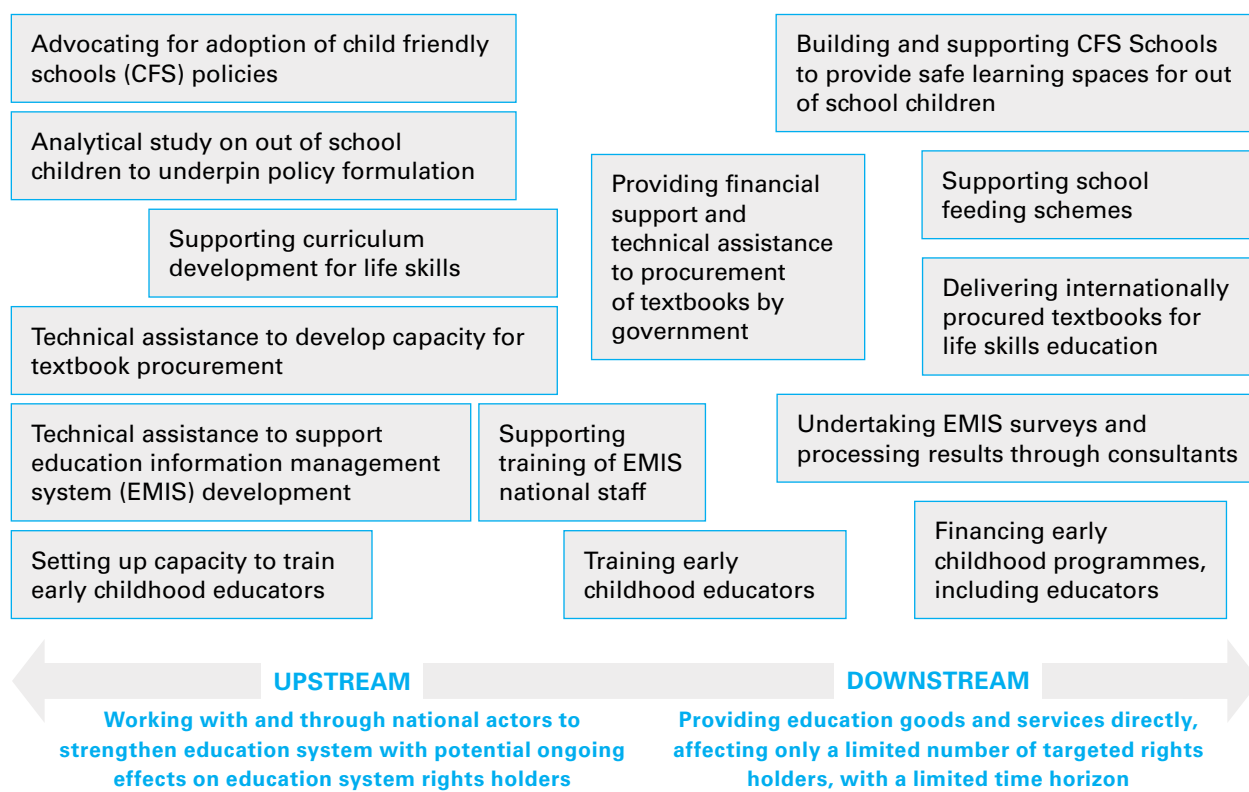
Defining upstream engagement

Although the TOR did not prescribe a definition of upstream work in education, it did provide perspectives on what UNICEF considers to be upstream engagement. This includes advocacy efforts and support for policy development, including through: evidence-based policy dialogue; setting a global education policy agenda and leveraging resources for education; facilitating national coordination of policy dialogue with government's external partners; work on allocation and management of budgets; strengthening national capacities for education management; facilitating participatory processes for national dialogue and consensus building; providing exposure to the most recent information, thinking, technologies and experiences of the international community; supporting the collection of data and evidence on education; and piloting innovative approaches for scaling up.

Inherent to the notion of upstream work is its distinction from downstream work. In order to help make this distinction consistently and provide a benchmark by which to identify upstream work, the evaluation adopted a formal definition of upstream engagement as

“UNICEF activities which were intended to have or had a system-wide, sustainable effect on the national capacities of public sector duty bearers in the basic education sector for fulfilling children’s rights, directly or indirectly.”

The rationale for this definition is set out in Annex 2. In essence, the distinction hinges on whether UNICEF works through and with national actors to strengthen the education system with potential ongoing effects on all education rights holders, or delivers education goods and services itself to only a targeted few rights holders, with a limited time horizon. In practice there is no clear dividing line between upstream and downstream work. Rather, it is a continuum, with some activities that are clearly upstream and others that are clearly downstream, but with many activities that fall somewhere in between. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1****Upstream versus downstream work in the education sector**

In terms of this definition all of UNICEF's global engagement in the education sector is upstream, as are its in-country engagements in donor coordination and education sector dialogues, which are indirectly aimed at working through and with national partners. The definition also encompasses the TOR's reference to results in *"education system education sector policy and practice, and national systemic strengthening in programme countries"*. For the purposes of the evaluation the latter was deemed to refer to capacity building, including both human resource strengthening and strengthening underlying systems and institutions.

Evaluation methodology and instruments

The evaluation utilized a theory of change and outcome mapping, coupled with contribution

analysis to gather and assess evidence on the results achieved by UNICEF's upstream work.

The theory of change allowed the mapping of contextual factors; UNICEF's upstream inputs (such as staff, training, strategy and monitoring) and outputs (such as advocacy, analytical work, piloting and participation in partnership processes); and observable "intermediate outcomes", or changes in the relationships, commitments, actions and behaviour of actors in education systems. It allowed the evaluation team to pose and test assumptions about how UNICEF's inputs and outputs could result in these desired changes.

To systematize these changes, the evaluation used a typology of the results of policy work set out in Jones (2011) to categorize observed changes into five types. These are:



- *Attitudinal change* – framing debates and getting issues on to the political agenda;
- *Discursive commitments* – changed rhetoric from states / policy actors;
- *Procedural change* – changes in the process whereby policy decisions are made;
- *Changed policy content* – such as legislative change, changes in formally adopted policies or changed budgetary commitments; and
- *Behavioural change* – such as changes in actual expenditure and the actual implementation of policies.

It is useful that there is an obvious hierarchy between these types of results, as it allowed the evaluation to rank the effectiveness of different UNICEF upstream interventions.

The evaluation used contribution analysis to assess the contribution of UNICEF inputs and outputs to these upstream results, if observed.

The evaluation team was guided in its work by an evaluation framework which turned the theory of change into a set of evaluation questions linked to the evaluation criteria. The evaluation framework questions incorporated the six UNICEF evaluation themes. The theory of change and evaluation framework are provided in Annex 2, together with a discussion of the contribution analysis approach utilized.

Evaluation process

The evaluation collected data in three phases. The inception phase developed a description of upstream work and a detailed methodology; the fieldwork phase comprised further collection of evidence at the global and regional levels, and four in-depth country case studies; and the analysis and review phase included a survey to test the fieldwork findings. Box 1 sets out the evidence base in more detail. A full discussion of the evaluation process is provided in the Note on Approach and Methods (Annex 2), while Annex 3 provides a summary of the survey data and results.

BOX 1

Evidence base

Inception Phase

- UNICEF primary and available secondary documentation (such as existing studies, reviews and evaluations) for 14 countries (Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Malaysia, Morocco, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Togo, Turkey, Zambia and Zimbabwe), two per UNICEF region.
- Primary and available secondary documentation for UNICEF's seven administrative regions.
- Global UNICEF primary and available secondary documentation.

Fieldwork phase

- In depth primary and secondary documentary, primary data and primary interview evidence for the four country case studies (Afghanistan, Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe).
- Primary interviews with UNICEF staff in the ROSA region, as well as primary interviews with Regional Education Advisors in a further five regions.
- Primary interviews with UNICEF global respondents (UNICEF leadership; global education sector staff; selected staff from other sectors; selected ex-UNICEF staff), as well as selected UNICEF global partners and stakeholders.

Analysis and review phase

A modified Delphi survey conducted to test the generalisability of findings from the case study countries. The survey included UNICEF and non-UNICEF, and global, regional and country level respondents. The UNICEF respondents comprised BEGE, country leadership and staff from the Social Policy section.



CHAPTER 2

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

This chapter, drawing from Annex 4, describes the aid context and a chronology of notable events in international development and the education sectors and in UNICEF education over the evaluation period.

2.1 OVERALL INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

Global development goals and focuses

In the early 1990s a dialogue started which led to the UN Millennium Declaration (2000) and the subsequent adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs provided an overarching agenda across sectors with guidance for governments on the setting of national strategic priorities and standards. They also galvanized the coordination of development partner efforts.

From 2007 many donors re-orientated their programmes to support fragile states, triggered by the realization that in education, as in other sectors, the populations of conflict-affected or fragile states were lagging in the achievement of development goals (see Collier 2007; Zoellick 2008; World Bank 2011).

Aid effectiveness

Another key development during the 2000s has been the greater importance placed on aid effectiveness, following on progress made with Sector Wide Approaches (SWAs) and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) during the 1990s and early 2000s. The aid effectiveness movement, expressed through a series of High Level Forums and joint commitments

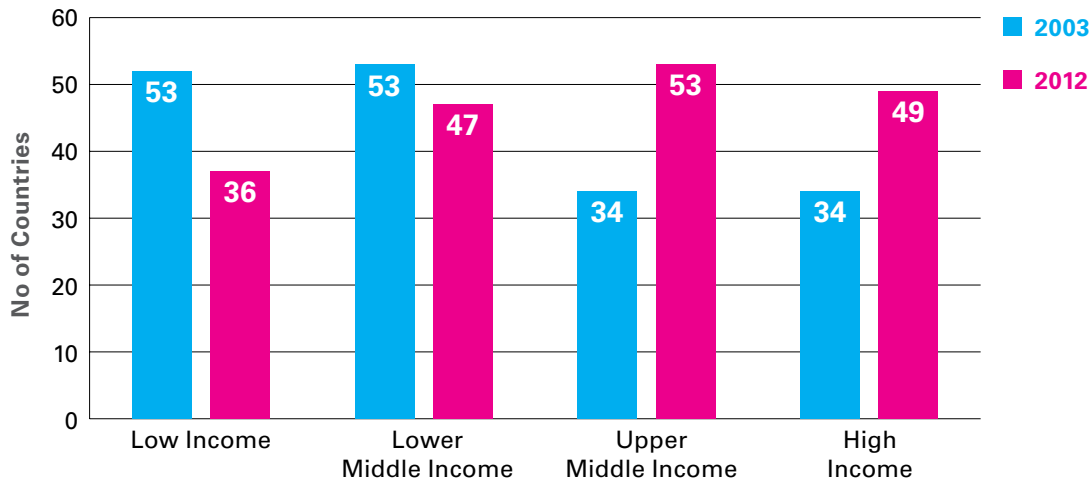
by development partners and partner countries between 2002 and 2011, underlined the importance of national ownership, the need for harmonized support by development partners and a sharpened focus on development results. Key aspects were the harmonization and alignment of development assistance around national policies and strategies, and the use of country systems to deliver assistance.

In keeping with the aid effectiveness agenda, a series of reform initiatives have been put in place in the UN family over the last decade to try to improve the ability of agencies to work together coherently and effectively with national governments.

Global growth and financial crisis

The effect of global growth on developing countries in the early part of the evaluation period and the effect of the economic crisis on traditional bilateral support in the latter part of the period provide further key context factors for UNICEF's upstream work in education.

Between 2003 and 2012, about a third of the countries with 'UNICEF presence' moved upwards in their income classification (comparing World Bank classification and adjusting for the 2012 change in classification parameters). Figure 2 illustrates the shift.

**FIGURE 2** Income classification of UNICEF countries (2003–2012)

Source: World Bank 2013 and UNICEF 2013b (Note that 12 countries were classified with income status “unknown” in 2003.)

2.2 INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SECTOR CONTEXT

Global education priorities

The global priorities for education up to 2015 were set out in 2000 in the education-related MDGs and the six Education for All (EFA) goals. They have dominated global education coordination forums and initiatives over the evaluation period, and relate to access to primary education, the elimination of gender disparities in primary and secondary education, expanding and improving early childhood education, meeting the learning needs of young people and adults through adult literacy and life skills education, and improving education quality. At the start of the evaluation period the EFA access and gender parity goals were privileged through their direct relation to the education MDGs. Over the evaluation period equity came into focus, with equality and an emphasis on learning outcomes following towards the end of the period.

From 2007, reflecting the shift in development thinking overall, improving education in fragile states became a focus in the education sector, overlaying the MDGs and EFA goals. Linked

to this, education has become a key focal area for emergency situations (see EFA 2011, p. 3) spawning several new partnerships, with a general acceptance that a focus on education will promote peace-building and conflict mitigation and foster economic growth.

Global education partnerships

The global basic education sector is marked by a number of key partnerships.

- The Education for All (EFA) movement, which was launched by UNESCO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and the World Bank, is built around the EFA goals and led by UNESCO. EFA works on dialogue and partnership, mobilization of resources, ensuring the effective use of aid, capacity capacity building, and monitoring progress (UNESCO 2006).
- The FastTrack Initiative (FTI) was launched in 2002 to help finance education sector plans endorsed by FTI, related to the achievement of the EFA goals. FTI was a multi-partner initiative managed by the World Bank.



- Following the mid-term review in 2009/10 of FTI, it was reconstituted as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), operating at the global and country level. At country level Local Education Groups form the foundation of the partnership's governance. At the global level it is managed by a Board of Directors, supported by a professional Secretariat. The GPE Fund was launched in 2011 and provides grants at the country level to develop education sector plans, develop programmes to achieve EFA goals for financing by the GPE fund, and support implementation of such programmes.
- UNAIDS Interagency Task Team on Education, the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative (UNGEI) are key sub-sector partnerships. UNGEI was launched in 2000 and includes UNICEF (tasked with leading and coordinating it), several other UN agencies, the World Bank, bilateral donors, national and local governments, ministries of education, grass-roots organizations, and local and international NGOs. The partnership provides technical support and promotes policy dialogue and advocacy on gender parity.

The education in emergencies sector is organized at the global and country level through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Education Cluster, or the Global Education Cluster. It was established in 2007 with UNICEF as the co-lead together with the Save the Children Alliance; they share responsibility for convening the cluster at country level in emergencies. The establishment of the cluster positioned education as part of emergency responses, something that had previously been considered non-essential. Since 2007, efforts have been made at the global level to develop tools, streamline knowledge management, and build capacity to facilitate inter-agency coordination, collaboration and accountability at the national level. Other partnerships and joint initiatives in the education in emergencies

sector include the International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), a network of individual members from government, civil society and donors, and the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA), formed in 2010 to address the problem of targeted attacks on education during armed conflict.

A number of further partnerships and joint initiatives emerged towards the end of the evaluation period.

- The Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) is not a partnership as such, but an initiative or campaign launched by the United Nations Secretary General to raise awareness in the global debate of education as an issue and to provide an umbrella forum which utilizes the convening power of the office of the UN Secretary General to coordinate efforts and align interventions in the sector.
- The Learning Metrics Taskforce was formed in 2012 to work towards EFA goal 6 by focusing on measuring learning at the global and national levels and by seeking to build global consensus. The task force is led by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics and the Brookings Institution.
- In 2012 the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which is co-led by UNICEF and UNESCO, arose out of the process laid out for the post-2015 Development Agenda under the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons which was convened in 2012. Its purpose is to look for consensus on reflecting education in a post-2015 framework through discussion and to develop ideas on the measurement of progress towards greater education quality and equity.

While these global partnerships are well aligned with the aid effectiveness agenda, at the country level progress in coordination, harmonization and division of labour has been slower (GPE 2012).



UNICEF Education programme

UNICEF is a key player in the education sector at the global level, together with the World Bank and UNESCO, with which it partners in many of the global education partnerships.

Basic education and gender equality (BEGE) is the term used to designate UNICEF's education programme at global, regional and country level and is derived from the MTSP 2006–09(13), in which it is one of five strategic focus areas. The Global Education team, led by a global Chief of Education who is supported by a number of education advisers, develops UNICEF's global education strategy, engages education stakeholders at the global level, and manages UNICEF's global education programme (see Chapter 3). Countries set their own education programmes in response to country needs. Not all countries have equal education programmes: currently UNICEF undertakes education work in 156 countries and has education chiefs or education focal points in 59 countries. Each region has a regional education adviser who supports the country education programme teams in the region in addition to managing

a regional education programme, including regional initiatives and studies.

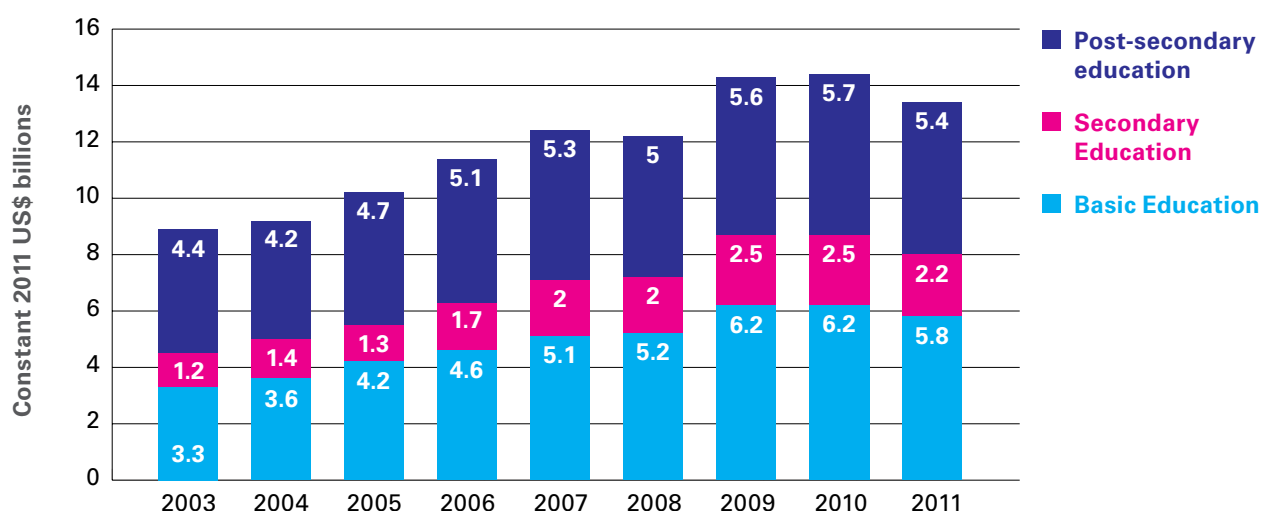
Key questions for the evaluation are in what way UNICEF has translated the strategic shift to upstream work into its education programmes at the country level, and how well these strategies are being implemented.

Global finance for education

Global funding to education over the evaluation period has shown a slow increase (see Figure 3). However, as highlighted in the 2013/14 EFA Global Monitoring Report (GMR 2014) levels peaked in 2010 and are now falling, with a decline of 7 per cent (USD1 billion) between 2010 and 2011. This is mirrored in the basic education sub-sector, which saw ODA falling for the first time over the evaluation period, from USD6.2 billion to USD5.8 billion, a real contraction of 6 per cent (ibid).

In the humanitarian sphere, evidence suggests that funding for education is also being squeezed out. Despite the high prevalence of

FIGURE 3 Total ODA to Education and Basic Education 2003–2011



Source: GMR, 2014



out-of-school children in conflict-affected countries, the share of humanitarian resources going to education was 1.4 per cent in 2012, compared to 2.2 per cent in 2009 (ibid).

The GMR reports that low-income countries are bearing the brunt of these recent reductions, witnessing a larger decrease than middle-income countries. 19 low-income countries registered a fall in aid to basic education between 2010 and 2011, with a 9 per cent reduction for the group overall from USD2.05 billion to USD1.86 billion (ibid).

Evidence suggests that aid to basic education in low-income countries is falling not just because of an overall decline in levels of aid due to the recent economic downturn but also because a number of significant donors are no longer prioritizing aid to basic education. Between 2010 and 2011, 21 bilateral and multilateral donors reduced their aid disbursements to basic education (ibid). Notable in this group were the USA, the Netherlands and the EU. In the main, these cuts were part of an overall reduction in aid to low-income countries. In some cases, they have stemmed from an active prioritization of those sectors which are considered to contribute more directly to national foreign policy priorities which has resulted in a fall in the share going to basic education.

Whilst one-year fluctuations in aid flows are not uncommon (if still damaging, in terms of undermining predictability and medium-term planning), the GMR forecasts that the trend will continue beyond this, with further reductions in aid to education likely in the coming years. The GMR's review of pledges and planned budget cuts for the main bilateral and multilateral education funders indicates that many are expected to reduce their aid further in coming years, and as such "there is no sign that overall aid will stop declining before the 2015 deadline

for the education [for all] goals is reached" (GMR, 2014, p.131).

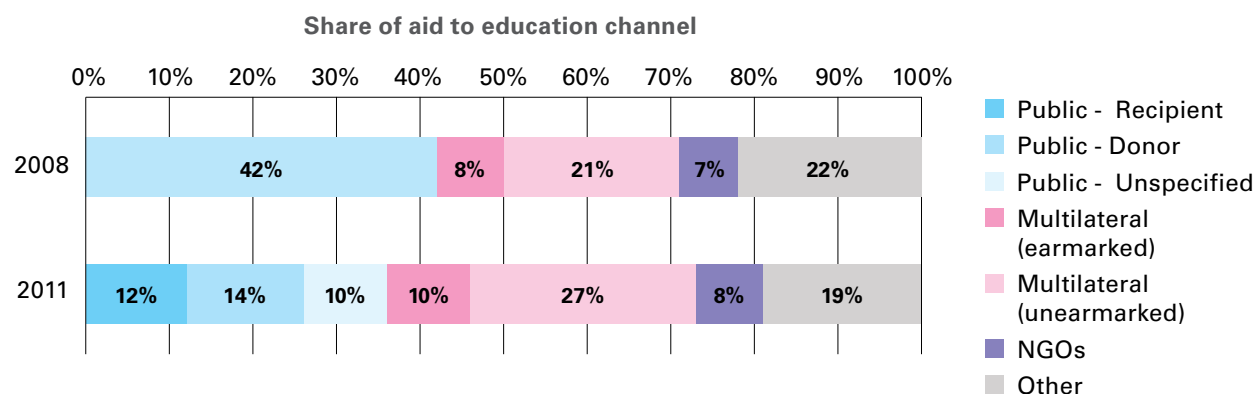
The overall picture of how aid is delivered has also changed fairly significantly over the evaluation period. The call for greater use of government systems to enhance country leadership and implementation did yield some early results. However, evidence presented in a recent GMR policy paper (GMR, 2013) suggests that donors may be moving away from such approaches and back towards project-based support because of a growing importance attached to demonstrating results that can be attributed directly to their inputs. As demonstrated in Figure 4, between 2008 and 2011 the share of total aid to education by DAC donors disbursed through the public sector fell from 42 per cent to 36 per cent.⁹

In part related to the trend away from using host government systems, there has been significant growth in the volume of bilateral aid to education channelled through multilaterals, reflecting their increasingly important role. In particular, unearmarked funds to multilaterals have grown to represent 27 per cent of total education aid in 2011 (see Figure 4). This has been driven by a number of significant donors to education substantially increasing the share of contributions to multilaterals over recently years, notably Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States (ibid).

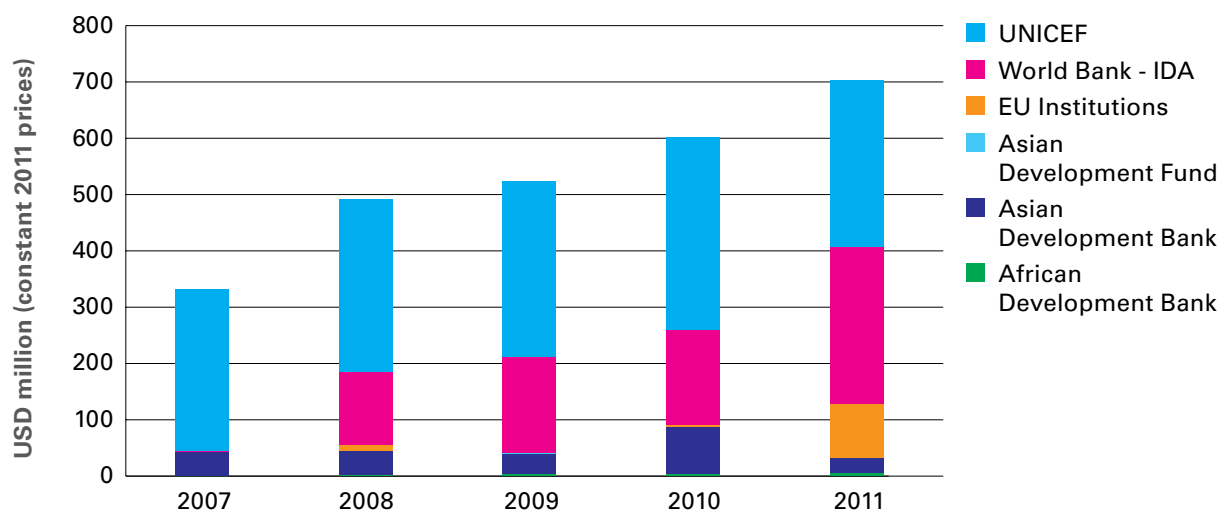
Whilst the growth of unearmarked funds for education channelled through multilaterals has outstripped that of earmarked funds,¹⁰ both have increased, and for UNICEF earmarked funds are of greater significance. In addition to the USD58 million of un-earmarked aid to basic education, UNICEF managed USD295.8 million of earmarked education funding from bilateral donors in 2011 (GMR2013). It is consistently the largest recipient of this type of funding

⁹ Note: In 2008, aid channelled through the public sector cannot be disaggregated between recipient or donor government channels; therefore, it is all classified as unspecified.

¹⁰ Earmarked funds channelled through multilaterals are categorized as bilateral aid under OECD-DAC definitions.

**FIGURE 4** Distribution of bilateral aid to education by channel, 2008 and 2011

Source: GMR 2013

FIGURE 5 Earmarked bilateral aid to education channelled through multilaterals, 2007–2011

Source: GMR 2013

(see Figure 5) although its dominance may be waning as the World Bank and, more recently, EU institutions receive a growing share.

The FTI and its successor the GPE emerged during the evaluation period as funding sources. Unlike what has happened with other key funding institutions, basic education funding from the GPE has increased in recent years,

reaching a record high of USD385 million in 2011. Critically, the GPE has emerged as an important source of financing for low-income and lower-middle-income countries, where it is the fourth largest donor. In the 31 countries with a programme implementation grant in 2011, 24 per cent of basic education aid was disbursed by the GPE (GMR 2014).



Domestic spending on education

Whilst donor countries' budgets for education aid have suffered under the economic downturn, domestic spending on education particularly in low- and lower-middle-income countries has increased in recent years (GMR, 2014). This can in part be attributed to growth rates in these countries, which have tended to fare better than DAC countries. As demonstrated in Table 1, domestic spending on education has increased both in absolute terms and relative to other spending priorities.

The growth in host governments' domestic spending on education is relevant to UNICEF not only because it reflects potential growth in host government contributions to UNICEF-implemented programmes but also because growth in education budgets strengthens the need and rationale for upstream work to influence how the funds are spent and help inform the policies and programmes they support.

UNICEF funding for BEGE

Figure 6 provide s a simplified diagrammatic representation of the channels of UNICEF funding for basic education and gender equality. At the first level of distinction, UNICEF's revenues are split into two types: Regular Resources (RR),

which are unrestricted, and Other Resources (OR), which are earmarked to varying degrees.

Regular Resources are sourced globally at a corporate level and through cost-recovery charges applied to programme-specific funding agreements. As they can be used for any purpose (including management and administration), they provide UNICEF with maximum flexibility in use, and can be shifted towards areas of priority or to fill gaps. The BEGE work stream is a consistent and significant recipient of financing from the Regular Resources pool; in 2012, 19 per cent of the entire RR envelope went to BEGE (UNICEF, 2012).

In contrast to Regular Resources, **Other Resources** are subject to varying degrees of earmarking. In terms of end purpose, OR support both UNICEF's emergency work (ORE) and non-emergency or "regular" work (ORR). BEGE is financed through both ORE and ORR channels.

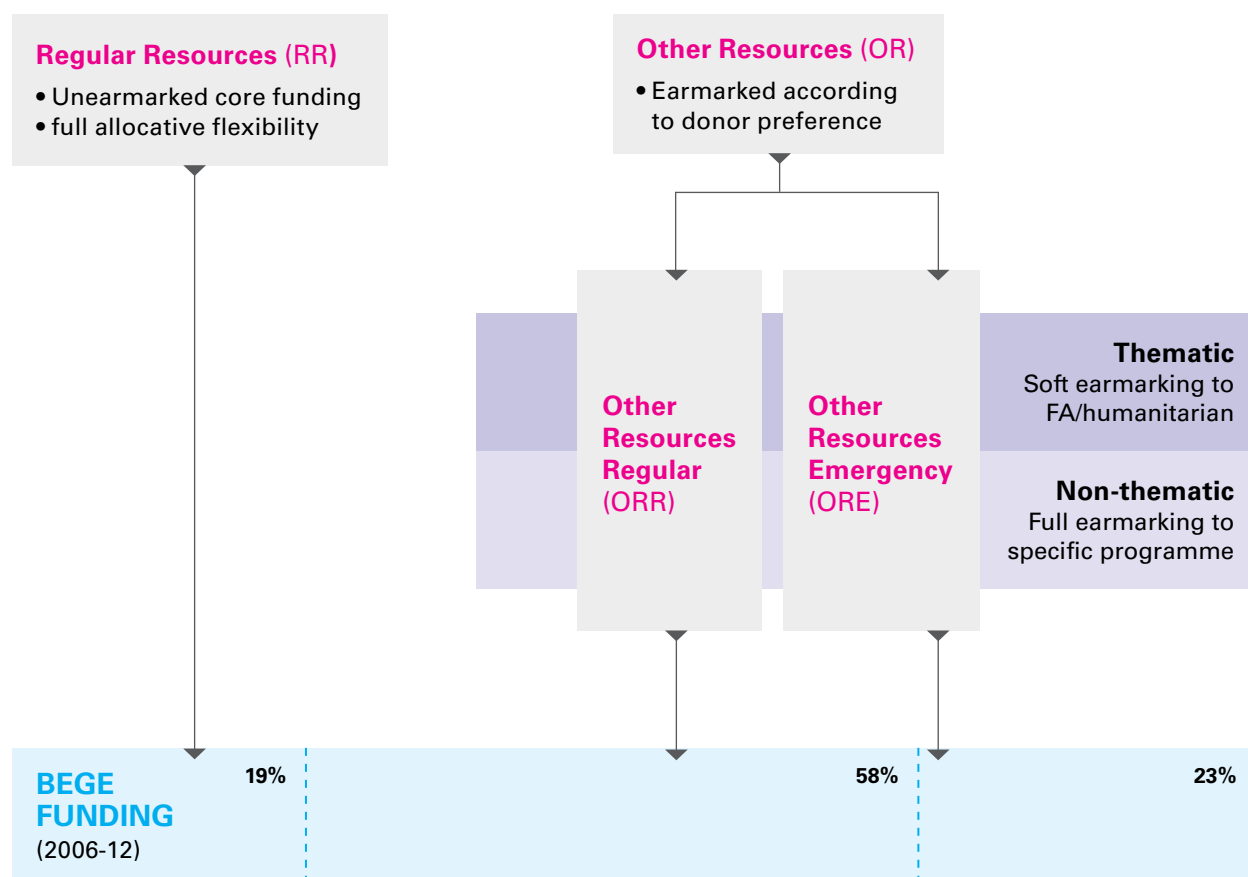
The degree of earmarking of Other Resources is dependent on whether funding is "thematic" or "non-thematic". **Thematic** OR are the second most flexible revenue stream for UNICEF. First introduced in 2003 (UNICEF 2004c), thematic funds are "soft-earmarked" by donor partners to any of the five focus areas of the MTSP 2006–09(13)¹¹ or to humanitarian response, at global,

TABLE 1 Public spending on education by region

Region	Public spending on education					
	% GNP		% of government expenditure on education		Per capita spend on primary education	
	1999	2011	1999	2011	1999	2011
World	4.6	5.1	15	15.5	2149	3089
Low income	3.1	4.1	16.4	18.3	102	115
Lower middle income	4.6	5.1	15.9	16.9	356	545
Upper middle income	4.8	5.1	15.8	15.5	1117	1745
High income	5.3	5.6	13.3	13.2	4752	6721

Source: GMR, 2014

¹¹ Or to the five key organizational priorities of the MTSP 2002–05 prior to 2006.

FIGURE 6 UNICEF funding for BEGE


regional or country level. Within these specifications, UNICEF has the flexibility to allocate resources on a needs basis. Contributions from all donors to a thematic area are combined into one pooled fund account, and a single consolidated narrative and financial reporting is provided which is the same for all donors, reducing administrative costs. **Non-thematic** OR are earmarked more tightly than their thematic equivalent, usually to the level of a specific programme or project. They are, therefore, the least flexible pool of funding available to UNICEF, and are usually generated in the form of country-level programme agreements.

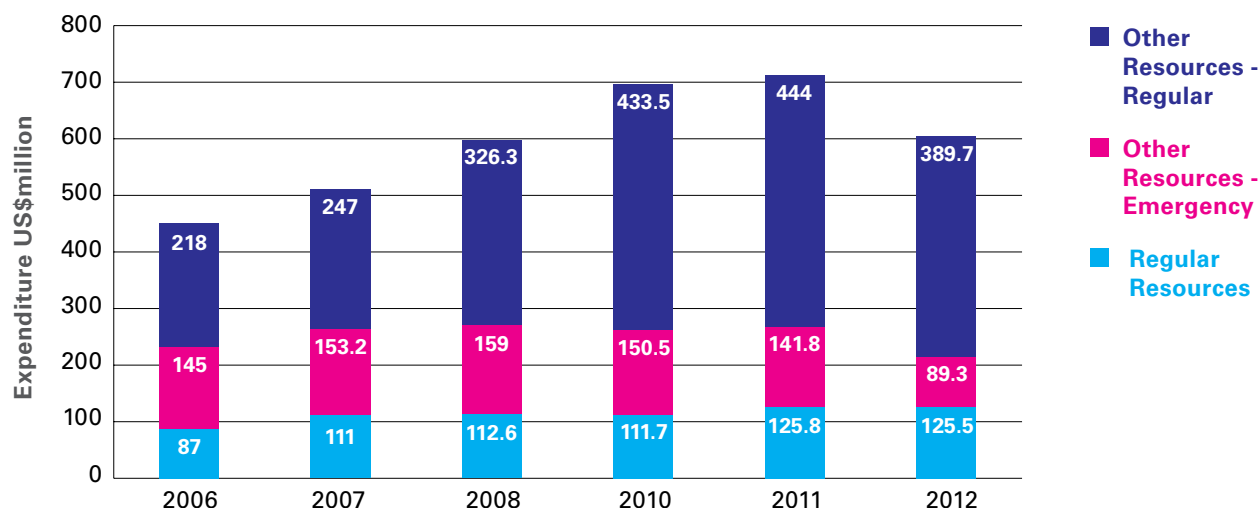
Figure 7 shows the financing of BEGE through the combination of Regular Resources and Other

Resources (OR-Regular and OR-Emergency, Thematic and Non-thematic). Since the BEGE focus area was first introduced in 2006, funding for it has risen significantly from USD 450 million to USD 605 million in 2012, a nominal increase of 34 per cent. However, the peak to date came in 2011, when BEGE funding reached USD 712 million, which was followed by a fall of 15 per cent between 2011 and 2012.

As illustrated in the bottom bar of Figure 6, the Other Resources pool is the primary source of financing for BEGE, accounting for 81 per cent of funding between 2006 and 2012. In particular, OR-Regular contributed on average 58 per cent of BEGE funds over the period.



FIGURE 7 Composition of BEGE funding 2006–2012

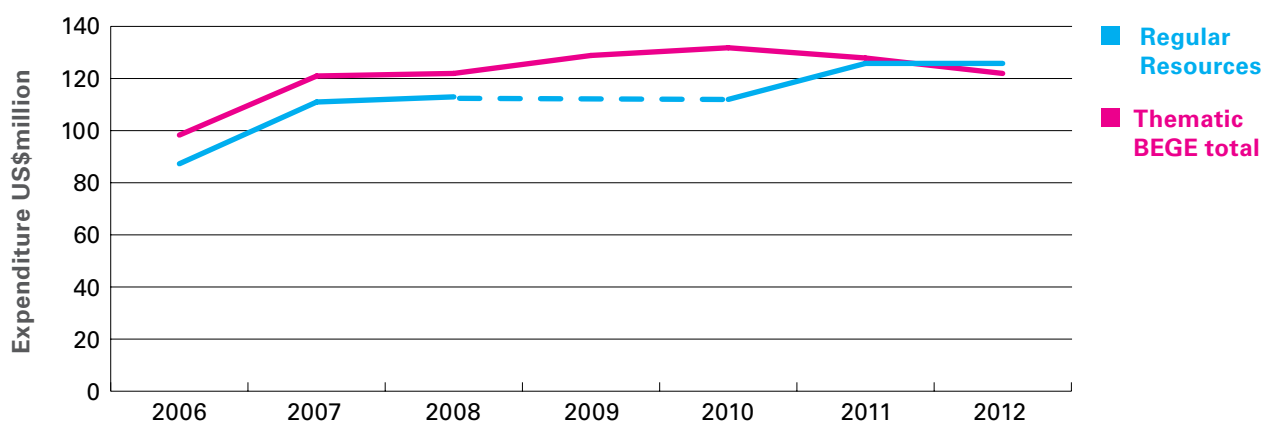


Source: BEGE Thematic Reports 2006–2008, 2010–2012. 2009 not available.

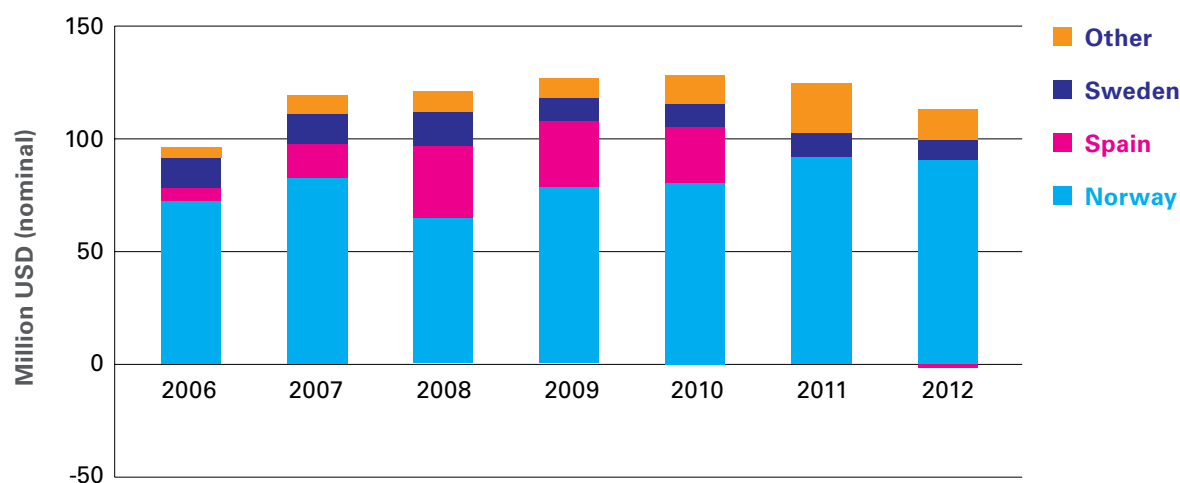
Flexible funding, such as thematic funds and Regular Resources, is an important financing stream for UNICEF's upstream work in education.¹² However, between 2006 and 2012, Thematic OR and Regular Resources accounted for only 24 per cent and 19 per cent of BEGE

funding respectively. Furthermore, as demonstrated by Figure 7, thematic funding for BEGE peaked in 2010 but has fallen since, and growth in Regular Resources has stalled since 2011, reducing it as a proportion of overall UNICEF income.

FIGURE 8 Regular Resources and Thematic Other Resources for BEGE 2006–2012



Source: UNICEF Annual Reports 2006–2012, BEGE Thematic Reports 2006–2008, 2010–2012 (2009 not available) This is consistent with a general trend affecting UNICEF finances as a whole. Thematic funding increased from USD25.5 million in 2003 to USD198 million in 2012. However, it has been in decline since 2010, when it reached USD241 million. As a percentage of total Other Resources Regular income (i.e. non-emergency), Thematic Funding only represents approximately 7–11 per cent – the balance being tied to specific programmes. UNICEF sees this as a worrying trend, as stated in its 'Main Donors Compendium of Contribution 2012' document (UNICEF 2012a).

FIGURE 9
BEGE thematic funding 2006–2012 (volume and contributions)


Source: UNICEF Education Section 2013. The negative amount from Spain in 2012 is due to adjustments to contributions from prior years.

Within the global thematic funding pool, BEGE has consistently been the best-funded focus area. From 2006 onwards, the BEGE focus area attracted on average 60 per cent of total thematic (non-emergency) income, peaking at 69 per cent in 2012. In line with overall Thematic Funding, however, and with the withdrawal of Spain as a contributor, it has been in decline since 2010, as illustrated by Figure 9.

Since 2006, the Norwegian Government has given the most funding to the BEGE focus area by means of thematic funds, contributing USD561 million between 2006 and 2012, or 68 per cent of funding. In 2012, after the withdrawal

of Spain as a thematic funder, Norway's contribution was over 80 per cent of thematic funds. Over 2006 to 2012 Norway was followed by Spain, Sweden, the Korean Committee for UNICEF and Brazil as significant contributors to BEGE thematic funds. The contribution by national committees to thematic funding for BEGE has shown an upward trend over the period, from 2 per cent in 2006 to 5 per cent in 2012.

The use of BEGE thematic funding, and trends in expenditure on upstream work in education in particular, is discussed in Chapter 3.

¹² However, it is not the only source: specific programmes such as the Government of Netherlands funding for education in emergencies and peacebuilding can be significantly upstream in their aims and activities.



SECTION II

UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

This section provides a description of UNICEF's global, regional and country level upstream work, discussing how it was framed in UNICEF strategies, and its scope and trends over the evaluation period.



CHAPTER 3

GLOBAL AND REGIONAL STRATEGY AND PRACTICE IN UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

3.1 UPSTREAM WORK IN UNICEF GLOBAL STRATEGIC DOCUMENTATION

Upstream work was mainstreamed for the first time as a UNICEF strategic organizational focus in MTSP 2006–09(13). This mainstreaming was a result of a gradual change process involving organizational repositioning. However, over the evaluation period UNICEF's strategy for upstream engagement became more focussed and nuanced, as reflected in successive MTSPs.

Targeting upstream work overall

The intention to move to upstream work as a key component of organizational strategy was articulated in the introductory paragraphs of MTSP 2006–09(13). These paragraphs placed *“continued support for building national capacities to fulfil children's rights, with increased emphasis on strengthening policy frameworks, service delivery and protection systems and institutions”* and *“systematic efforts to leverage additional resources and results for children through advocacy and partnerships and by generating evidence to inform decision-making”* at the centre of UNICEF's work to make a difference for children (UNICEF 2005, p. 6).

The MTSP commits UNICEF to *“substantially increase its emphasis ... on working as part of the UNCTs [United Nations Country Teams] and with other partners in support of national capacity building, policy development and scaled-up implementation.”* This was to include technical assistance and support to national partners across all focus areas in:

- Accelerating child-related programmes and investments to reach the MDGs;
- Setting standards and policy, legislative, regulatory and administrative reforms;
- Monitoring and reporting on achievements at different levels;
- Supporting emergency preparedness and response and post-emergency transition; and
- Facilitating policy dialogue and exchange. (UNICEF 2005, pp. 10, 11).

This commitment was manifested in the inclusion of the new cross-cutting theme (Focus Area 5: Policy advocacy and partnerships for children's rights) in the MTSP, and in specific strategies and targets within the sector-oriented focus areas, of which BEGE was one.

Whilst MTSP 2006–09 marks a watershed in terms of an explicit, formalized shift in focus to upstream work for UNICEF, the previous MTSP (2002–05) had already targeted upstream activities (UNICEF 2004b), listing alliances, partnerships, advocacy, monitoring, research and policy analysis at all levels as key strategies to influence actors for children, including national governments (UNICEF 2001b, p. 8).

The mid-term review of MTSP 2002–05 was instrumental in recognizing the need for UNICEF not only to become more involved upstream and to become more specific with its upstream support, but also to formalize its approach to upstream work. Specifically, it noted greater involvement in support to social and economic policy formulation as an area for expansion of the existing business of UNICEF, for example

- National strategic planning and poverty reduction frameworks;



“seeking to influence budgetary trends based on cogent arguments for investing in children” (UNICEF 2004b, p. 27).

Targeting upstream work in education in UNICEF’s organizational MTSPs

MTSP 2002–05 focused specifically on girls’ education as one of the five overall MTSP priority goals for the period. Key results targeted were the number of countries that had policies and practices in place to reduce the numbers of out-of-school girls and promote quality learning in child-friendly, gender-sensitive schools; and the number of countries that identified learning outcomes and built capacity towards ensuring gender parity in achievement in basic education. The interventions planned to achieve these goals included advocacy of girls’ education and gender sensitization of education systems and personnel; policy analysis, technical and policy assistance to governments; capacity building; strengthening of partnerships; support for countries in inter-sectoral programmes for basic education; and partnership at all levels.

The mid-term review of MTSP 2002–2005 (UNICEF 2004b) recognized the results that UNICEF had achieved through upstream engagement and noted donor confidence in UNICEF’s capacity to act as lead agency in the girls’ education sector. The review called for the strengthening of UNICEF’s engagement in education sector reform programmes. The review’s recommendations were taken up in MTSP 2006–09 and its extensions in which upstream work was even more explicitly targeted, for example, through BEGE key result areas (KRAs):

- KRA 1 (School readiness): Increase number of countries with quality standards for monitoring school readiness as a component of developmental school readiness from 51 (the number reached in 2009) to 80.
- KRA 2 (Equitable access): The number of countries with education sector plans that aim to reduce gender and other disparities as an indicator to achieve the gender parity organizational target.

- KRA 3 (Education quality): An increase to 60 per cent of the proportion of programme countries with national quality standards for primary education based on ‘child-friendly schools’ (CFS) or similar models.
- KRA 4 (Education in emergencies): Promoting and supporting emergency preparedness planning and the development of appropriate policies, including disaster risk reduction; and promoting standards for safe and child-friendly schools as part of disaster risk reduction and post-crisis reconstruction.

Annex 5 (Vol 2) provides more detail on how upstream work in education was targeted and on the associated proposed measures in MTSP 2006–09(13).

Upstream work in UNICEF’s Education Strategy

The 2007 UNICEF Education Strategy provides further insight into the articulation of the upstream shift in education through strategic planning (UNICEF 2007). This strategy was in place for the remainder of the evaluation period with a new strategy being developed at the time of the evaluation. The strategy identified principles and themes and laid out strategies against the principles, many of which were clearly upstream in intent. These included: proposing to work through national frameworks; using key global partnerships at the country level; and emphasizing value-added and evidence-based contributions, using evidence from UNICEF activities to influence national policies.

Of interest to the evaluation is the mix of ‘upstream engagement’ support measures proposed and more traditional service delivery and project-based downstream measures. While upstream measures feature significantly, more downstream measures are still targeted to meet the needs of specific excluded or vulnerable groups. For example, while the equal access and universal primary completion priority theme targets the establishment of Child-Friendly School standards, it also mandates



education teams to provide multiple services to children in schools. While measures appear to be located across a spectrum of upstream to downstream work, it is noteworthy that in some areas of support the balance of measures still appears to be more downstream, e.g., in the early childhood development and school readiness cross-cutting area.

3.2 UNICEF'S GLOBAL AND REGIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

By definition, UNICEF's global and regional education programmatic activities are upstream: they do not involve the direct delivery of education goods and services but involve engagement in partnerships and activities directed at influencing global, regional and national education policies and systems.

UNICEF global upstream work in education

At the Headquarters level the UNICEF education team undertakes two related types of programmatic activities, besides providing technical and management support to regions and countries. These are: participating in the global education partnerships' global activities; and developing approaches, models and frameworks to promote children's rights in the education sector at the country level.

UNICEF HQ participation in global partnerships

Over the evaluation period UNICEF became increasingly involved in the key global education partnerships in the following ways:

- *Providing a leadership role:* UNICEF leads UNGEI and co-leads the Global Education Cluster (the formation of which it proposed to the IASC in 2007). UNICEF sat on the FTI Strategy Committee from 2005, and now occupies one of three multilateral seats on the GPE Board of Directors. Between August 2013 and February 2014 the GPE acting chair was a UNICEF Deputy Executive Director.

UNICEF's Executive Director is a member of the GEFI Steering Committee, formed in 2012. UNICEF is also on the governing structures of INEE and GCPEA. Since 2012 UNICEF has co-led the post-2015 Global Thematic Consultation on Education with UNESCO.

- *As a convening partner or partner:* UNICEF is a convening partner in EFA, and is involved in the UNAIDS Interagency Task Team on Education and the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development.
- *Providing coordination, funding and support in the field:* The UNGEI Secretariat is based in UNICEF's Education Section and UNGEI activities are financed through UNICEF thematic funds; UNICEF has helped organize GEFI events; UNICEF supports GCPEA globally and has funded some of its programmes.
- *Contributing to technical outputs:* The UNICEF Global Education team contributes to: the EFA Global Monitoring Report; the outputs of the Learning Metrics Task Force (of which it is a member); the work of INEE; and the technical outputs of the Global Thematic Consultation.

UNICEF plays key roles in many of these partnerships at the country level through its country offices, including its education staff acting as UNGEI focal points, the organization taking on various in-country leadership roles for GPE, and convening country Education Clusters in emergencies.

Most respondents to the modified Delphi survey, including both UNICEF and non-UNICEF respondents, agreed that UNICEF increased its participation in education partnerships at the global level (86 per cent of all respondents), and increased its upstream work portfolio (78 per cent).

Development of approaches, models and frameworks

A key output of the UNICEF global education programme is the development of models,



analytical frameworks and methodologies, and approaches to key education policy issues on which regions and country programmes can draw. In some cases the Headquarters education team developed these initiatives in partnership with other global players, particularly the World Bank and UNESCO, but also others such as academic and research institutions. Some of the initiatives are implemented by Headquarters in cooperation with country offices, with other programme countries drawing lessons for inclusion in their country programmes. The paragraphs below map these initiatives by BEGE key result area (KRA). It is notable that most of these initiatives were instituted post-2006.

KRA1: School readiness

Before 2006 UNICEF Education already contributed to the development of Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS) which establish benchmarks for countries on what children should know and be able to do at certain ages, thereby describing the expectations for learning and development of young children. By 2012 this had been expanded through:

- *Technical papers and guidance.* For example, in 2007 a series of papers was produced to define the term “school readiness” more clearly, and in 2011 and 2012 a guidance document for country offices providing standards and theoretical frameworks that could be adopted for policy advocacy, policy development and technical support at national level.
- *A Child-to-Child Approach.* In 2008 a key UNICEF strategy for ensuring that children start school on time and are ready for school, the Getting Ready for School: A Child-to-Child Approach (CtC) was piloted in six countries. The initiative was developed in close partnership with the Child-to-Child Trust of the Institute of Education in London.

KRA2: Equitable access

UNICEF Education launched a number of key initiatives after 2006 from the HQ level, which

were implemented through global partnerships at the country level and with country offices. After 2009 UNICEF stepped up the development of analytical approaches which could be applied at the country level. Initiatives were:

- *The School Fee Abolition Initiative (SFAI)*, a partnership at global level with the World Bank launched in 2007. It was incorporated into the EFA Movement and GPE partnerships and is centred on advocacy for the abolition of school fees, coupled with support for broader education sector reforms to sustain fee abolition.
- *A Global Out-of-School Children Initiative* launched by UNICEF and the UNESCO Institute of Statistics in 2010. In its first phase the Initiative worked with 25 countries to improve statistical information and analysis; scrutinize factors of exclusion; and propose effective policies. All 25 countries have developed follow-up plans and have started work on the country studies (UNICEF Education Section 2011).
- The ‘*Simulation for Equity in Education*’ model (SEE) which UNICEF began developing in 2011 in collaboration with the World Bank to assess the costs and results of sets of education interventions targeted at risk groups. The model includes a bottleneck analysis, a database of effective access and quality interventions, and a means to project marginal costs of interventions to reach excluded children. It can be applied in different contexts and supports UNICEF’s new Monitoring Results for Equity System (MORES), strengthening the organization’s identification of problems and the implementation of responsive cost-effective strategies (UNICEF Education Section 2012).

Given UNICEF’s focus on the realisation of the rights of the girl child, its education strategy and programme include gender as a key intervention area in upstream work, as illustrated in Box 2.

**BOX 2****Gender in Upstream work in Education**

Under MTSP 2002-05 the focus was specifically on girls' education as one of the five overall MTSP priority goals for the period. Key results targeted were the number of countries that had policies and practices in place to reduce the numbers of out-of-school girls and promote quality learning in child-friendly, gender-sensitive schools; and the number of countries that identified learning outcomes and built capacity towards ensuring gender parity in achievement in basic education. The interventions planned to achieve these goals included advocacy of girls' education and gender sensitisation of education systems and personnel; policy analysis, technical and policy assistance to governments; capacity building; strengthening of partnerships; support for countries in inter-sectoral programmes for basic education; and partnership at all levels.

MTSP 2006-09(13) explicitly targeted upstream work further. The BEGE KRAs in the MTSP identify upstream targets. KRA 2 seeks to reduce gender-based and other disparities in relation to increased access, participation and completion of quality basic education. THE MTSP identifies working with a wide range of partners within the framework of the UNGEI; advocacy for free and compulsory education; the identification assessment and analysis of barriers, disparities and opportunities in basic education through data collection and disparity analysis; and engagement with SWAPs, PRSPs, the GPE and national budget analyses as key upstream areas of cooperation to achieve the target and goals of KRA 2. In relation to KRA 3, addressing education quality, the MTSP 2007-09 (13) strategy includes increasing the number of programme countries undertaking gender audits of education sector plans.

At the global level, UNICEF's leadership role in UNGEI has enabled them to influence global education discourse and debates on gender. It has successfully advocated for girls' education at the global, regional and country levels, amongst other ways through EFA Global Monitoring Report Gender Review and the production of an equity guide for the GPE (Visser-Valfrey, 2012).

At the country level, the desk-study review illustrated how country programmes achieved MTSP gender objectives through upstream work in education and gender and equality. UNICEF Sudan is supporting the development of a 'Gender in Education Strategy' to promote increased access and retention for girls and more female teachers. In Nepal, the results from UNGEI advocacy and partnerships included increasing budget allocation for the provision of girls' toilets in schools, doubling the number of girls receiving scholarships and developing a counselling package to keep girls in school. In Turkey, the Girls' Education campaign was an effective entry point for identifying out-of-school children. It paved the way for a needs analysis that identified half a million adolescents aged 10–14 years who had dropped out of school or had never been enrolled.

The relevance of UNICEF's approach to upstream work in education and gender equality has been illustrated by the fieldwork country case studies. In Afghanistan, Girls' education was a relevant focus given the enormous gender disparities in access and achievement. The CPD 2006-2009 included strategies to enlarge the pool of female teachers, improvements in learning environment to reduce drop-out, initiatives bringing families and schools closer together, and improving management and information systems and a revitalised ECG. Similarly, in Brazil there has been a highly relevant focus on inclusion of disadvantaged groups given inequality along racial, historical, cultural, regional and gender lines, and in Zimbabwe UNICEF's upstream work has been clearly focused on improving access to and quality of education which feed strongly into the mandate to expand children's rights and the rights of the girl-child.



KRA3: Education quality

In this KRA, upstream work has centred on the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) model, which was introduced in 1999. During the evaluation period a key shift occurred in how UNICEF used the CFS models, from direct support to establishing child-friendly schools, to promoting the incorporation of CFS standards into education sector plans and legal frameworks. This was not a full shift, however: between 2006 and 2009 67 per cent of CFS funding still went to supplies, equipment and construction (UNICEF, 2009). Some of this spending may have been on piloting CFS schools to provide evidence for policy change, which is arguably part of an upstream programme. We return to this point in Chapter 5. UNICEF globally has supported this shift through:

- The Global Capacity Development Programme on CFS developed in 2007 and rolled out from 2008 to 2011, involving training on CFS planning, implementation, scaling up and mainstreaming into national policies and plans (UNICEF Education Section 2013).
- Collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning from 2010 to support the development of capacity in education systems for CFS through the integration of the CFS approach into the curricula of teacher training institutions in eight countries.

A second, related, global level programme across countries with upstream work components is the Life Skills in Basic Education (LSBE) programme. The main global initiative in this area occurred in 2010, when UNICEF set out principles, concepts and standards for life skills education for use by country offices. By this time many of the country-level life skills activities were already oriented to upstream work, with 145 of the 156 countries which had UNICEF-supported life skills activities having integrated life skills education into the curriculum and 70 having made it a compulsory subject.

KRA4: Education in Emergencies (EiE)

While MTSP 2006–09(13) still made UNICEF-facilitated education supplies in emergency and post-crisis situations a strategic priority, UNICEF Education globally has increased its work portfolio aimed at disaster risk reduction (DRR), conflict reduction and prevention, and supporting the rebuilding of education systems. In practice, over the evaluation period UNICEF worked globally in key partnerships to develop technical standards and tools for use in emergencies. Key components were:

- Updating of UNICEF's Core Commitments to Children in 2004;
- Working to broaden partners' assistance in the Global Education Cluster from simple emergency response to disaster risk reduction (DRR) and conflict reduction and prevention;
- The development of a capacity building strategy for the Global Education Cluster in 2008, with a particular focus on national capacity development for upstream work;
- Improving prediction, prevention and preparedness for emergencies and availability of evidence-based policies, efficient operational strategies and fit-for-purpose financing instruments for education in emergencies, through the Education in Emergencies and Post-Crisis Transition (EEPCT) programme. The programme was a partnership between UNICEF and the Netherlands that aimed at putting education in emergency and post-crisis transition countries on a "viable path of sustainable progress toward quality basic education for all (UNICEF 2011a); and
- Increasing institutional capacities to supply conflict-sensitive education, including education in peacebuilding, and conflict-reduction policies, analysis and implementation through the on-going Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme (PBEA), the objectives of which include evidence-based national policies and programming in emergencies.



UNICEF regional upstream work in education

UNICEF regional offices provide support for country-level upstream work in education, directly and through capacity building, and undertake upstream initiatives of their own.

UNICEF Regional Education Advisers (REAs) provide support to UNICEF country offices. As UNICEF's strategic approach and country work portfolios shifted, regional offices' support work has become more upstream. One form of support is to provide direct assistance to country Education Chiefs in in-country upstream processes. In Cambodia, for example, the regional education officer would attend strategic meetings in country, such as education sector working group meetings. Regional offices also undertake capacity building of country staff for upstream work. Examples include providing training, identifying training opportunities for country staff to attend, and offering webinars, leadership coaching programmes, or training in negotiation with government. Regional offices work with Headquarters to implement global upstream programmes in countries: for example, the OSCI programme was facilitated through regional workshops with UNICEF staff and national partners, and Education in Emergency capacity building workshops.

Regional offices also act as 'clearing houses' for knowledge on upstream work, putting countries in contact with one another or arranging workshops and meetings, such as exchanges between ESARO and EAPRO countries on child-friendly schools. Regional offices hold annual meetings with Chiefs of Education and other staff during which knowledge exchange occurs.

In terms of programmatic work, regional offices initiate or coordinate studies providing evidence to support UNICEF policy advocacy. In the evaluation period, for example, the CEE/CIS region undertook a regional situation analysis of the education sector, followed by a prioritization of target groups of out-of-school children. The result was the production of position papers and policy guidelines with a focus

on Roma children and children with disabilities. Regional offices also coordinate the implementation of global UNICEF upstream initiatives across countries or in selected countries in the region. The WCARO region, for example, was the first to undertake a MORES education analysis, linked to the equity costing model.

Regional offices provide guidelines and toolkits for upstream work, or develop frameworks for studies that countries can undertake. Examples include the development of country status reports in WCARO region, a theory of change for upstream work developed by the CEE/CIS region to determine effective strategies for undertaking education work in middle-income countries, and development of the Education Parity Index (EPI), a composite index measuring disparities by ROSA in 2008. Using Bangladesh as an example, the calculations showed that child labour was the most significant factor in disparity, suggesting the need for greater attention to this group of children (UNICEF Education Section 2009).

Finally, regional offices undertake regional initiatives with partners. This can be with regional institutions and/or through regional collaboration between global partners. Examples are LACRO's work with sub-regional inter-governmental bodies to expand the OSCI and identify key bottlenecks for the whole region and ROSA's work with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation on ECE in collaboration with partners such as UNESCO and Go South Korea. Regional initiatives can have significant upstream results, such as the conference convened by LACRO in 2009 leading to the Constitutional amendment on compulsory school age in Brazil, affecting access to ECE and secondary schools.

Most respondents to the modified Delphi survey, including both UNICEF and non-UNICEF respondents, agreed that UNICEF increased its participation in education partnerships at the regional level (72 per cent of all respondents), and increased its upstream work portfolio (68 per cent).



3.3 FINANCING UPSTREAM WORK: AN EXPENDITURE PERSPECTIVE

Changes to thematic funding – which funds upstream work in education for the most part – provide some information on the availability of funding for upstream work. However, this does not provide information on the actual use of resources for upstream work. We set out to understand more about UNICEF’s BEGE expenditure and whether there has been any change in expenditure on upstream activities. Our methodology for doing this was to work with a member of the UNICEF Headquarters strategic team to categorize the BEGE expenditure codes (relating to specific activities) to either “upstream” or “others.” This involved subjective decisions about which codes reflect upstream work. Therefore the analysis below should not be taken as conclusive, but merely as indicative of a trend. Codes that were selected included activities such as: standards to monitor school readiness; advocacy for free and compulsory education; sector plans for EFA; support to PRS/ MTEF and education sector plans; emergency preparedness plans in the education sector; and data trends and disparity analysis. We then

categorized expenditure – we were able to do this for the years 2007 to 2012 for which the codes were comparable – as ‘upstream expenditure’ or ‘other expenditure’.

This exercise indicates that expenditure on upstream activities increased over the evaluation period. The results are given in Table 2 by region. Expenditure hardly increased in CEE/CIS, but it was already at a substantial 17 per cent in 2007; in Eastern and Southern Africa, expenditure increased the most, from 8 per cent to 30 per cent, a 22 per cent increase. It should be noted that the regional expenditure here refers to the expenditure associated with the region and all countries in the region.

This expenditure analysis shows a shift to upstream work based on assumptions about some expenditure purposes coded into the system being more upstream than others. The analysis however, also assumes that these codes are used correctly and consistently at the primary data entry level and should be taken as indicative of a shift, at the same level that increased thematic funding points to increased upstream work, as upstream work is funded by thematic funding.

TABLE 2 Per cent change on BEGE upstream expenditure

UNICEF region	2007	2012
CEE/CIS	17%	18%
EAPRO	4%	19%
ESARO	8%	30%
MENA	6%	17%
ROSA	10%	18%
LACRO	11%	22%
WCARO	6%	17%

Source: UNICEF Headquarters



3.4 CAPACITY BUILDING FOR UPSTREAM WORK

The need to build capacity for upstream work was acknowledged in MTSP 2005–09(13). Over the evaluation period UNICEF Headquarters Education Section facilitated two main formal upstream capacity building partnerships:

- From 2008 to 2011 UNICEF collaborated with the World Bank Institute (WBI) to design a course aimed at building the technical skills and capacity of UNICEF staff for upstream work by developing their understanding of education policy reform, including the options available to enhance quality, efficiency, equity and sustainability of education, and approaches to designing education strategies. Over the three years that the course was active 250 UNICEF staff participated in six sessions, offered in French and English. Several UNICEF respondents at regional and country level indicated through follow-up surveys that the course was useful, and that they could apply the skills immediately. However, the WBI shut down its education section in 2011 so the course was no longer available at the time of the evaluation.
- The second initiative, a customized leadership development programme, was being tested in 2013¹³ with the first group of 54 participants. The course is offered in partnership with the Harvard Graduate School of Education. It is less technical than the WBI course, focusing more on the 'soft' leadership skills required to undertake upstream work effectively (Harvard GSE 2013). The course takes place over a semester, and involves course and home-based work. According to UNICEF Headquarters, initial feedback is positive, although common challenges of home studying have arisen.

Guidelines have also been produced at both the regional and the Headquarters level. Examples include the Advocacy Toolkit and the updating of the Programme Policy and Procedures manual to include a section on partnerships and integrate guidance on partnerships in different stages of programme planning and implementation cycles.

Most recently Headquarters have started using Sharepoint – UNICEF's IT-based knowledge management system – for upstream capacity building with discussion boards where staff can share knowledge and experience across countries. A section on upstream work is being offered on a pilot basis.

The organization also reviewed its human resources management procedures, including job descriptions and the competency framework, to include competencies and skills for effective partnering (UNICEF 2012b)

Global capacity building efforts have been supported by informal as well as more structured regional capacity building interventions, including UNICEF workshops and routine opportunities to exchange experiences, and facilitation of the participation of UNICEF country education staff in regional opportunities. The Afghanistan case study included a mini-case study of the support role fulfilled by ROSA for upstream work in education in Afghanistan. Efforts included technical support, webinars, the development of guidelines for national staff research and a leadership coaching programme. A second phase of this training will extend it to modules on negotiation with government and seeking leverage in policy discussions (UNICEF 2014a, p. 21).

¹³ It therefore falls outside the evaluation period, although it was initiated by UNICEF during the evaluation period after the WBI course closed down.



CHAPTER 4

UPSTREAM WORK IN COUNTRY PROGRAMMES AND STRATEGIES

Drawing from the desk phase literature review, the global interviews, the fieldwork case studies and the modified Delphi survey, this chapter provides an account of upstream work in education at the country level. It provides a typology of upstream work, a discussion of the in-depth country case studies, and financing of and capacity building for upstream work at the country level.

4.1 TYPOLOGY OF IN-COUNTRY UPSTREAM WORK

From the desk reviews (see Annex 6 in Vol 2 for examples of instances of upstream work found in the desk review of country documentation) and in-depth country case studies, as well as the global and regional interviews, the

evaluation developed a typology of types of upstream work at the country level, which was tested in the Delphi survey. Table 3 provides this summary list of forms of UNICEF upstream work encountered in the evaluation, by order of the proportion of survey respondents recognizing it as upstream work and saying they have seen it frequently.

TABLE 3 Typology of upstream work

Type of work	Frequently seen
Advocacy for a UNICEF approach or model, like Child-Friendly Schools	71%
Adoption of UNICEF developed standards, such as for early childhood education	65%
Supporting the development of education sector plans	59%
Leading national education sector groups and processes, such as local education sector groups, sector-wide approaches	57%
Participating in, but not leading, local education sector groups and processes, such as sector working groups, sector-wide approaches	53%
Acting as an intermediary when dialogue is not occurring and/or trying to open up space for dialogue on sensitive or controversial issues in education in the country	51%
Activities to build the technical capacity of the education sector, for example planning and monitoring and evaluation skills and systems	51%
Generating evidence of what works, through studies or piloting/delivering education sector services	50%

**Table 3** (cont'd)

Type of work	Frequently seen
Trying to build the training capacity of the education sector, such as through the establishment of training courses	50%
Providing support for education system data, such as the education management information system (EMIS)	39%
Supporting curriculum development	38%
Activities to build the management capacity of the education sector, for example public financial management, human resource management, and/or leadership capacity	38%
Supervising, managing and/or coordinating education sector funds, such as FTI/GPE funds or pooled sector funds	35%
Undertaking diagnostic studies of the education system	30%
Working on education sector budgets, either by directly advocating with government, or undertaking budget analysis/supporting local organizations to undertake budget analysis in the education sector	26%
Supporting incentive schemes to improve school performance	16%

In addition to validating the list above, the open-ended responses to the survey identified further sets of work not identified in the survey itself. These include work with legislatures (corroborated by incidences from the desk phase countries); advocacy on UNICEF's mandate generally; and activities to support the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in sector activities and plans. These have all been corroborated by evidence from the 10 additional desk phase countries and in some cases from global respondents.

4.2 UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION: IN-COUNTRY PRACTICE

The country fieldwork afforded the evaluation the opportunity to look more closely at how UNICEF's upstream work in education evolved within its work portfolio in specific contexts. Data collection at the field level in case study countries was built around the selection of three to four mini-case studies per country. These cases were examined for UNICEF's contribution to the results observed. Annex 7 in Vol 2 provides a summary of each of the country case

studies, including an account of the country context, the activities undertaken in education upstream work, as well as the results achieved along the OECD DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, in addition to coherence. What follows is not an attempt to reproduce this summary, but rather provides a brief synopsis of the expectations underlying each study and key findings. For a comprehensive summary of upstream activities in the countries, and a fuller understanding of how these and additional findings were reached, a more detailed summary of country case studies is provided in Annex 7¹⁴.

Afghanistan

The Afghanistan country case study presents an opportunity to review UNICEF's upstream work in a high-risk environment with a relatively recent protracted conflict. In 2002, the Asian Development Bank's needs assessment recorded a collapsed education system, with challenges including large numbers of children formerly associated with armed forces, an influx of 1.8 million returning refugees,

¹⁴ Full case study reports are available for each of the four country cases.



severe shortages of teachers and schools, and the absence of a unified national curriculum. However, UNICEF has a long history in Afghanistan spanning over 60 years, directed from Islamabad during the earlier years before improvements in the security situation made possible the establishment of an office in Kabul in 2002. Since that time, the Afghanistan country office has continuously combined upstream and downstream approaches in its education programmes (although the nature of upstream work changed over the period), an approach which has enabled the results, expertise and support garnered from implementation downstream to strengthen policy advocacy upstream. Key examples of this are the take-up of community-based education and child-friendly schools in government, which delivered results in terms of formal policies being adopted and developed respectively. In the case of child-friendly schools, government established a department of inclusive and child-friendly education to coordinate CFS initiatives.

The Afghanistan country case study was also able to document some significant upstream wins in the mini-case study of school construction. UNICEF developed a cost-effective school design which was eventually proposed by the government as a suitable model for Afghanistan. This represented a major advance given the high number of companies and donor programmes involved in school construction and the plethora of designs and materials being used.

A second mini-case study was UNICEF's role as Supervising Entity (SE) for the GPE. As SE UNICEF was able to ensure that the GPE programme is fully focused on equity issues. The evaluation however, uncovered little evidence of any further added value from UNICEF's role as GPE SE over its earlier support of donor coordination in education in Afghanistan. While this in part is due to the relatively small size of the GPE grant compared to other grants, and to the country context with limited government capacity, the evaluation found that the UNICEF

office was at the time of the evaluation, not able to leverage its GPE responsibilities into upstream influence and system strengthening because of lack of capacity in the country office itself. While some country respondents thought UNICEF taking on the SE role was good, others were concerned about the ability of UNICEF to fulfil the capacity building and mentoring role required in terms of the Afghanistan GPE documentation. Issues also arose around the way in which the GPE grant was being managed within government, through a separate implementation unit and with high transaction costs due to parallel implementation and reporting procedures. The case study acknowledges the short period of GPE implementation at the time of the evaluation, and that not all of these issues are fully within UNICEF's control or its responsibilities in terms of its SE role. Nonetheless, at the time of the evaluation there was little evidence that within this context, taking on the SE role would strengthen UNICEF's upstream results at country level.

The Afghanistan study considers the length of UNICEF's experience in country and the trust it has garnered to be a great asset. That said, this favoured position is deemed to be at risk unless the coherence of upstream work is improved. Whilst there was a common understanding of upstream work in the country office, there was far from consistent agreement on skills and capacity required for it, and as such UNICEF's current mix of staff capacities was found to be inadequate for policy level dialogue, particularly on the financial aspects of education. Additionally, the sustainability of some upstream activities is called into question, particularly around the provision of technical assistance for the Ministry of Education where exit strategies were found to be wanting.

Brazil

The Brazil country case study provides the evaluation with an opportunity to consider UNICEF's upstream work in education in a middle-income



country context. UNICEF has been present in Brazil since the 1950s, over a period in which the country has undergone profound reforms and registered substantial progress on key MDGs. Inequality, however, remains a national challenge. Whilst education is considered a key tool to address this and receives much national investment, it is plagued by low completion rates and poor performance results amongst disadvantaged groups, such as Afro-Brazilians, indigenous populations, and females. In this context, UNICEF's education programmes have evolved away from direct service delivery of previous eras to focus on technical assistance and advocacy aimed at addressing education quality and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups through the formation and implementation of national and sub-national policies. Critically, the Government of Brazil has become the main funder of UNICEF's work in country in recent years, distinguishing Brazil from most other countries in which UNICEF undertakes upstream work in education.

Given that UNICEF Brazil's upstream work in education is well established and represents the bulk of its education programme, the case study was expected to provide good practice examples. Notable strengths were apparent in the upstream portfolio and were examined in depth in the mini-case studies. Firstly, UNICEF Brazil demonstrates an ability to engage at all levels of government – federal, state, and municipal – in a coherent and effective way. Its reputation for professional capacity and integrity, serious technical competence and long-standing engagement in Brazil have resulted in a strong partnership with the various levels of government. An example of this is the support UNICEF provided to the establishment in two states of Literacy at the Right Age programmes, of which many aspects were later integrated into federal programmes. Furthermore, UNICEF has been able to influence municipal policy and programming by helping to establish a Municipal Seal of Approval programme, which incentivizes the integration of child rights issues and MDG

attainment into local government programmes for education, health and maternal welfare.

The evaluation also noted UNICEF Brazil's demonstrated ability to work with other stakeholders. In collaboration with a national NGO, UNICEF carried out an analysis and revision of official education indicators to enable schools to self-assess against racism criteria, and also developed curriculum guidelines to help schools to address racism. These have since been disseminated to all schools by the Government of Brazil. UNICEF has also worked closely with the Brazilian media over the years, to ensure that mainstream media address education and rights issues in a positive and effective manner. In this context, UNICEF played a key role in the establishment of ANDI Brazil (a network of journalists), funding the organization and organizing events around specific themes in education. This approach is thought to have had a positive impact on the opinion of the general public and through it, to have influenced the government and its policies.

Alongside these prominent achievements, the case study also notes some potential constraints and risks to future performance. In particular, it is felt that the strains on existing country office capacity may undermine the coherence and effectiveness of UNICEF's approach, and it is recommended that staff job descriptions and internal processes be modified so that staff can focus more effectively on upstream work.

Cambodia

Over the evaluation period, UNICEF's education programme in Cambodia has shown an increasingly pronounced emphasis on upstream work. The country case study sought to determine what contribution this may have made to improved policies and systems in basic education, in the context of a country with a relatively long history of a sector-wide approach and well-developed coordination mechanisms.



As in the other three case studies, UNICEF's early presence in country has played a critical role in enabling it to build a long-term and trusting relationship with the Government of Cambodia. UNICEF started operations in Cambodia in 1952, but stopped cooperation during the Khmer Rouge administration. In 1979 cooperation resumed when UNICEF became the lead United Nations agency in the 1979–81 emergency period. Since then Cambodia has made impressive gains in rebuilding its education system, driving up primary enrolment, bridging gender gaps, and reconstructing the education infrastructure, although school retention rates remain weak particularly in rural areas and for ethnic minority communities.

The Cambodia case study finds that UNICEF's upstream work has had notable success in ensuring that key priorities are taken up in the government's education agenda, including priorities which might not have been of interest to the government otherwise. This is clearly demonstrated in two of the study's mini-case studies, namely of UNICEF's advocacy for bilingual education and for early childhood education. The demonstration of results through piloting, twinned with effective lobbying of government and donor partners, has led to inclusion of bilingual education and early childhood education in national policies and plans. However, at the time of the evaluation government had not yet committed its own resources to implementation of these policies. The salary and training costs for bilingual education teachers are financed by UNICEF, and government financial commitment to early childhood education also continues to be very limited.

In the third mini-case study UNICEF was catalytic in setting up a harmonized Capacity Development Partnership Fund (CDPF), which matches pooled donor support to the education-sector-wide capacity development plan. UNICEF took on the transaction cost of setting up the fund, and was managing the fund at the time of the evaluation with plans for its eventual

hand-over to government. Whilst the CDPF was considered a marked improvement over the workshop- and project-based interventions of the past, at the time only two donors had joined the fund, resulting in significant investment in capacity building still occurring in an uncoordinated manner and limiting UNICEF's impact on system strengthening through the fund. The case study also calls for a clear plan for handing over the management of the fund to the education ministry within a concrete timeframe.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe was proposed as a case study country by the UNICEF Evaluation Office as it recently emerged from an emergency and was expected to provide useful examples of upstream work in a context where the education system was historically well capacitated. Zimbabwe's post-independence history is characterized by an early decade of rapid progress in nation building and recovery, during which great strides in education provision were made, followed by economic decline and a drop in well-being during the 1990s and 2000s. The formation of a Government of National Unity in 2009 brought a degree of recovery in the education system; nevertheless, significant challenges remain. Throughout this whole period, UNICEF has remained engaged in Zimbabwe, and its selection as a country case study allows the evaluation to investigate how it has employed upstream work throughout this cycle of crisis and recovery.

A first key finding of the evaluation is that upstream work has always been present in UNICEF's education activities in Zimbabwe, but there has been an upstream shift post the 2008 humanitarian crisis. UNICEF's focus on coordination and leadership, strengthening evidence and supporting policy development and planning played a significant role in stabilizing the education system. The turnaround, however, was only possible because of the inherited strengths of a well-performing



education system including substantial decentralization to a school level and strong community involvement.

The Zimbabwe case study also demonstrates the merits of combining upstream and downstream approaches in education, echoing findings from Afghanistan and Cambodia. Involvement in downstream work and with implementers provided the knowledge, experience, trust and credibility to coordinate upstream processes. An example of this is provided in the mini-case study on UNICEF's management of the Education Transition Fund (ETF). The key achievements under the first ETF were downstream, with direct UNICEF management of the processes (e.g., distribution of 13 million textbooks, stationery and storage facilities to 5,300 primary schools). However, upstream benefits were reaped through the ETF Steering Committee, which provided a strong platform for sector coordination between donors and a forum for discussion with the education ministry which had otherwise been absent. Work under ETF II was more upstream. Similarly, the Zimbabwe case study demonstrates the importance of having country-based evidence to support upstream policy advocacy: in the CFS case UNICEF was able to demonstrate results through its CFS pilot and advocate successfully for formal policy adoption of the CFS framework.

The case study emphasizes the strong leadership and autonomy of the country office as a success factor, as the country office is able to respond to country circumstances in a country-appropriate and timely manner. UNICEF's position as a United Nations agency was also key as it could manage funds on behalf of donors that were not in a position to disburse to government. Its neutral position also meant that it could create a forum for discussion and

collaboration that would have been hard to establish otherwise.

4.3 UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION: IN-COUNTRY STRATEGIES

The medium-term strategic plan is UNICEF's main global strategy document. It provides the framework to guide the development of country-level plans and budgets. However, because UNICEF is a decentralized organization, the shape of UNICEF country programmes as articulated in Country Programme Documents (CPDs) and the balance between upstream and downstream work are decided by country teams through the country programming process.¹⁵

The desk review provided many examples of how UNICEF global upstream approaches and targets were reflected in country programmes. Several of the 14 countries reviewed, and other countries, have operationalized the areas of cooperation targeted by UNICEF globally. For example, in school readiness, by 2011 65 country offices reported the development and implementation of national policies on early learning. In addition, 63 countries had developed specific Early Learning and Development Standards (ELDS). Furthermore, in 2010 UNICEF reported that many countries had recognized the importance of teaching pre-school children about disaster preparedness in order to decrease vulnerability to hazards in disaster-prone regions (UNICEF Education Section 2011).

In the four fieldwork case study countries, the intention to undertake and/or increase upstream work in education was articulated in all of the CPDs covering the evaluation period. In all four countries, the portfolio of activities has been increasingly orientated towards upstream work. In Afghanistan the last CPD of

¹⁵ Country Programme Documents are typically prepared every 4–5 years in each country, with a number of countries completing their planning cycle in any one year. CPDs and associated requests for funding are approved by the UNICEF Executive Board.



the evaluation period was the first to specify upstream results more clearly.

However, in none of the case study countries was upstream work packaged as an upstream “strategy” in the early and mid-period CPDs. This supports findings from the 14 countries reviewed in the desk phase, where upstream activities were targeted in plans but not coherently and the word was not used. It is only in the latest CPDs that “upstream” has entered the lexicon. The priority given to upstream work (as articulated in the CPDs) varied from country to country among the 14 desk review countries.

4.4 FINANCING OF AND EXPENDITURE ON UPSTREAM WORK AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL

UNICEF upstream work in education at country level is financed through countries’ share in global regular resources and in other resources, particularly thematic funds. At the same time, country offices can also raise funds locally for upstream work. The country cases included two examples where this occurred, namely Cambodia, where Sida was funding UNICEF’s work, and Brazil, where the Brazilian government was a significant contributor to the country programme.

Unfortunately, the country teams were not able to track budget shifts to upstream funding at the country level with more certainty than the exercise undertaken at the global level, or collect data on the funding itself, as country offices

indicated that they did not have the mechanisms to track the cost of upstream work. This is understandable: while the codes provided a mechanism to track expenditure against clearly upstream types of work, they mixed forms of work with the issues at which the work is aimed. For example, ‘sub-national and regional disparities in education’ co-exists as an option to code a financial outflow with ‘data trends and disparity analysis’. A manager in a regional office would not know whether expenditures coded under the former are for upstream or downstream activities, as it is an issue, while the latter is clearly an activity. A multi-dimensional coding system would allow for both the issue and the activity to be identified, e.g., an OSCI study would be identified as a data and analysis activity aimed at ‘disparities in education’.

4.5 CAPACITY BUILDING FOR UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

The country case studies include examples of country office efforts to build capacity, and in two of the cases, of UNICEF individual staff on their own initiative taking on postgraduate studies to fill the upstream capacity gap. In Brazil the country office organized a workshop to think through upstream work in middle-income contexts. The Brazil office has also established a South-South cooperation unit in the office, the aim of which is to share Brazil’s experience with UNICEF elsewhere and to bring experience from elsewhere to Brazil.



SECTION III

THE QUALITY OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK

This section assesses UNICEF's upstream work against the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness (what are the results of the work), efficiency, coherence, and sustainability.



CHAPTER 5

THE RELEVANCE OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

As a criterion for this evaluation relevance is defined as the extent to which the development intervention is consistent with UNICEF's policies, global priorities, beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, and partners' policies.

The key questions the evaluation is answering are: was UNICEF's approach to upstream work in education aligned with its mandate and objectives; did UNICEF's priorities align with emerging priorities for education; and how well aligned are UNICEF's policy positions and outputs to national priorities? The evaluation assessed both the relevance of 'upstream' as a way of working and the relevance of the content of UNICEF's upstream work (i.e., the issues on which it undertook policy advocacy) at all levels.

5.1 RELEVANCE OF UPSTREAM WORK AS A WAY OF WORKING

Relevance to UNICEF's mandate

MTSP 2006–09(13) made the link between achieving UNICEF's mandate, mission and global commitments and undertaking upstream work. UNICEF's shift to building the capacities of duty bearers to fulfil the rights of all children rather than itself fulfilling the rights of a few children through direct service delivery on behalf of states is a logical outcome of UNICEF's CRC mandate. This shift is also mandated in the UNICEF mission statement. Upstream engagement as a way of working at the country level in contrast to other types of engagement such as service delivery projects is therefore fully aligned with UNICEF's mandate, mission and strategies. Its international partnerships are similarly aligned, insofar as they allow UNICEF to influence its partners through

these partnerships to build capacities for fulfilling the rights of the child.

Relevance to global priorities for education development

The education sector shares a growing concern with rest of the development community as to whether aid modalities are contributing to the capacity of states. As awareness of aid effectiveness objectives increased, what mattered in supporting countries was no longer only the areas in which support was provided, but also the means of provision. The intention behind UNICEF upstream work to develop the capacity of states to fulfil children's rights in education is fully in line with the global state and institution building agenda.

Relevance at country level

In all three low-income, post-conflict country case studies (Afghanistan, Cambodia and Zimbabwe) UNICEF's shift in emphasis from mainly fulfilling educational needs directly to increasingly working with and through government on policies and system gaps and weaknesses was found to be highly relevant to the countries' needs. This was both from a government priority perspective and from the perspective of the emerging needs of the beneficiaries of the education system. In Zimbabwe respondents highlighted the shift as an example of UNICEF's responsiveness to country needs



(UNICEF 2014d, p.16). In Cambodia, UNICEF shifted its capacity-building focus to sub-national levels of government, in response to government's own priorities (UNICEF 2014c, p. 12). In Afghanistan, UNICEF recognized the need to locate its downstream delivery "within sustainable systems" (UNICEF 2014a, p. 8). In contrast, the Brazil case study found that given the middle-income context, upstream work has long been the only relevant mode of engagement (UNICEF 2014b, p. 34).

Creating space for dialogue and convening stakeholders around issues of shared concern is also a highly relevant form of upstream work, and was highlighted by global and country respondents as a relevant and important contribution by UNICEF. In Brazil, UNICEF's 'convening power' played a critical role in bringing different stakeholders together around issues and engineering partnership (op cit, p. 15); in Cambodia UNICEF has shown good awareness of country donor coordination needs and has taken a coordination leadership role (op cit, p. 13); and UNICEF's leadership in opening up dialogue space within government and between government and donors to address education priorities was key in Zimbabwe.

Relevance to aid effectiveness principles

In the 2010 GPE Monitoring exercise on aid effectiveness in the education sector, UNICEF reported disbursing 29 per cent of its aid using country financial management systems and 32 per cent using country procurement systems. This is in line with the average for all donors (at 28 per cent and 38 per cent respectively) in the 36 countries surveyed for the monitoring exercise (GPE 2012). UNICEF's investment in donor coordination at the global level (through its strong role in all the global partnerships for education) and at country level (through its participation in and often its leadership of sector programmes and coordination mechanisms and its GPE roles) is fully relevant to the global education aid effectiveness agenda, as is its management of harmonized sector funds.

There is, however, some concern that although in principle UNICEF's contribution when it takes on coordination roles (whether for GPE purposes or in local education groups generally) is relevant to the global aid effectiveness agenda, the way in which it manages pooled funding is not always fully so in practice. A key objective of the aid effectiveness agenda is that the way in which official development assistance is managed should contribute to the strengthening of country systems and not develop parallel systems which takes country capacity away from the management of own resources, with high transaction costs. The Afghanistan case study provides an example of how UNICEF as the supervising entity for GPE funds has not placed sufficient emphasis on leveraging the role to build government capacity. Similar issues were raised over the evaluation period in relation to the Education Pooled Fund arrangement, set up and developed by the Liberia country office with the Government of Liberia, the Open Society Foundation and the World Bank (UNICEF 2011b, p. 28). In both cases the funds are managed by separate units, in Afghanistan through government central bank accounts, but in Liberia through a separate bank account at the time (Schmidt 2009), with additional transaction costs for government. This is discussed further in Box 3 in Chapter 8.

5.2 RELEVANCE OF UPSTREAM FOCUS AREAS

In MTSP 2006–09(13) UNICEF is clear on how its programmes of cooperation are jointly determined by its mandate, international priorities, country priorities, strategic partnerships, operational experience and country and regional conditions (UNICEF 2005, p. 6). The extent to which this has been operationalized is discussed below.

The evaluation did not come across significant UNICEF programmes that were not aligned in one or another way with global education priorities. In fact, UNICEF was at the forefront of shaping global priorities: global interview respondents agreed that it was an influential



player in shaping the debate. An example of this is UNICEF's work to make girls' education and equity a global priority.

Global interview respondents – particularly non-UNICEF respondents – also drew attention to the strength of UNICEF in making its regional and country programming and activities relevant to context. This means recognizing that not all global priorities or any single global priority are relevant in all contexts and having the flexibility to allow for this in country-level programming. This was evident in the review of UNICEF activities for this evaluation: for example, in the CEE/CIS region UNICEF's upstream work in education included work on Roma children. Disaster preparedness received focus in LACRO, together with getting children from marginalized or minority communities into school and using data and evidence in policy making. In ESARO and EAPRO, participation in SWaps was a focus of UNICEF's work. UNICEF's highly decentralized decision-making structure on strategy and programming was given credit for this, by both UNICEF and non-UNICEF respondents.

From available interview evidence, emerging education strategy priorities in UNICEF's most recent corporate strategic plan (MTSP 2014–17) are in line with emerging global education priorities, and may to some extent have driven them, given the leadership role by UNICEF in the thematic consultation on education for the post-2015 development agenda. Key aspects include quality and a continued focus on equity and on innovation. UNICEF's capacity to develop models that can be tested through its implementation capability puts it in a strong position to undertake upstream work in this environment, at global and country level.

Relevance of focus of UNICEF upstream work in education at country level

Where trade-offs have to be made between UNICEF's own mandate and focuses and country priorities, evidence from the evaluation suggests that UNICEF will undertake upstream work in education informed by its

own priorities, even when issues are not explicitly governments' priorities. This occurred in Cambodia (with ECE and bilingual education), and in Zimbabwe where government respondents lamented that UNICEF is no longer directly supporting the CFS model as adapted in the country but has shifted its work to the provision of school grants. Some global non-UNICEF respondents, although not a majority, have also stated that UNICEF at times pushes its own branded models such as CFS at the expense of supporting governments to implement their priorities. From the country case studies, however, where this occurs:

- it is in line with UNICEF's judgement on needs of beneficiary populations in terms of its interpretation of its own mandate, even if not captured in government priority frameworks, an example being UNICEF's work to establish official policies and practices on bilingual education and ECD in Cambodia; and
- it can lead to a change in policy and practice, thereby extending education services to previously disadvantaged or excluded population groups.

UNICEF's upstream work at country level is informed by its mandate as a UN organization which derives from the CRC and CEDAW. While its Mission Statement therefore compels UNICEF to *"help countries... build their capacity to form appropriate policies and deliver services for children and their families"* this upstream engagement is not neutral. UNICEF's mission statement also directs the organization to strive *"to establish children's rights as enduring ethical principles"*; to ensure *"special protection for the most disadvantaged children"*; and to promote *"the equal rights of women and girls"* (UNICEF 2013a). A common refrain in the global and country fieldwork was that this clarity of UNICEF's mandate, as well as its position as a UN organization, is a great strength in its upstream work, and that it made its engagement *"politically neutral"*. The Brazil case study offers a good example of how this neutrality has made UNICEF a powerful upstream actor.



In the Zimbabwe and Afghanistan case studies some of the objectives of UNICEF's upstream engagement were relevant to the governments' needs. But there were also areas of disagreement about how UNICEF had chosen to achieve their objectives. In Afghanistan, UNICEF shifted from working in all provinces to focusing its engagement on the ten most disadvantaged provinces. Government respondents expressed disappointment at this decision ("what about the other provinces and districts? Is EFA not for their children?"), but the case study argues that the shift meant that UNICEF's programme was "more relevant than before, on grounds of equity" (UNICEF 2014a, p. 11). Similarly, in Zimbabwe UNICEF's support for school grants as a means to address education quality is in line with government's objectives. However, government respondents indicated that continuing support for the child-friendly schools model would have been a more appropriate way to enhance quality through the UNICEF programme (UNICEF 2014d, p. 17). In contrast, UNICEF saw its choice as more relevant to empowering a higher number of education rights holders in the country. The country office argues that the quality standards inherent in the CFS model can only be scaled up through government to a nation-wide level, and that it is not UNICEF's role. The school grants, however, provided schools the opportunity to fund implementation of the standards.

At the country level, therefore, UNICEF education programmes are a function of the country office's interpretation of the best balance between government objectives and priorities, the needs of beneficiaries and the principles of UNICEF's own mandate and strategic focuses. This highly decentralized structure of authority emerged as an important factor for UNICEF's relevance in achieving results through upstream work in education. It means that country programmes have a lot of space to tailor their sector programmes and interventions to the priorities and needs of countries. It also means that countries can be responsive, without the delay caused by long decision chains to headquarters. In three of the case studies (Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe) UNICEF's

in-country flexibility and its ability to respond to the situation as it unfolds were highlighted.

The benefits of decentralization in keeping country programmes relevant were also apparent in relation to the difference between programmes in different country income contexts. In Brazil, as a middle-income country, UNICEF was able to bring technical expertise and tools to analyse existing data with a focus on equity adding value to local capacity in a country where education issues are not driven by a lack of resources or data. It could also recognize opportunities for teaming up with local partners – from civil society, the media and the private sector – for initiatives at the local level, particularly as UNICEF's resources to undertake implementation are limited in a middle-income country.

In line with its decentralized decision-making structure, UNICEF has a long history of engaging government and other country stakeholders in the development of its programmes, thus generating relevance and buy-in. Global respondents acknowledged this, with the Brazil case study offering a discussion of how this process plays out in practice (UNICEF 2014b, p. 15).

The Afghanistan, Cambodia and Zimbabwe case studies also demonstrate that UNICEF was able to adjust its programme of work over the evaluation period in order to remain relevant. In Afghanistan and Zimbabwe this meant shifting from the provision of emergency assistance to keep schooling going to strengthening the state education system. The significant differences between the four case studies in terms of their focus and/or the detail of the education programmes in country are in themselves evidence of the capacity of UNICEF to mould its country level engagement to country context and need.

Finally, in the three case study countries in which donor resources are a significant proportion of the resources in the education sector, the donor coordination role played by UNICEF has been highly relevant. Where it is the key international actor in managing donor funds, it has also been instrumental in ensuring the relevance of the use of these funds to the needs of end beneficiaries and government priorities.



CHAPTER 6

THE RESULTS OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

This chapter discusses the results achieved by UNICEF's upstream work. In particular, it looks at the contribution by UNICEF upstream activities and outputs as described in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 to observed results in terms of changes in the attitudes and discursive commitments made by global and national actors, as well as procedural, policy and behavioural change in education systems in case study countries.

6.1 RESULTS AT GLOBAL LEVEL

Figure 10 sets out the chain of inputs to results for UNICEF's upstream engagement at the global level, based on the foundational theory of change for the evaluation and assuming the same context, UNICEF input categories and BEGE target outcomes as are set out in the foundational theory of change. It also provides references to evidence of where UNICEF has converted its upstream activities at the global level successfully to upstream results at country level.¹⁶

Figure 10 illustrates that over the evaluation period UNICEF's global engagement in education – which by definition is upstream insofar as it is aimed at policy influence at the global level – has had:

- upstream results at the global level in the equitable access (UNGEI, OSCI), quality of education (learning metrics task force),

and education in emergencies (formation of Global Cluster and shaping of standards) KRAs; and

- upstream results at the country level from case study evidence, in the school readiness (using GPE funding to support ECE piloting in Cambodia), equitable access (through UNGEI and OSCI at country level), and education in emergencies (through inclusion of education in emergency responses) KRAs.

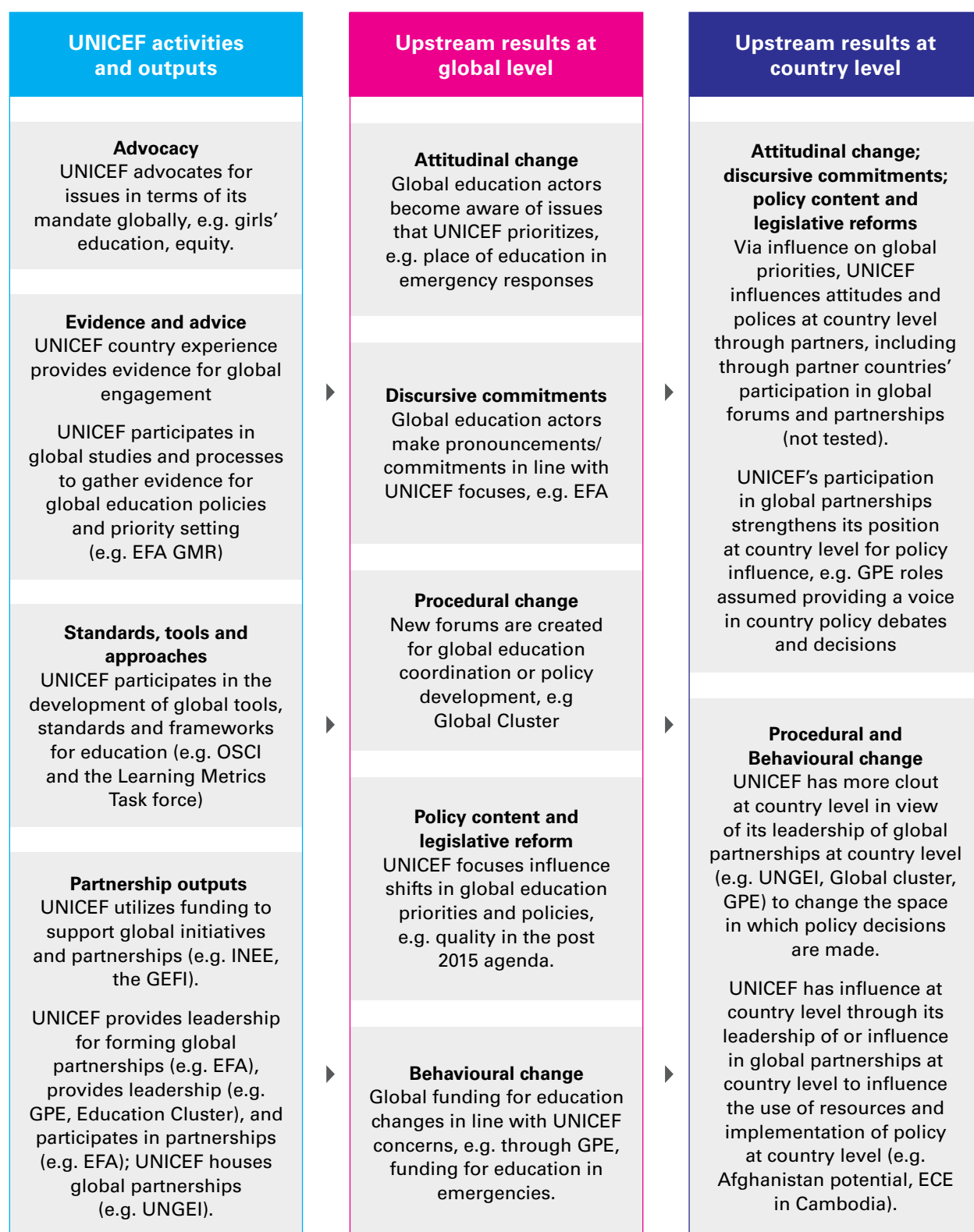
More of these results occurred later in the evaluation period. Although UNGEI was active at the start of the period, it took time for the partnership to deliver results at the country level. Also, the OSCI programme only started after 2006, as did the formation of the global cluster which enabled the shaping of standards, and the learning metrics task force, which started its work in 2012 right at the end of the evaluation period.

¹⁶ The evaluation did not include in its scope testing whether UNICEF's global-level influence translates to upstream results at country level through the engagement of global partners at country level, outside of UNICEF's own engagement at country level.



FIGURE 10

Theory of Change findings for upstream work at global level





At the global level, UNICEF's participation in global and regional education partnerships has provided access to the global education discourse and debates, enabling UNICEF to influence these debates. Drawing on its mandate, priorities and experience at the country level, UNICEF is able to influence what these global partnerships and other partners at country level can do. It has also made key technical contributions, such as the standards for education in emergencies and to the learning standards metric processes and outputs. Working with UNESCO, it has developed global diagnostic tools to identify who the out-of-school children are and reasons for their being out of school, and it is supporting country-level application of the tools and strategies to address the needs of these children (as evidenced in Brazil). Through its leading role in UNGEI it has advocated successfully for girls' education at the global, regional and country levels, amongst other ways through the EFA Global Monitoring Report Gender Review and the production of an equity guide for the GPE (Visser-Valfrey 2012).

The result-chain in Figure 10 highlights, however, that results at the country level on account of UNICEF's participation in global partnerships, would be dependent on the capacity of UNICEF country offices and country education teams to lead or influence the local education groups associated with the global partnerships, or influence government and strengthen its systems through its role locally in these partnerships. This is discussed further in Chapter 8.

6.2 RESULTS AT COUNTRY LEVEL

The desk review highlighted many instances of UNICEF country reports setting out:

- changes in the attitudes of national actors on equity and gender parity issues and disaster preparedness following UNICEF advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, among other things;

- commitments to address issues raised through UNICEF's work, or commitments to increase budget financing in certain areas;
- the development and agreement of sector roadmaps, strategic plans and programmes through UNICEF support or contributions;
- the formal adoption of ECE, CFS, inclusive education, disaster risk reduction policies, strategies, standards and/or guidelines as a result of UNICEF policy advocacy, technical support, piloting of new interventions, and/or and other forms of evidence generation;
- changes in sector procedures, particularly around donor coordination, civil society organization involvement, and policy dialogue;
- increased external financing for the sector through UNICEF facilitation and/or increased financing through growth or prioritization of sector budgets to fund programmes addressing UNICEF-supported policy priorities, such as school fee abolition, or programmes addressing the reasons for exclusion in child-friendly schools; and
- changes in system capacity through UNICEF interventions for EMIS, strengthening the system's capacity to respond to emergencies, planning, and procurement, as well as in substantive teaching and governance capacity.

Country case studies provided the opportunity to examine in depth not only whether UNICEF is doing more upstream work at the country level (covered in Chapter 4), but whether it is doing it well, contributing to results. Since a lot of UNICEF's work moved upstream, it is beyond our scope to evaluate it all, but we have tried to focus on a few cases, and to understand the circumstances under which upstream work is done well. This is the focus of the mini-case studies within the country case studies. In particular, the fieldwork sought to examine UNICEF's contribution through contribution



analysis in these cases, examining the relationships between UNICEF's inputs, outputs and activities and the results observed. The sampling was purposive, aiming to get a selection of case studies that would offer maximum variety in terms of BEGE KRAs, type of UNICEF inputs and likely observed results, while also providing significant information on how UNICEF achieves results.

The case studies were analysed for the strength of UNICEF's arguable contribution and the strength of the results achieved. This analysis is set out systematically in Table 4. In order to make the judgements transparent, we have used the following criteria for the purposes of the analysis:

Categorization of results

- Strong results refer to cases where there has been behavioural change.
- Medium results refer to cases where there have been policy commitments and/or procedural change.
- Weak or no results refer to cases where there have been attitudinal change and discursive commitments only, but no formal policy or behavioural change.

Categorization of contribution

- A strong contribution is defined as a direct link between the result and a UNICEF intervention, where UNICEF at some point has either initiated the work or the central concept, or ensured its endurance (a necessary contribution), and has contributed since then.
- To describe cases where UNICEF's contribution may not have been necessary for the results to occur but has increased the magnitude of the results; or where its contribution was necessary at some point, but other actors have since taken a leading role.
- Weak contribution refers to the cases where there may be a link between UNICEF's outputs described and the result or potential result, but where this link is a negligible factor in the result.


TABLE 4
Assessment of baseline and UNICEF contribution to upstream results observed

Country, result type	Baseline	UNICEF upstream inputs and outputs	
UNICEF programmatic interventions: School readiness			
<p>Cambodia ECE Results achieved: Attitudinal change; discursive commitments; policy and legislative change; procedural change – the establishment of new committees and working groups; behavioural change through implementation, but still limited outside of UNICEF financial support.</p>	<p>In late 1990s, at start of UNICEF's ECE work, awareness was limited. In 2003 very limited resources were devoted to ECE; MoE capacity weak. In 2005/06 less than 14 per cent of 3–5 year olds had access. Government provided ECE through schools, but reached limited numbers.</p>	<p>From 2003 UNICEF provided salaries to commune ECE teachers, triggering systematic UNICEF engagement and strengthening of communes and education ministry planning for ECD. In 2004 UNICEF conducted a review of commune councils with government, resulting in recognition of need for structured ECE, and creation of community pre-schools (CPS). UNICEF continued to pilot CPS model, through training and support for curriculum and teacher guides. It supported ELDS (2006–2009) with associated activities to update ECD practice; and studies on effects of ECD; it influenced FTI and GPE to invest in ECD; it undertook advocacy, provided TA for the national Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Policy and Action Plan and national committee; it piloted inclusive pre-schools.</p>	
UNICEF programmatic interventions: Equitable access			
<p>Cambodia Bilingual Education (BE) Results achieved: Attitudinal change; Discursive Commitments; Policy Commitments; Legal change; Behavioural change through changes in resources and implementation of programme.</p>	<p>Significantly lower enrolment and educational outcomes for children in remote provinces and from minority communities. Government resistance to BE. CARE pilot on BE.</p>	<p>UNICEF stepped in to fund an NGO pilot, previously funded by AusAID. UNICEF contributed to the development of the programme and insisted on a policy framework for BE and formal endorsement. It ensured the inclusion of BE in the education sector plan and made it part of its CFS model. It supported capacity development through the sub-committee on special education, provided teacher training, piloting through teacher upgrading and paid community BE teachers' salaries. It provided a monitoring budget, set up school boards and school support committees.</p>	
UNICEF Programmatic Interventions: Quality education			
<p>Brazil Literacy at the Right Age and the Palavra da Criança. (also has aspects of equitable access)</p> <p>Result type: Policy influence; Behavioural change.</p>	<p>The state of Ceará did an assessment of literacy in 200 municipalities, showing high illiteracy at grade 3 level. A <i>Literacy at the Right Age</i> programme was designed. In Piauí, the Teresina municipality undertook a local initiative.</p>	<p>UNICEF provided technical input for the Right Age programme. After the initiation of the Teresina programme, it was asked to support the programme,. It helped the teachers set up a new NGO – Instituto ProBem – to drive and expand the programme to other municipalities and supported teacher training. By 2013 the programme had reached all municipalities, and in Piauí the programme was adopted as formal policy with a budgetary allocation. In 2010, after advocacy at the federal level, UNICEF brought state education staff to a series of national meetings, resulting in a federal programme. UNICEF supported studies and research and provided technical support to design and implementation.</p>	



	Result observed	Other explanations	UNICEF contribution
	UNICEF programmatic interventions: School readiness		
	<p>Medium results: In 2004 need for structured ECE realized through joint review; in 2006 government endorsed the CPS as one model for delivering ECE services. The ECD Department in MoE is now established with significant internal capacity; an inter-sectoral working group is established. In early 2010 the Council of Ministers passed the ECE policy. In 2013 an ECE committee was established by Royal Decree. Community-based pre-schools and home-based programmes were officially endorsed models for delivering ECE. By 2010/11 ECE access up to 29 per cent . However, limited prioritization of national resources to ECE, other education areas still seen as more important. But ECD included in guidelines for budget planning at commune level.</p>	<p>Other actors include government itself, and the World Bank (school building) through the GPE (as a result of UNICEF advocacy). Also NGOs involved, but they work with UNICEF. Government would not have expanded ECE at the pace it is doing right now without UNICEF push, and the adoption of the lower-cost community school model (attributable to UNICEF).</p>	<p>Strong contribution: It is arguable that UNICEF's long-term ECE activities in Cambodia have been critical in the recognition of ECE, the development of approaches and policies, the building of MoE capacity and the formal adoption of policies: the forms of policies adopted are aligned to the models UNICEF developed and piloted, and reflect UNICEF's holistic approach to ECCD. UNICEF's advocacy and convening power across ministries were acknowledged to have been critical.</p>
	UNICEF programmatic interventions: Equitable access		
	<p>Medium Results: By 2007 the education ministry started implementing BE in two provinces and in a third by 2008. Guidelines were signed by the education minister in 2010, adopting the CARE/UNICEF model. In 2011 the ministry evaluated BE and developed a master plan for 2012 to 2015. In 2012 two more provinces started implementation and in 2013 a high level Praka policy was signed by the minister. Some adjustment of government budget to fund BE has occurred, but not sufficient. BE still dependent on UNICEF financing.</p>	<p>CARE's initial development of the model and running of a pilot were important inputs into the results achieved. Other inputs were the partnership with parts of the ministry who worked with CARE/UNICEF on the model and subsequent documentation.</p>	<p>Strong contribution: It is arguable that UNICEF's insistence to get BE formally adopted and supported by government is key in the higher policy commitments, budgetary adjustments and implementation of BE in four provinces already. Without UNICEF engagement the CARE model might have remained at the level of framework development and a pilot.</p>
	UNICEF Programmatic Interventions: Quality education		
	<p>Strong results: The two literacy initiatives, which were started at local level and developed and rolled out across the states with UNICEF's support, have been adapted and launched at federal level in 2013. In 2011 Piauí adopted the programme as formal policy across the state with a budgetary allocation. In Ceará it is funded through an earmarked tax. The programmes also contributed to understanding how national curriculum guidelines can be operationalized. The programmes directly contributed to literacy improvements.</p>	<p>Other partners' inputs were significant. The political support of the governor in Ceará was important; in Teresina the head of education at municipal level was important. The programmes are funded by Brazil own revenue.</p>	<p>Strong Contribution: UNICEF had a significant role in developing and scaling up the local initiatives. The initial programme was dependent on individuals; UNICEF's support to establish the teachers' NGO revitalized the programme. Its technical inputs were important contributions. Its advocacy actions resulted directly in the programme being scaled up.</p>



Table 4 (cont'd)

Country, result type	Baseline	UNICEF upstream inputs and outputs	
(cont'd) UNICEF Programmatic Interventions: Quality education			
<p>Zimbabwe Child-Friendly Schools Programme.</p> <p>Results type: Policy and legislative change.</p>	<p>In 2003 there were separate, ad hoc government concepts and policies related to quality education.</p>	<p>UNICEF Zimbabwe started using the CFS framework in 2003/4. The initial project was focused on orphans and vulnerable children and CFS was introduced to government with an education tool kit. By 2006 UNICEF was working in five districts piloting the CFSs approach. It provided training and some budget to 50 schools. In 2008 UNICEF continued the roll out to a total of 250 pilot schools. Training was provided by UNICEF to parents and caregivers in parenting. By 2012, there were 197 UNICEF pilot CFSs (of 8,000 schools). With government mainstreaming the concept, UNICEF is no longer undertaking specific CFS programming, but have included it in EFT programming with funding available through the school grants.</p>	
UNICEF Programmatic Interventions: cross-cutting BEGE KRAs and cross-sector collaboration			
<p>Brazil, Municipal SELO programme</p> <p>Results achieved: Discursive and policy commitments; procedural change through the involvement of local communities; behavioural change through changes in budget resources and implementation of policies.</p>	<p>No programme to incorporate children's rights and the MDGs into municipal resource allocation and policy.</p>	<p>UNICEF suggested the Municipal Seal of Approval programme in 1998 in Ceará to encourage better allocation of resources to achieve children's rights and welfare objectives. UNICEF had the Ceará State section of UNDIME – National Union of Education Municipal Secretaries – as a partner to develop the SELO activities throughout the state. It helped design the programme and UNICEF teams still do assessments. Through UNDIME it has gained access to local government processes and gained the support of municipal partners. The programme awards the SELO if points on 8 main goals are achieved: these goals cover ECD and primary education goals, but also health, nutrition, water, and safety goals.</p>	
UNICEF Programmatic Interventions: Education in Emergencies			
<p>Afghanistan School Construction</p> <p>Result type: Policy content and legislative reform Limited behavioural change.</p>	<p>Before 2005 very little coordination, with agencies all working to different designs in school construction.</p>	<p>Up to 2005 UNICEF constructed schools. It recognised the need to move from emergency to developmental programme in 2005 CPD, leading to the development of the concept of low-cost schools, involving local communities: UNICEF developed 7 standard designs and costing. After 2006 it provides TA for cost-effective schools (CES) technical & operational guidelines, and constructed demonstration schools.</p>	
<p>Zimbabwe support for EMIS and evidence-based policy and practice in EIE situations</p> <p>Result type: Attitudinal change; Behavioural change.</p>	<p>Absence of up-to-date sector data as a constraint on planning in 2003. Little official release of data after 2000s.</p>	<p>Between 2003 & 2009 UNICEF supported EMIS, evaluations and publication of 'education atlases' which mapped donor and NGO inputs. After 2009 UNICEF supported a systematic effort to rebuild data and evidence capability, through provision of infrastructure, training and capacity building for officials; TA; initiating and supporting programme evaluation and studies, and support for the EMIS plan, including development of a Roadmap for EMIS.</p>	



	Result observed	Other explanations	UNICEF contribution
	(cont'd) UNICEF Programmatic Interventions: Quality education		
	<p>Medium results: Government recognized CFSs as many familiar ideas in one package and embraced and used it. In 2006 a Ministerial circular was sent to Directors at all levels that outlined CFS and made it the standard for the promotion of quality education. The ministry trained 350 head office, provincial and district personnel in preparation for mainstreaming in all schools in 2010. The ministry started to develop a CFS monitoring and assessment tool. "Minimum (Functionality) Schools Standards" have been published. However, the Ministry lacks the funds to take CFS further.</p>	<p>UNICEF was the donor promoting the CFS concept with strong contribution to its adoption as policy. However, some decline in the programme is registered in the case study, with uncertainty as to whether schools will take it up through the school grants, and no evidence of government filling the gap that UNICEF has left.</p>	<p>Strong contribution: UNICEF's advocacy, technical and policy inputs into the policy change are clear. However, this has not resulted in government assigning its own funding to CFSs. While ETF funding in theory should support further implementation insofar as school development plans should be in line with the minimum CFS-based school standards, this is still donor funding.</p>
	UNICEF Programmatic Interventions: cross-cutting BEGE KRAs and cross-sector collaboration		
	<p>Strong results: In 2005 SELO was rolled out to all 11 states in Northeast Brazil. Municipalities committed to the SELO targets. Child Rights Councils were reinforced to mobilize citizens and monitor progress. By 2006 1179 of 1500 municipalities had achieved SELO by improving, committing resources and changing practices. State and federal levels have allocated more resources to municipalities. Infant mortality fell 1.5+ times faster in municipalities with a SELO, than those just participating in the programme, and 3+ times faster than the rest of Brazil.</p>	<p>The commitment of government at the local government level; the participation by municipal heads of education and other strategic sectors such as social development and health; dissemination of information by the media and the contribution of members of local Child Rights Councils were important to the results achieved.</p>	<p>Strong contribution: The UNICEF contribution was necessary but most likely not sufficient for the results achieved. It required the partnership with municipalities, Child Rights Councils and heads of education at the municipal level. However, as the programme was a UNICEF proposal to start with, it is unlikely that it would have succeeded without UNICEF's upstream work.</p>
	UNICEF Programmatic Interventions: Education in Emergencies		
	<p>Medium results: In the period 2010–2013 UNICEF's model for school construction contracts and payments was proposed by MoE as suitable for all donors. Took time for ownership and degree of harmonization to emerge. However, evidence that not all donors are following plans set by MoE planning department.</p>	<p>The result chain from the baseline through to the policy content reform result can be attributed to UNICEF. Its technical work directly linked to change in policies and plans. Partial change in behaviour.</p>	<p>Medium contribution: UNICEF contribution to result can be argued. However, weak capacity at country level for upstream work and M&E is linked in the evidence to evidence on poor community participation and design, both of which comprise UNICEF CES inputs.</p>
	<p>Medium results: 2011 Roadmap for EMIS, and the preparation of reports for 2000 to 2004, 2009 and 2012, although not released. But, data is available for partners' planning and programming. Recent data support and analysis fed into plans to transition into more systematic development of the sector. Evidence through EMIS and studies has been instrumental in changing attitudes on urgency of interventions.</p>	<p>EMIS was supported by UNESCO through the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, processing 2009 and 2010 data; World Bank limited inputs. UNICEF has been present as a support for EMIS throughout.</p>	<p>Strong contribution: UNICEF has sustained support to EMIS and evidence system during the crisis when most other donors had withdrawn. Its financial and technical support to EMIS post crisis was systematic towards building up the system, the only donor with such inputs.</p>



Table 4 (cont'd)

Country, result type	Baseline	UNICEF upstream inputs and outputs	
UNICEF Partnership Interventions			
<p>Supervising entity (SE) for the Afghanistan GPE account.</p> <p>Result type: Policy influence; Opportunity for system strengthening through role in GPE fund management.</p>	<p>World Bank previously acted as the supervising and management agent for the FTI. UNICEF was the Focal Point for the Education Consultative Group.</p>	<p>UNICEF acts as supervising entity, but not coordinating agency, for the GPE Afghanistan grant. UNICEF is responsible for monitoring programme progress, assessing on-going achievements, providing real-time lesson learning; and reviewing ministry programmatic reports. It also has fiduciary responsibilities to transfer funds every 3 months to a GPE account held by the Afghanistan government. UNICEF also supports the costs of a government official in the GPE coordination unit established in view of weak capacity in ministry to implement the programme.</p>	
<p>Capacity Development for Education Management (Capacity Development Partnership Fund), Cambodia.</p> <p>Result type: Procedural Change in creating a mechanism for more aligned, relevant and harmonized support for capacity development in Cambodia.</p>	<p>Lack of coordination among donors; ad hoc training rather than institutional capacity development; perverse incentives through practice of per diem and 'workshop' training not put into practice. Capacity development inputs not delivering aid effectively Earlier effort within MoE to move towards harmonized approach unsuccessful.</p>	<p>UNICEF, Sida and EU created the Capacity Development Partnership fund in 2011, with UNICEF taking on the transaction cost of setting it up. The fund supports holistic institutional capacity development and responds to the Master Plan for Capacity Development. UNICEF administers the fund on behalf of the partnership. The Fund utilizes domestic institutions, to capacitate them for future capacity building. UNICEF has engaged 10 volunteer service officers to support MoE officials in putting learning into practice. UNICEF's management of the Fund is at the request of the MoE, who felt it did not have the capacity to do so and the expectation is that UNICEF will hand over the fund at some point in the future.</p>	
<p>Zimbabwe Education Transition Fund. (should also be read as an EIE intervention)</p> <p>Result type: Policy influence, capacity building opportunities, opportunities to bring about procedural change.</p>	<p>From 2007 to 2010 UNICEF managed earlier pooled funding. Donors could not fund education in Zimbabwe holistically through government systems because of sanctions.</p>	<p>UNICEF designed and established the Education Transition Fund (ETF) after discussion first started in 2008. ETF I was aimed at stabilizing the education system and supporting efforts towards improving the quality of education. ETF II's (2011–15) overall objective was to support the revitalization of the education sector through system strengthening. It provides block grants to schools to reduce user fee costs for all learners, and undertakes activities such as curriculum development and support to development of sector plans. ETF II is jointly steered by the government, the funding partners and UNESCO, UNICEF. ETF I to ETF II moved from project to unearmarked allocations.</p>	



	Result observed	Other explanations	UNICEF contribution
	UNICEF Partnership Interventions		
	<p>Weak results: UNICEF's role has not been strengthened through its SE role, in terms of policy influence or systems strengthening. The SE role and the way in which UNICEF fulfills it – outsourcing key responsibilities - has not provided upstream leverage beyond influencing the use of the GPE grant. UNICEF has not developed sustainable ministry capacity through its SE role. GPE management still comes with significant transaction cost and is not harmonized.</p>	<p>Lack of results can be explained by low capacity in UNICEF to fulfil SE role in a way that enhances upstream influence overall. Also, the GPE grant is relatively small, compared with World Bank EQUIP programme. Afghanistan also presents a challenging context for implementing a GPE programme.</p>	<p>Weak contribution: Acting as supervising entity has not contributed to UNICEF's upstream results in-country beyond influencing the GPE programme. It is not clear that upstream results was part of the CO expected value-added from taking on the role. The relative size of the GPE grant and Afghanistan circumstances contribute to weak results.</p>
	<p>Medium results: The Fund responds to a critical priority of the MoE and by supporting the Master Plan for Capacity Development achieves relevance, alignment and ownership objectives. The Fund transfers unearmarked contributions to finance the Plan, but the Fund is not managed by the government, and therefore is still a parallel system. The fund is a pooled fund, delivering on harmonization objectives, but has not been successful in bringing other key donors on board. Much capacity building from other donors is therefore still projectized. The Fund uses local capacity for capacity building, ensuring sustainability.</p>	<p>UNICEF has provided more harmonized, aligned and aid-effective support to capacity building. It has shown willingness to manage the Fund, and taken on the cost of setting it up. It provides inputs into design and oversight. The size of the other resources, the EU's role co-chairing the Steering Committee and Sida's membership of the committee are concomitant inputs to make the Fund work.</p>	<p>Strong contribution: The Fund represents an effort by UNICEF to approach its capacity development inputs more holistically, in an aligned and harmonized way. UNICEF's capacity and availability to manage the Fund enables harmonized procedures and aligned support for Cambodia as a whole. UNICEF has been catalytic in setting up the fund in a context where earlier efforts were unsuccessful.</p>
	<p>Strong Results: ETF launched in 2009 by the government, UNICEF and other donors. The main achievements of ETF I were not upstream (delivery of textbooks to schools; training for school development committees), but it enabled a platform for coordination, cooperation and alignment behind government priorities in a difficult context. Link to the Education Sector Working group brought about sector-wide engagement. ETF stabilized the system. The management of ETF has given UNICEF key role at the policy table. In ETF II the activities have moved upstream and are linked to the ministry sector plan. The school grant system changes education sector practice for financing schools.</p>	<p>The presence of an Education Minister keen to bring about change was a critical input which enabled UNICEF and other donors to engage. The financial inputs from other donors (including DFID, EC, Finland, Germany, Norway, OSISA and Sida) influenced government policy-making, enabling UNICEF's influence, as did its central position managing the fund.</p>	<p>Strong Contribution: It can be argued that UNICEF was the only 'politically viable' option to manage the fund given its long-term presence in the country and government's acceptance of it as a partner. Its presence and availability, coupled with the monetary contributions of donors, enabled the ETF and coordination and cooperation. The donor finances are a necessary input to enable UNICEF's policy influence gained through its management of the fund. However, UNICEF's unique position and relationship with government were key.</p>



The four combinations of results achieved/ UNICEF contribution categories emerged, as follows:

Strong results, with a strong UNICEF contribution (3)

- *Literacy at the right age campaign in Brazil*, where UNICEF's intervention was necessary to sustain and scale up what were local initiatives, and where the programmes are fully funded by government.
- *Municipal SELO programme in Brazil*, where UNICEF initiated the programme and has continued to support it; it has been scaled up across states and with additional federal funding to the municipalities.
- *The Education Transition Fund in Zimbabwe*, where UNICEF was instrumental in setting up the fund, opening up the dialogue space to allow policy influence in the education sector through the fund, even if most of the funds came from other donors. The results were strong during the evaluation period, with procedural and behavioural change; however, the sustainability of the fund after the evaluation period is uncertain.

Medium results with a strong UNICEF contribution (5)

- *ECE in Cambodia*, where UNICEF has introduced new early childhood education models and advocated for them. These models have been adopted formally, even though government has not yet started funding the policy change.
- *Bilingual education in Cambodia*, where UNICEF's advocacy for formal policy adoption was necessary and the first government funding to implement the policy has started to flow, even if insufficiently so.
- *Capacity Development Fund in Cambodia*, where UNICEF is managing the fund as an effort towards pooled funding, to harmonize support for capacity building. The policy influence and system strengthening effects

of the fund are limited, as it is managed as a parallel fund by UNICEF. Also, only three donors have joined the arrangement. UNICEF's contribution to the fund is strong, as it was catalytic in setting it up.

- *CFS in Zimbabwe*: where UNICEF has introduced the concept and it has been adopted as policy, but without government funding commitments.
- *EMIS system recovery Zimbabwe*, where UNICEF consistently supported EMIS and evidence-based policy throughout the crisis, and was critical in initiating a recovery road map, with full government engagement. The provision of evidence has led to attitudinal change about coordination and the need for action, and influences policy decisions. The data have however not yet been formally released.

Medium results with a medium UNICEF contribution (1)

- *Cost-effective schools in Afghanistan*, where UNICEF developed standardized school designs for cost-effective reconstruction and these have been adopted by government, but with limited implementation and UNICEF's own continued use is not clear.

Weak or no results; weak UNICEF contribution (1)

- *Supervising entity for the Afghanistan GPE grant*, where the case study argues that little policy influence or capacity building has occurred through the way in which the grant is implemented, beyond influence over the use of the grant, and that this is due to capacity weaknesses in the UNICEF office. UNICEF has made very limited or weak contributions to upstream results occurring.

For three of the ten case studies analysed the contribution analysis showed strong results with strong UNICEF contribution. It is notable that in all of these high result / high contribution



cases the interventions were very context-specific, even though aligned with UNICEF's mandate and priorities. They did not depend on Headquarters' endorsed UNICEF models and approaches (such as CFS or OSCI).

In contrast, two of the four strong contribution, medium result cases involve UNICEF approaches (CFS and early learning development standards), and have achieved policy content change but not behavioural change.

In three cases, namely, Afghanistan School Construction, Zimbabwe CFS, and potentially Zimbabwe ETF, results were stronger earlier in the period, but have subsequently waned. This is discussed further in the assessment of sustainability in Chapter 10.

Two of the three mini-case studies in which UNICEF took on responsibility for managing funds achieved medium success or lower, in both cases arguably on account of a mix of UNICEF capacity and context factors. In one of these, the Afghanistan GPE case, UNICEF made a weak contribution, with weak results. The assumption that the context (complex context and relatively small GPE funding) and UNICEF inputs (capacity) would support the UNICEF Country Office to achieve policy influence and other upstream results on account of its SE role, were not fulfilled. In the other case (CDPF in Cambodia), the contribution of funds was highly significant in the country context, and UNICEF had high capacity in the country office. However, a negative factor in this case is the sustainability of the results. The third case, the Zimbabwe ETF, showed strong contribution to strong results.

The mix of results from upstream work in country case studies suggested that UNICEF more often achieved results related to policy commitments/change and changes in education sector procedures, rather than results further down the chain, such as governments financing the new commitments and policies and changed sector practices. This is supported by findings from the Delphi survey. The highest results were for the

upstream impact of UNICEF having a voice in national education sector groups or processes (92 per cent). More respondents indicated that they had seen substantial results across upstream impact types for the "attitudinal change" category than other categories, while 'behavioural change' had the fewest number of respondents at 52 per cent. Conversely, the highest number of respondents indicated that they had 'never' seen results in the 'behavioural change' category at 6 per cent, although this was still a low proportion.

6.3 UNINTENDED RESULTS

Country case studies also identified unintended and potentially negative results from UNICEF's shift to upstream work.

- The Zimbabwe case study identified the loss of government ownership of sector plans and policies, as well as strategic plan development, as an issue for the ETF. Also, UNICEF's close coordination with other donors and responsibilities under the ETF has called into question UNICEF's neutrality and the government's trust that UNICEF is not just another donor. At the same time donors may at times view UNICEF as having sympathies with government. This presents a challenge in the management of the ETF. Thirdly, UNICEF's shift upstream and away from implementation meant that it was perceived to be less in touch with issues on the ground across the country. Its closer association with donors has meant that it has lost its relationships with NGOs.
- In Afghanistan, the provision of technical assistance for policy development by UNICEF and the agreement it has with the government to manage the GPE funds were seen as creating dependency in government. There was also a risk that government would perceive UNICEF as just another donor as it takes on the fiduciary tasks of GPE grant supervision.



- In Cambodia UNICEF's closer engagement with national government also meant that it lost its relationship with some NGOs.

Global interview respondents also pointed to risks associated with upstream work. These included that taking on brokering dialogues or managing sector funds could compromise UNICEF's ability to promote positions arising from its children's rights mandate. Similarly, global interview respondents felt that getting closer to national governments compromised UNICEF's neutrality, as the organization was seen to side with host governments and not to be advocating as strongly for children's rights as it should. On the other hand, some respondents from UNICEF's global partners also felt that UNICEF has become too close to its donor partners in GPE and was not working sufficiently on the side of national governments to enable the fulfilment of children's rights. Besides the limited evidence of related negative partnership consequences from upstream work in the case study countries (see the previous paragraph), the evaluation did not find further instances of these perceived risks materializing.

The survey, however, tested the generalisability of the perceptions of risk. Notable in the results was the high level of agreement (over 40 per cent) that technical assistance provided by UNICEF creates dependency in government (which would in all likelihood also be true for many donors), and that engagement with national government has resulted in loss of relationships with local NGOs in some cases, which is a UNICEF-specific outcome. Just over 20 per cent of respondents agreed that UNICEF had lost touch on the ground as it is no longer implementing downstream projects, and its loss of neutrality from getting too close to national government was also seen as a negative consequence of the shift upstream. The other issues identified through fieldwork attracted lower support, such as the risk to UNICEF's partnerships associated with managing pooled funds, which suggests that they are specific to the case study countries.



CHAPTER 7

THE INTERNAL COHERENCE OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

This chapter examines internal coherence of UNICEF's upstream work, and addresses two of the six themes of the evaluation, namely whether there are shared definitions of upstream work and UNICEF-wide collaboration on upstream work in education.

'Coherence' was proposed as an additional evaluation criterion for this evaluation in order to examine the alignment of UNICEF's upstream work internally, as well as the alignment with the work of UNICEF's key partners.

The high level definition of internal coherence was unpacked in four sub-dimensions as follows: (i) was there a shared understanding of upstream work? (ii) were common approaches and principles applied, that is, was there an underlying theory of change which translated into clearly stated desired outcomes and realistic pathways? (iii) was there cross-sector collaboration within UNICEF? and (iv) collaboration between the global, regional and country levels of UNICEF.

7.1 SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF UPSTREAM WORK

Interview respondents from UNICEF leadership and the UNICEF education teams at global, regional and country level define upstream work in similar ways, and are of the opinion that there is a common understanding in UNICEF of what it means. This is validated by the survey evidence, in which in only two per cent of possible cases UNICEF Education respondents from all levels indicated that they did not consider

a type of activity described as upstream and there was a limited number of additional activities identified.

UNICEF Education interview respondents in the four country case studies and at the regional and global levels tended to emphasize policy advocacy and influence in their definitions, with systems strengthening included less often in responses. This was despite the strengthening both of policy frameworks and of delivery systems being explicit in the orientation of the MTSP 2006–09 (UNICEF 2005, p. 6).

Examples of such definitions of upstream work from country respondents include:

- Upstream work is “about influencing policy and getting global goals for child development integrated into national programmes in a way that is aligned with national priorities, context and capacity” (Brazil, UNICEF 2014b, p. 37);
- Upstream work is “leverage of policy and partnerships focused on achievement and agreed results” (Cambodia, UNICEF 2014c, p. 10);



- Upstream work is “policy leveraging and advocacy” (Zimbabwe, UNICEF 2014d, p. 29);
- In upstream work “certainly a large proportion of COs are looking at law, policy, finance, regulation and advising and/or advocating around those” (global respondent).

In discussions of instances of upstream work, however, activities to strengthen systems were often presented as upstream work, for example: putting in place capacity in South Africa to train country educators for child-friendly schools; as opposed to training the educators directly); strengthening education planning at sub-national level in Cambodia; and strengthening EMIS systems and capacity in Zimbabwe and Cambodia.

It was also notable that the shifting of budgets so that ‘national programmes’ or ‘policy’ are financed and implemented was absent from the definitions provided by UNICEF interview respondents. In the survey, however, not a single UNICEF respondent thought that working on budgets was not upstream work.

Common pathways to upstream results are understood, although the evaluation found that these may differ between the country and regional levels, as against the global level. At all levels respondents shared an understanding that in order to achieve upstream results, evidence is critical. But there may be different interpretations of what that means:

- One regional respondent said that “for UNICEF, it means what we do in the field, and what works and what doesn’t”. If a field programme works, UNICEF looks at what are the factors, contextualizes them, and “puts proposals on the table with policy and budget owners”
- Global respondents saw proven UNICEF initiatives as important door openers for policy influence, for example “CFS is a comfortable framework to sell...through

it (we) get a lot of work done...CFS is the door opener to policy”

These views are not incompatible because UNICEF global initiatives can be the vehicle for country-contextualized work (like including bilingual education in the CFS model in Cambodia), and country respondents to the survey too recognized the value of a globally recognized ‘brand’ to open doors at country level. Nonetheless, it was notable that global respondents framed upstream work almost exclusively in terms of the global programmes and initiatives, while country and regional respondents put more emphasis on country alignment as a key pathway to upstream effectiveness.

Across the global and country level, however, policy influence was better understood as upstream work than was system strengthening, despite the inclusion of the latter in high level MTSP 2006–09(13) objectives for upstream work. There are no frameworks to clarify whether system strengthening equals capacity building, and whether capacity building includes strengthening both of human resources and of underlying systems and institutions, and the understanding differs between respondents. While many country programmes target capacity building of both types (as evidenced by the discussion of desk review examples of upstream work in Annex 6), there is little effort to learn across countries from these efforts, or to support them with guidance from Headquarters.

The survey evidence supported findings about the emphasis on policy advocacy and influence.

7.2 TARGETING AND MONITORING UPSTREAM WORK COHERENTLY

Across global, regional and country case study respondents and evidence, however, it is clear that the broad shared understanding of what upstream work implies has not yet produced a clear organizational definition of upstream



work in education which could allow it to be translated into coherent and detailed strategies, objectives and targets. As put clearly by the Brazil case study: “there is no explicitly formulated or institutional understanding of what it is, in the sense that it can guide future programme development and planning of resources, including human resources” (UNICEF 2014b, p. 37). The Afghanistan case study found that there is no understanding at the country level of what it means to target and roll out upstream work, despite recognition that the country programme must shift from an emergency to a developmental response. In Zimbabwe, however, “the role of senior staff in driving forward a clear strategy and agenda of upstream work” pulling together country office resources across programmes compensated for weak inclusion of upstream strategies and targets in the CPD.

Chapter 3, supported by Annex 5, sets out how the UNICEF Global education team at the global level has targeted upstream work largely in terms of UNICEF approaches and models. However, these targets do not necessarily help countries to frame, plan, monitor and report on their upstream work, which is often driven by country-specific concerns not related to the global Headquarters-endorsed approaches and models. As stated by a regional respondent, “we were asked to apply globally-defined models of upstream [work]. In some cases we saw distance from New York, for example, we were asked how many CFS are implemented in the country. [It is] hard to respond...hard to implement in practice”.

When these findings were tested in the survey, the responses were mixed. A question in the survey asked UNICEF respondents to indicate the absence or presence of statements and targets for specific results of upstream work in education plans and strategies, and rate their quality. Overall 70 per cent of respondents thought that less than two thirds of upstream activities were covered by statements of objectives and targets. Proportionately, 25 per cent

of respondents at country level thought that these statements and targets were absent or poor quality, compared to 40 per cent of global respondents. More significantly, none of the global or regional respondents thought country level statements and targets were good quality, compared to 49 per cent of country respondents. Further questions about the quality of systems to collect data on and to monitor upstream work, and about processes to review and evaluate the work, had similar differences in responses, as detailed in 0. After reviewing UNICEF documentation, however, it was evident that upstream work was not being well described, and its results were not well targeted, or reported. Apart from counting the number of countries with ECE standards or formal CFS policies, upstream work was often reported anecdotally. At the global level, issues with reporting of upstream work were also raised by interview respondents, including UNICEF respondents, partners and donors who, while recognizing that upstream work was difficult to measure, said that UNICEF had not made enough progress in reporting this work clearly and systematically.

Towards the end of the evaluation period UNICEF introduced Monitoring Results for Equity Systems (MORES), a conceptual framework for effective planning, programming, implementation, monitoring and managing results. The framework – which is highly data- and evidence-based – is aimed at systematically filling the gap between the routine monitoring of inputs and outputs prevalent in current UNICEF country and global reporting, and monitoring of high level outcomes every three to five years. It is based on identifying country by country the determinants of equity results and designing strategies, with intermediate process / outcome measures to track progress against the strategies. The evaluation acknowledges that the process to develop MORES is still under way, and that the cross-sector team at Headquarters is looking at developing guidance for countries on indicators and processes through highlighting case studies. Upstream



work will be included in this process, and is expected to become increasingly important as the work portfolio shifts.

While the evaluation cannot provide definitive findings in relation to MORES at the country level, the approach appears to have potential for internal coherence in upstream work, insofar as it could lead to clearly stated upstream work strategies that are country- and substantive target-specific. It remains to be seen whether the collection of case studies and country strategies will unpack the upstream pathway to results, thereby enabling measurement of upstream work, and/or whether UNICEF will have an analytical framework that allows for the measurement of upstream work across contexts and the substantive results sought. If so, MORES could be a key part of redressing the narrow nature of many of the MTSP 2006–09(13) upstream targets, which did not allow sufficiently for variation across countries in the substantive focus of upstream work on policies and systems, or measurement of the work as such.

7.3 COLLABORATION ACROSS UNICEF SECTORS

At global level there is evidence of task teams for upstream work operating across units and an emphasis on the expectation of cross-unit upstream work at the country level. For example, there is collaboration between WASH and BEGE in relation to CFS; collaboration through Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys; and collaboration between the Global Education team and the Early Childhood Development Unit, and with the HIV/AIDS and Life Skills Unit. Several correspondents at the global level were of the view that the sector distinctions are far less relevant at country level, where programmes are not formulated along sector lines. Respondents also reported the co-funding of

initiatives between sections at the global level, and funding of initiatives of other sections from BEGE funds.

At country level, however, while the teams did find some evidence of upstream collaboration across sectors, it was not systematic. There is a lot of evidence, though, on sectors collaborating on downstream projects. In Afghanistan there is recognition that upstream work should be cross-sectoral, but in practice UNICEF teams related to their respective ministries and targets were still pursued in silos. The Zimbabwe case study highlighted collaboration between sectors around setting up and running the ETF, but this was more the administrative sections working with the BEGE team than with other sectors. However, as other sectors are replicating the ETF model, lesson sharing and support are taking place. In Brazil the SELO programme was by definition cross-sectoral, but the team reported that this did not necessarily translate into explicit collaboration within the UNICEF office. In Cambodia the restructuring of UNICEF's field presence in 2011 from provincial offices to zone offices with an explicit upstream mandate helped facilitate such collaboration as was manifested in the ECE programme. One factor that impedes collaboration is separate streams of funding, together with separate management of teams and work programmes.

In two of the four case study countries collaboration between education staff and Social Policy Advisers associated with MTSP 2006–11(13) Focus Area 5 is emerging. In Zimbabwe this collaboration is reported to be 'close', while in Cambodia the two sections undertook a joint analysis of the education budget. Social Policy staff from UNICEF Headquarters noted that the work of Social Policy officers was by definition upstream, which meant that they had to collaborate with staff from specific sectors as the content of their work at the country level is framed in terms of UNICEF programme focuses



in the sectors themselves. In education, one of the many examples of collaboration is work on per child funding formulas in countries in the CEE/CIS region.

The survey tested the generalizability of these findings within UNICEF by asking education officers to indicate whether they collaborated with other UNICEF units in their upstream work. Altogether 57 per cent of UNICEF respondents believed that collaboration occurred in none to less than a third of BEGE's work, 32 per cent selected one to two thirds, while only 11 per cent indicated that collaboration occurred in more than two thirds of upstream work.

7.4 COLLABORATION BETWEEN UNICEF HEADQUARTERS AND THE REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVELS

Country offices were consistent in seeing their independence as a key factor in effective upstream work. At the same time, however, they acknowledged the importance of support from the regional level, with the exception of Zimbabwe, where UNICEF country staff did not see regional support as particularly important.

Country case study correspondents indicated that there was less contact with Headquarters: the protocol in UNICEF is that engagement from Headquarters to country level is via the regional office. Country offices experience a disconnect between their work at the country level and Headquarters views on upstream work. As the Brazil case study states:

"another view of how Headquarters sees upstream work is that it tends to focus more on integrating global initiatives and ensuring that MDGs and other global goals are integrated in CPs, rather than working with government to build a policy platform that meets national priorities" (UNICEF 2014b, p. 37).

However, the role of Headquarters in raising funds, in 'telling the upstream story better', in providing advice on measuring results and in developing capacity was deemed important, as was highlighted in the Cambodia case study (UNICEF 2014c, p. 26).

In contrast to the other three case studies, in which the need for Headquarters support appeared limited, in Afghanistan development partners and country government respondents felt that much more support was needed for the country office in its upstream work. Several development partners no longer have education specialist staff (just when the education ministry needs greater support) and there are demands on the UNICEF country office to fulfill its Supervising Entity role such that capacity and sound policy development are supported. For these reasons, calls were made for country capacity for upstream work to be strengthened with more sustained support from the regional office and Headquarters.

The survey tested findings on the degree and desirability of collaboration against the various types of collaboration between levels of UNICEF. None of the respondents identified any collaboration that occurs frequently or too often. Respondents indicated their preference for more collaboration, particularly joint reviews of upstream work between levels of UNICEF and sharing of upstream work experience. It is also worth noting that BEGE staff across countries indicated a desire for more participation and advice from Headquarters on upstream work.



CHAPTER 8

THE EXTERNAL COHERENCE OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

This chapter examines the degree to which UNICEF's upstream work was aligned with the work of its key partners, thereby addressing evaluation themes of UNICEF 'positioning' and 'partnerships'.

8.1 COMMUNICATION OF APPROACHES

External coherence is used in this evaluation to cover three aspects, namely: (i) how well UNICEF communicated its approaches and how its partners experienced UNICEF; (ii) how UNICEF positioned itself for upstream work and whether there has been effective coordination with UN agencies and other international partners at the global and country levels; and, (iii) whether donors are willing to fund upstream work in education, and whether UNICEF has used its resources in a complimentary way.

There is mixed evidence from the case studies on whether UNICEF has communicated its upstream policy positions and approaches well. The findings from Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe indicated that UNICEF's main international partners were well informed on UNICEF's positions and approaches. In Zimbabwe and Cambodia this was facilitated through sector coordination mechanisms. In Afghanistan, however, the finding is that whereas UNICEF's positions and approaches were communicated well in the early part of the evaluation period, in the latter part this changed. Earlier, UNICEF acted as lead coordinator of policy dialogue through its role as the focal point for the Education Consultative Group and assisted government in the establishment of the education ministry. Towards the end of the

evaluation period, UNICEF's influence waned as other programmes grew in size, particularly on donor coordination, resulting in UNICEF's central role slipping and weaker understanding of its programme among partners. For example, UNICEF's shift from a national focus to concentrating its support in the ten most disadvantaged provinces was not known by development partner respondents.

8.2 PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

This section looks at whether UNICEF's education upstream work at the global and country level was coordinated effectively and was complementary to that of its principal UN and international partners, and at how UNICEF has positioned itself as a partner. The section also examines the capacity for partnership on the side of UNICEF's partners at the country level.

Global and regional partnerships and coordination

At the global level there was a high level of consensus among the UNICEF partners interviewed that UNICEF is a critical player – in the sense that it adds value to debates and decisions and is credible – through its leadership and participation in partnerships.



UNICEF's contributions were seen by global interview respondents as a necessary complement to the inputs of its principal partners into global forums. This was because its presence on the ground in most countries, and country-wide in many, meant that it brought up-to-date, relevant, country-specific information to partnerships. This was seen as valuable particularly for post-conflict and emergency countries, where its experience was acknowledged. At the same time its mandate and focus meant that it influenced debates in the interest of developing countries (for example in the learning metrics task force) and kept equity and the hard-to-reach disadvantaged education rights holders in the forefront of global debates and agreements. UNICEF's technical contributions to the outputs of global partnerships were acknowledged, as well as its capacity to implement co-designed global partnership initiatives and pilots through its regional and country offices. Organizational capacity and quality of staff at the global level were also seen as important factors in its global positioning vis-à-vis its partners.

Country level partnerships and coordination

Global and country level respondents noted UNICEF's partnership contributions at country level, with UNICEF not only coordinating its inputs with those of its global partners, but also working upstream with local civil society and other local actors. UNICEF's presence country-wide in many countries and perceptions of it as being a trusted or neutral partner were commonly seen as giving it credibility and differentiating it from other players in country partnerships. The following paragraphs discuss different aspects of UNICEF's country-level partnerships, relating the views of global interview respondents to evidence from the four country case studies.

Constructive, complementary country partnerships

In Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe UNICEF has constructive country partnerships within the UN family, and coordination occurs through UNDAF processes where these are relevant. These cases supported the consensus of global interview respondents that for the most part UNICEF and UNESCO were able to construct complementary partnerships at the country level.

Global interview respondents were also commonly of the view that UNICEF's role is complementary to that of the World Bank. As said by one correspondent, "When UNICEF and the World Bank work together at country level, nothing is as powerful," given their relative strengths. The World Bank brings a macro-economic 'economist' perspective, while UNICEF brings its experience in implementing downstream projects and its knowledge of the challenges of capacity at lower levels of the system.

In the case study countries this has emerged as a significant factor in UNICEF's upstream work in education. In Cambodia, for example, UNICEF's ability to provide evidence from its implementation of bilingual education schools and early childhood education of how interventions can work in the country was important in persuading government to formally adopt bilingual education and ECE policies. In Afghanistan, UNICEF was able to demonstrate its cost-effective schools models (although follow-through to ensure implementation once the policy was adopted by government was not effective). In the early years of the evaluation period, UNICEF's ability in Afghanistan to switch from emergency assistance to developmental system strengthening was important.

A common refrain in the country case studies is that UNICEF is able to engage effectively with government as a partner – often more so than some of its key global partners – because



it is trusted, is perceived as neutral, has always consulted extensively on the development of its programmes with government, and is a consistent contributor and/or one of the first global organizations to have provided assistance during emergencies. These perceptions are also an important factor in UNICEF's partnership with global development partners and local actors. This is in effect UNICEF's "capital" for upstream work, built up over years of engagement in country.

Tensions do, however, arise in countries between partners, including between UNICEF and its UN partners, as UNICEF's cross-sector mandate means that it works in what can be seen as the preserve of other agencies and it is often the bigger partner. This is the case between UNICEF Education teams and UNESCO in particular. In the case study countries tensions arose between UNICEF and its UN partners in Afghanistan and Zimbabwe about turf and share of resources. Different approaches to partnership also cause tensions between UNICEF and the World Bank, as in the Cambodia case study. In not one of the cases, however, did the evaluation find that these tensions interfered significantly with UNICEF's ability to work upstream.

Strength in emergency contexts

UNICEF's long-term presence and strength in emergency contexts gives it a leadership role in partnerships. This occurred both in Zimbabwe (where UNICEF took leadership of the Education Cluster when a humanitarian emergency was declared) and in Afghanistan in the early period, when, after the collapse of the previous government, UNICEF was the lead in education policy development and was the focal point for the Education Consultative Group, and assisted government in the establishment of an education ministry.

Global interview respondents noted that as attention is becoming more focused on fragile states and post-conflict contexts, UNICEF also more frequently takes the lead in coordinating partnership processes at the country level. GPE respondents noted that it would have been difficult for GPE to become involved in fragile states without UNICEF as a key partner at the global level and taking on a leadership role at the country level.

Country donor coordination and dialogue strengthening

Generally, global interview respondents, both from UNICEF and from its partners, perceive UNICEF's role in donor coordination to have strengthened over the evaluation period, enhancing UNICEF's capacity to coordinate its country programmes with country partners. The relative strength of UNICEF's in-country presence compared to that of other development partners emerged as an important factor in both Zimbabwe and Afghanistan. In the former, the absence of players such as the World Bank has created opportunities for UNICEF. Similarly, global respondents described UNICEF's increased role in education sector donor coordination and dialogue as the result of bilateral donors changing the composition of their in-country staff and withdrawing education specialists. However, in contrast, in Afghanistan the effective upstream engagement in the early evaluation period was not sustained as more development partners engaged in the country.

Global interview respondents also often credited UNICEF with broadening country dialogue forums to include local civil society and other local partners. In the country case studies this occurred in Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe. In Brazil, for example, this was an important UNICEF upstream result.

Donor coordination is, however, a function of the willingness of donors to be coordinated and the strength of government in demanding



coordination. These were key factors in Afghanistan where donor coordination was weak in the latter part of the evaluation period, with government having weak capacity to force coordination. UNICEF has not been able to turn this around, despite its influence as Supervising Entity for the GPE grant. In Cambodia UNICEF has played a leading role in coordinating donors, supporting government in its drive for more harmonized support. This was assisted by the UNICEF Education Chief strategically lobbying donor partners to build consensus around a UNICEF priority issue in order to be more effective in persuading government. However, efforts to coordinate capacity building support were less successful, as key donors elected not to join the pooled fund managed by UNICEF for this purpose.

Volume of resources

The volume of development resources associated with UNICEF can make a difference in whether the organization is able to coordinate its inputs with that of other donors, and in the strength of its partnership role. While this can strengthen UNICEF's hand as a facilitator

of upstream work, it is not a necessary factor as illustrated by the Brazil case study. In Afghanistan UNICEF's earlier capability to coordinate development partner inputs diminished towards the end of the period, as agencies such as the World Bank managed resource pools that were much bigger than UNICEF commanded. In contrast, managing pooled funding in the Zimbabwe case allowed UNICEF a significant role in coordination of development partners: the ETF represents the most significant inflow of external resources into the Zimbabwe education sector. In Cambodia the fact that Sida provided resources through UNICEF was seen as assisting UNICEF's upstream influence in the education ministry.

The UNICEF Global Education team sees UNICEF taking on a lead role in the management of GPE funds at country level as an important means to strengthen its influence in policy dialogue at this level. The Zimbabwe case – in contrast to the Afghanistan and Cambodia cases – confirms that UNICEF managing funds other than its own can enhance UNICEF's role, but only if it has the capacity in the country office to do so. Box 3 discusses this further.

BOX 3

UNICEF's role in GPE grants and upstream work

The UNICEF Global Education team saw UNICEF's increasing role in the management of the GPE partnership at country level as an important vehicle for achieving upstream results. In the GPE governance model different roles are designated at the country level. While a coordinating agency has mainly liaison responsibilities, the Supervising Entity (SE) or Managing Entity (ME) takes an active role in managing the GPE funds with fiduciary responsibilities, and in monitoring and reporting programme implementation.

The SE is an agency designated to receive GPE funds for transferring to the developing country partner, and to supervise activities as approved by the GPE Board of Directors. The SE works with the developing country partner to prepare a programme. Once the programme is approved, the SE prepares and signs a grant agreement with the partner government. The SE then oversees and reports on the use of the funds, keeping other members of the Local Education Group informed of implementation progress. An ME, which is used when government lacks capacity or conditions prohibit/limit the transfer of GPE funds, receives the funds and implements the activities.

By 2012 UNICEF was serving as the Coordinating Agency for 26 GPE-funded countries, Supervising Entity in Afghanistan and Yemen, and Managing Entity in eight countries (Chad, Comoros, Eritrea, Guinea, Nigeria, Pakistan, South Sudan and Zimbabwe).



Box 3 (cont'd)

How the GPE funds are managed matters to UNICEF as the Supervising Entity. One of the guiding principles of the GPE is that it aims to provide financing for education that is aligned with country priorities but is also aligned to the public financial management and procurement systems of the partner country. The evaluation has found that UNICEF's ability to fulfil these system-strengthening objectives is crucially dependent on capacity in the country office, and the system put in place to manage pooled or grant funds.

Specifically, the country case study found that UNICEF's upstream role in Afghanistan has not been strengthened through its SE role, beyond influencing the use of the relatively small GPE grant (see Table 4). Similar issues emerged at global fieldwork level, raised by global partners of UNICEF, in relation to other countries where UNICEF is taking on the Supervising Entity or Management Agent role. Respondents acknowledge that UNICEF's experience and presence in post-conflict, emergency and fragile state contexts has enabled the Partnership to work in these situations. It is also acknowledged that UNICEF's role in the development of GPE programmes results in high quality programmes that are well aligned. And that in many cases where it takes a leading role in GPE partnerships at country level UNICEF operates in an inclusive, transparent manner that builds ownership across partners.

However, partners noted that the way in which UNICEF manages funds on behalf of partners does not maximize the system-strengthening potential of these funds. Partners acknowledge that GPE funds are usually not large compared to other inflows, and that UNICEF undertakes these roles in conditions that carry high fiduciary risk, but it is also in these situations that aid effectiveness principles and system strengthening are most needed. The Supervising Entity role particularly assumes the full use of country systems to manage the funds. The sense is that UNICEF – as it steps up its role in GPE and undertakes similar roles for other pooled sector funds – should clarify its thinking on aid effectiveness, on how to separate managing its own funding and funds that it manages on behalf of others, and on the full use of country systems without requiring derogations and imposing parallel systems. It should develop better modalities and frameworks to make better trade-offs between short-term fiduciary risk and funding efficiency, and long-term developmental results.

Country office capacity

A comparison between external coherence in Afghanistan, Zimbabwe and Cambodia, highlights the importance of country office capacity in UNICEF's credibility in partnerships at the country level, and the ability to leverage UNICEF's strengths into an effective voice at the policy table and an effective role in donor coordination. To a significant degree UNICEF's partnerships at country level are driven by individuals and personalities and there are risks associated with staff changes. While this is perhaps inevitable given that personal relationships often determine whether partnerships work, there is a lack of system factors that could help ensure sustainability of partnerships, such as monitoring and evaluation systems that create incentives for upstream

work in education. As stated in the Brazil case study "there is no specific monitoring and evaluation capacity to assess upstream work in education and generate management tools that can be used to improve how it is done in current programmes, and how it can be done better in future" (UNICEF 2014b, p. 42).

Willingness and capacity of government for partnership

In Brazil (subnational and national level) and Cambodia the willingness and capacity of the government for partnerships created the opportunities for upstream engagement by UNICEF. The Zimbabwe case study discusses the importance of the engagement by the coalition government's education minister with the international development community, and



the risk at the time of the country fieldwork¹⁷ of this willingness dissipating, threatening the upstream results achieved in the latter part of the evaluation period. In Brazil and Cambodia good or emerging capacity in state institutions contributed to UNICEF's effectiveness.

The only clear case of government not having sufficient capacity to engage meaningfully in partnerships with donors is described in the Afghanistan case study, where the MoE is 'skeletal', and UNICEF has not been effective in building up capacity beyond the early years of helping to establish the education ministry (UNICEF 2014a, p. 2). In the open responses to the survey, some respondents indeed highlighted governments' capacity for engagement as an important factor hampering effectiveness.

8.3 COMPLEMENTARITY IN USE OF RESOURCES

The Brazil and Zimbabwe case studies highlight the importance of sound analytical work to ensure that UNICEF's resources for upstream work are used effectively, complementing other resource flows. In contexts where many donors are present, UNICEF's capacity to act in a complementary way is also dependent on the strength of donor coordination mechanisms and whether UNICEF itself acts in a coordinated manner. In Afghanistan the evaluation found some evidence of duplication and overlap, coupled with weak donor coordination and communication by UNICEF itself. In Cambodia, while donor coordination overall was strong, the effort by UNICEF, the EC and

Sida to coordinate capacity building inputs in alignment with government's capacity building strategy has not been fully successful, and the country office's understanding of whether its resources were being used cost-effectively was hampered by lack of monitoring and evaluation systems for capacity building in country.

8.4 WILLINGNESS OF DONORS TO FUND UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

The Evaluation Framework included a question on the willingness of donors to fund UNICEF's upstream work. From the country case studies the clearest example of willingness to fund UNICEF's upstream work is the funding from the Brazilian government to the country office – the programme of which is upstream – provided via New York and earmarked for Brazil. In Zimbabwe donors also said that they saw the value of UNICEF's upstream work and were willing to fund it. In practice this seems to occur through the administrative charges on the ETF. In Cambodia Sida has been a core funder of the UNICEF education portfolio since 2000, and is complimentary about UNICEF's work. At the global level, BEGE's thematic funders too saw the value of UNICEF's upstream contributions at the global, regional and country level, describing UNICEF as a highly valuable and critical player. However, in common with country funders, international funders placed emphasis on the necessity of measuring upstream work, even if this was difficult, and reporting on it systematically so that the funding for it could be justified to domestic audiences.

¹⁷ By the time the evaluation was completed this risk had reduced with the continuation of the sector plan and the ETF confirmed.



CHAPTER 9

THE EFFICIENCY AND CAPACITY OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

In this chapter we consider two main questions: (i) whether UNICEF has allocated monetary, human and other resources efficiently to upstream work in education; and (ii) whether UNICEF and its partners have had the necessary capacities for upstream work.

9.1 EFFICIENCY OF RESOURCE UTILIZATION FOR UPSTREAM WORK

In this evaluation, efficiency is defined as a measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results. Efficiency, as a DAC criterion, refers to the ratio of inputs to results; simple in principle, but in practice difficult to calculate, especially further down the causal chain, because it requires good data on the results as well as on the volume and cost of inputs.

It is beyond the scope of this evaluation to undertake such a quantitative assessment of the efficiency of all of UNICEF upstream work in education. However, there is a common assumption that the return on UNICEF upstream inputs would be higher than on downstream inputs because of various multiplier effects. Global UNICEF respondents pointed to the in-built likely higher cost-effectiveness of upstream work as a reason for increasing upstream work portfolios. Lacking comprehensive quantitative data on the utilization of funding or human resources for upstream work, we have focused on whether we found evidence to confirm or qualify this assumption.

UNICEF country office respondents said that upstream work is more resource-intensive than downstream work, among other things because the skills required for it are expensive and it is time-intensive. However, the multiplier effects in terms of the number of children reached when the work is effective are much higher, equalling greater cost-effectiveness compared to delivering projects to limited numbers of beneficiaries.

There is indicative evidence that UNICEF's human resource practices and the links to country programming might reduce UNICEF's efficiency in upstream work more than for downstream work. In three of the case studies – Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe – country offices had recently gone through or were preparing for a changeover of key international staff, with the risk of loss of relationships – more telling for upstream than for downstream work – and the additional senior staff time cost of having to rebuild relationships. A three-year rotation policy may not allow sufficient time for investment in building relationships to bear fruit efficiently. Furthermore, as country programmes are revised every five years, that is the only point, together with the mid-term reviews, at which staff profiles can be adjusted. This, together with contracting terms



generally, means that at times UNICEF may carry staff whose skill profiles are not suited for upstream work, or whose opportunity for reskilling is slim.

Country offices can also underestimate the cost of upstream work, not budgeting for time spent in meetings and for report writing. However, in Cambodia where the Education Chief took care to budget for upstream work in proposals to donors, this was found to facilitate upstream work in education.

Furthermore, the efficiency dividend of upstream work is only realized when the work is fully effective, that is, when policy shifts are followed by shifts in budgets and implementation of the policies influenced by UNICEF. Chapter 6 has highlighted that UNICEF's upstream work in education does not always lead to this level of results. This is discussed further in Chapter 10 on sustainability.

Recognizing the limitations of the country case study data on the efficiency of resource use in upstream work, the evaluation included a question in the survey which asked whether respondents agreed with a series of statements related to efficiency and cost-effectiveness of UNICEF's upstream work in education. While about half of the respondents selected the 'I do not know' option at the global and regional level, more than 80 per cent were able to answer the questions for UNICEF's upstream work in education at the country level. Of these, 64 per cent agreed that at the country level UNICEF used its resources efficiently to undertake upstream work, and 70 per cent that the upstream activities that UNICEF undertook were the activities most likely to achieve results. However, a significant number (28 per cent) agreed that at the country level UNICEF took on too much and spread its resources too thinly in education upstream work.

9.2 UNICEF STAFF CAPACITY AND SKILLS

The theory of change in this evaluation identifies as one of the key assumptions / risks that the mix of UNICEF inputs is suited to produce quality outputs, leading to cost-effective and efficient policy influence and capacity building. Of the key inputs listed, this report has so far assessed UNICEF's strategy, resources, internal collaboration, management arrangements and monitoring and evaluation. In this section we turn to UNICEF's staff capacity and skills, one of the focus themes of the evaluation.

Effect of staffing and capacity on UNICEF's upstream work in education

Global interview respondents, both UNICEF and non-UNICEF, almost without exception emphasized that a key factor in the extent and effectiveness of UNICEF's upstream work in education was whether its country office and/or education section leadership saw upstream engagement as an important UNICEF focus and whether the office had the right staff profile to be effective in upstream work. While interview respondents mostly thought capacity had increased, it was recognized that much more was needed.¹⁸ Two types of skills were emphasized: (i) the technical and analytical skills needed for policy analysis to participate in policy dialogues, identify and direct technical work programmes to strengthen UNICEF's position, and support government; and (ii) the 'soft' leadership, dialogue and relationship skills needed to engage upstream and build partnerships.

These issues were apparent in the country case studies. In Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe where country office and education section leadership was focused on upstream work and had the skills to engage, there is significant

¹⁸ In the survey this evidence from interview respondents was tested by asking whether survey respondents thought capacity increased for upstream work in education between 2003 and 2012. Altogether 73 per cent of respondents agreed, with 20 per cent being neutral and 7 per cent disagreeing.



evidence of quality, country-appropriate outputs and upstream results. In all three cases the technical and leadership/ lobbying/negotiation skills of education staff and country leadership were highlighted as significant contributors to success. For example, in Cambodia:

“...the competence of the UNICEF Education Advisors or Specialists was critical to ensuring that the opportunities provide by the context for [upstream work] were taken advantage of... both the technical expertise and the lobbying and strategic bargaining capabilities of UNICEF senior advisors can be critical to achieving impact through upstream work in education” (UNICEF 2014c, p. 29).

In Brazil, while the leadership, relationship and technical skills of the country education team were acknowledged, the evaluation also identified concerns that the effectiveness of the UNICEF Brazil programme would be undermined by capacity limitations within the UNICEF country office and Brazil regional office teams in terms of the number of staff. At the national level the team comprises only two education experts. As stated by the case study:

“Comments from some partners suggest that the UNICEF staff are too thinly stretched and are finding it difficult to dedicate sufficient time and attention to all the activities under way” (UNICEF 2014b, p. 39).

This raises issues about the sustainability of the work in Brazil, particularly as the Chief of Education is about to retire.

In Afghanistan, where the case study found that the capacity of the country office was not geared to taking up opportunities for upstream work offered by the context, the evidence points to weak upstream inputs and limited results that have not been followed through.

“The first assumption (of the theory of change) is that the mix of UNICEF inputs is suited to produce quality outputs leading to policy influence, capacity building and upstream

impact cost-effectively...the current mix of staff capacities and the approach to capacity building are inadequate for this purpose... with GPE, UNICEF is compromised by...its lack of appropriately qualified staff.” (UNICEF 2014a, p. 27)

The survey tested fieldwork findings on staffing and capacity by checking them as a factor both when education upstream work is successful and when it is not. Respondents were asked to indicate the level of importance for a particular factor. Although skill factors on average were not rated important in explaining success more often than other factors, they were seen as a constraint on upstream work more often than most other factors.

Capacity has therefore emerged as a key challenge to deepening UNICEF's upstream work. In the next paragraphs we look at efforts by UNICEF to improve capacity over the evaluation period.

Upstream capacity building efforts

The UNICEF Global Education team recognizes the importance of building both technical skills and leadership capacity for upstream work, and offered a course aimed at building such skills through the World Bank Institute (see Chapter 3 for a description of capacity building initiatives over the evaluation period). Capacity building needs are as diverse as UNICEF's upstream engagement and roles in countries. In some countries hard analytical skills are needed to empower UNICEF staff, while for other programmes the required skill set includes abilities in leadership, negotiation and relationship building. From this perspective, a key gap currently is the lack of formal opportunities to build technical skills for upstream work after the discontinuation of the WBI course, as identified by respondents. UNICEF has tried to revive the WBI course through partnering with other institutions, as it will be allowed to use the material, but has so far not been successful.



Respondents from the UNICEF Global Education team reported that the feedback on the WBI course was positive. At the country level some respondents were aware of the course but did not report direct experience of it. The Harvard course was also mentioned by some, but fewer, respondents.

Respondents from the Global team also recognized the need for more systematic capacity building outside of formal training, including mentoring and staff exchanges. The latter were said to be difficult to do, however, as country offices are not always willing to release staff to support colleagues elsewhere. One Global team respondent pointed out that UNICEF has the mechanisms to release staff temporarily for work elsewhere, as is routinely done for emergency work. UNICEF also has examples of a central pool of skilled staff in areas such as IT support providing support across countries. This model has not been applied systematically to upstream work. However, the use of UNICEF Global Education team staff to support the development of programmes in country offices that are applying for GPE grants is an example of such deployment.

Despite this acknowledgement from Headquarters level, and reports of regional capacity building through engagement with the regional offices, the evaluation found limited evidence of formal capacity building at the country level in the four country case studies.

A lack of capacity building efforts was identified as a short-coming in the Brazil case, although the case study acknowledged that an internal seminar on what it means to work in Brazil as a middle-income country was a first step at improving the situation. The Afghanistan case study also found that capacity building at the country level was insufficient, given the degree of retraining required to undertake a more upstream work programme.

In Zimbabwe, however, the case study found that capacity for upstream work was built in the country office both by increasing the number of

staff, and through the restructuring of the education team in 2010, after which staff with specific upstream experience and skills were recruited (UNICEF 2014d, p. 16). While there was limited structured training, experienced senior personnel allowed 'learning by doing and by watching' (p. 36). In Cambodia, besides using Social Policy Advisors to support upstream work, the country office has also built capacity through recruiting senior Cambodian local staff, who can undertake the work (UNICEF 2014c, p. 31). In these two cases, capacity has been improved more through changing the staff profile than through formal capacity building of existing staff.

Efforts to change staff profiles

Some UNICEF global interview respondents felt that capacity building for upstream work was only one strategy, and not even the most effective one, to resolve capacity issues in support of upstream work. Changing staff profiles was seen as a more important intervention. The evaluation investigated the degree to which staff profiles had changed over the evaluation period.

Several UNICEF interview respondents at the global, regional and country levels provided examples of how UNICEF prioritizes upstream skills and experience when recruiting staff, in cases where the country office has identified the need to strengthen its staff profile for upstream work. Global interview respondents were also in agreement that the staff profile of Headquarters is changing, with skills in education policy and analytical work being sought perhaps over skills in education delivery. However, job descriptions at the country level may not have changed significantly. An analysis of the job descriptions used for the recruitment of the Chief of Education position in the case study countries – one from before or early on in the evaluation period and the latest one – showed a marginal shift in the duties of the Chief of Education towards upstream work. Job descriptions in UNICEF draw on standardized formats which the Country Representative can



adjust to suit country needs. Points from the four country case studies include:

- The job descriptions and skill profiles for Brazil, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe were almost uniform, suggesting that country offices do not often customize job descriptions to their needs. Cambodia's job description was customized, however, with the inclusion of a uniquely formulated task on SWAp engagement and capacity building of government. The standard job description for the key Education positions at country level is however not highly oriented towards upstream work. This is somewhat mitigated by performance assessment statements, which are more detailed in their description of upstream responsibilities.
- However, the job descriptions did show an adjustment towards upstream work compared to earlier job descriptions, mostly through the addition of a task formulated around policy dialogue and advocacy for UNICEF's global goals.¹⁹ Except for Cambodia, which already included participation in SWAp and support for government in its job description in 2003, earlier job descriptions were focused on the design and management of UNICEF's country education programme.
- In two cases weights were included for upstream work: it was weighted at 15 per cent of tasks in Afghanistan and 20 per cent for the SWAp component in Cambodia.
- Although this example is outside of the evaluation period, the job description for recruitment currently in process in Brazil was also reported to deviate from the standard: the job title of Chief of Education will be changed to Chief of Education and Partnerships, and the terms of reference will be adjusted to include a far stronger focus on leadership and upstream work, and open the way for non-education specialists with the right skills.

¹⁹ "Promote the organizational goals of UNICEF through advocacy and policy dialogue in the education sector, by actively engaging in communication, networking and participation at every opportunity inside and outside of UNICEF, leveraging the strength of UNICEF's mission, goals and programmes."



CHAPTER 10

THE SUSTAINABILITY OF UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

Sustainability is defined for this evaluation as “the continuation of benefits from UNICEF’s engagement at the upstream impact and BEGE impact level over the long term; and the resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.”

Upstream work differs from downstream work in being long-term. Having policy influence itself takes time (as is well illustrated by the case studies where upstream results were achieved over several programme cycles), and translating the policy influence into implementation and strengthened systems takes even longer.

Resilience to risk therefore means not only the resilience of the upstream results, but the resilience of UNICEF inputs and outputs to sustain and deepen results. For the purposes of the evaluation, therefore, we have assessed upstream work in education in terms of the sustainability of UNICEF inputs and outputs and the sustainability of the upstream results.

10.1 SUSTAINABILITY OF UNICEF INPUTS

The importance of sustaining global funding for UNICEF upstream work in education and possible risks in this regard were highlighted in Chapter 2 of this report, with case studies emphasizing this vulnerability at the country level. In Brazil the case study recognizes that government funding is vulnerable to a change in government, and in Cambodia UNICEF’s upstream work is seen as reliant on continued willingness of one donor to support its programme. Urgent attention to how upstream

work is managed and measured is needed to facilitate funding flows. In Afghanistan weak upstream outputs and activities (and capacity to monitor the results of work) threaten funding for upstream work, with Sida already switching back to earmarked rather than thematic funding at country level.

In terms of human resources, the country case studies found some evidence of good planning for upstream work and of support to the quality and sustainability of the work through the budgeting of staff time. However, there were also examples of staff being overburdened and having limited time to fulfil their upstream responsibilities. This may be the result of inadequate budgeting for upstream work, possibly because it is thought to require less funding than downstream work, and also because upstream work is not given sufficient priority in country strategies.

At the global level the evaluation found no evidence to suggest that UNICEF’s engagement is not sustainable. While it is involved in many partnerships and takes a leadership role in some of them, UNICEF has prioritized key partnerships, such as GPE and UNGEI, as well as the important time-delimited joint teams that will influence the global agenda after 2015, such as the learning metrics taskforce and the post-2015 consultation.



10.2 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTIONS

Capacity shortfalls are a major factor highlighted that may affect whether UNICEF's activities and outputs contributing to its upstream results are sustainable, for example in Brazil and Afghanistan.

In Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe change-overs in staff were identified as factors contributing to risk to the sustainability of upstream activities. The Zimbabwe report observed that:

"In addition to the time lapse between departure and arrival of old and new staff, new appointees will clearly need some time to find their feet and understand the Zimbabwe situation. This change may therefore impact on the sustainability of recent results" (UNICEF 2014d, p. 34).

In Zimbabwe both the representative and the education chief changed at the same time. The risk presented by staff turnover is reduced where national staff and/or other international education staff besides the representative and chief of education are active in upstream work.

Weak UNICEF targeting, measuring and monitoring of upstream work were identified as a gap in ensuring that the work is sustained in country programmes.

Changes in the composition of development partners' personnel and in the relative size of UNICEF's funding stream for education at the country level can be positive factors supporting UNICEF's capability for partnership and coordination. At the same time, however, when they turn in the opposite direction, this can affect the sustainability of UNICEF's coordination role, as was the case in Afghanistan. In Zimbabwe the long-term funding of the education sector by donors is in doubt. This will affect funding flows into the ETF and UNICEF's role in policy dialogue.

The Cambodia study raises a key point about the sustainability of 'piloting' UNICEF-advocated approaches, when government is not taking up the financing of implementation. In the absence of securing government financial commitment, it is not clear whether and for how long UNICEF can sustain the financing of implementation activities.

10.3 SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS

Different levels of results were found to be associated with different risks to the stream of benefits continuing over time.

Procedural changes – in other words changes in the process whereby policy decisions are made, such as opening new spaces for policy dialogue – such as occurred in Zimbabwe, Cambodia and Afghanistan are vulnerable to changes in the context, such as political change. In Zimbabwe the evaluation period included the appointment of a new minister which opened up dialogue space. The case study also observes that opening up of space is dependent on the resultant political alignments, which may put the sustainability of the ETF channel for upstream work into question.

Policy and legislative change is more durable, as governments are slow to withdraw policies once they have been formalized and reversing legislative change comes with high transaction costs. However, the likelihood of these results translating into improved BEGE target outcomes is dependent on UNICEF sustaining its financing of implementation (bilingual education and ECE in Cambodia), and undertaking follow-up and enforcement when high and fragmented donor inputs are involved (cost-effective schools in Afghanistan).

Behavioural changes, such as change in a government's financing policy and the introduction of effective implementation, have the lowest risk of benefit flows reducing over time. It is only when behavioural change is realized



that full sustainability is achieved. The analysis in Chapter 6 identified two cases where UNICEF upstream work has succeeded in bringing about behavioural change, both in Brazil where government has significant own resources and is a funder of UNICEF. However, the Brazil case study does note that there is still some degree of dependence on UNICEF inputs for technical assessment and support work in the programmes involved.

The country case studies also investigated the sustainability of capacity building work. As is the case for most donors, UNICEF has not been fully effective in ensuring that sustainable capacity is put in place, with the possible exception of Cambodia, where the case study argues that UNICEF's capacity building support for the EMIS and planning functions has resulted in sustainable institutional capacity being built. In Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, however, investment in the capacity building of individuals rather than institutions makes the sustainability of the results questionable.



SECTION VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides the overall assessment of UNICEF upstream work in education, the lessons observed with validity for future UNICEF upstream work in education, and recommendations arising out of the evaluation.



CHAPTER 11

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNT

11.1 UNICEF'S UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION

UNICEF's upstream work in education far predates the MTSP 2006–09(13). Yet, this is the point at which UNICEF set its organization-wide strategy with policy influence and the strengthening of systems for education at the centre. Of interest to the evaluation was the degree to which upstream work increased or the ways in which it changed over the evaluation period, and how this influenced the results achieved.

Upstream work grew in volume at global and country level, and its focus changed in line with shifts in global education priorities. Over the evaluation period the UNICEF Global Education team developed additional analytical frameworks, such as OSCI and SEE, and adjusted existing models, such as CFS, to underpin country education teams' approaches to upstream work in education. The team also intensified its engagement in global partnerships. Regional offices shifted their support for country offices upstream, and continued to undertake regional analytical work and develop regional partnerships. At the country level UNICEF took on more upstream work in each of the four case studies: in three of the case study country programmes (Brazil, Cambodia and Zimbabwe) the full country programme was conceptualized in terms of these upstream objectives by the end of the evaluation period, with the remaining direct service delivery activities interpreted as involving the collection of evidence or demonstrating approaches and models to convince government.

While the analytical frameworks and models of the Global Education team feature heavily in country upstream work, country teams also undertake significant upstream work that does

not directly use these frameworks and models, but is driven by country-specific issues. The evaluation also shows an increased focus at the country level on equity and hard-to-reach out-of-school children, in addition to an earlier emphasis on access and gender parity. These are aligned with changes in UNICEF's global focus.

Participating in or leading partnership initiatives is a key part of UNICEF's upstream work. Over the evaluation period UNICEF increased its role in donor coordination and policy dialogue in countries in which aid is a significant resource in education. In other instances it has demonstrated the ability to bring country partners together, across policy sectors and spheres of society.

UNICEF education staff perceive upstream work as policy advocacy and influence, and working in partnerships with government and development partners. Upstream work in education is therefore focused on formal policy change and sector planning, and only rarely does this include an engagement in sector budgets to ensure implementation of changed policies. System strengthening – particularly of EMIS systems – and human resource capacity building in education were already part of country programmes prior to and during the early years of the evaluation period. However, in this area too work increased over the evaluation period.

11.2 HOW WELL DID UNICEF TRANSLATE ITS UPSTREAM WORK INTO RESULTS?

The team evaluated UNICEF's upstream work in terms of its relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.



The evaluation was able to establish that UNICEF's upstream work is **relevant** to its mandate and to global education priorities. It has also both influenced shifts in global priorities and moved with these shifts. At the country level UNICEF's work is characterized by striking a balance between being relevant to the priorities of government and being relevant to the emerging needs of the population as identified/assessed against UNICEF's mandate.

UNICEF gets results from its upstream work, and is therefore **effective** to a degree. The evaluation found significant evidence that it is able to bring about policy change at the country level, often succeeding in getting its Headquarters-endorsed models and frameworks such as CFSs and ELDS adopted as or integrated into formal policies. Country teams, however, also often successfully advocate for the adoption of country-specific, UNICEF-initiated or supported policy solutions to key access, equity or quality issues in education. In line with UNICEF education teams perceiving policy change to be the upstream objective, instances where such policy change translates into government budget changes and implementation are rarer. Whilst there is evidence of UNICEF successfully facilitating development partner funding to its areas of concern, it is nonetheless only when governments' own revenue flows to fund implementation sustainably that UNICEF-advocated policies are fully integrated and internalized. *It can be argued that it is only at this point that UNICEF can say it has been fully effective in its upstream work.*

The key related lesson from the evaluation is that in order to make its upstream work more sustainable, UNICEF needs to undertake more work aimed at shifting government budgets to finance policy changes aligned with UNICEF focuses and changing sector practices. The common conceptualization in practice of upstream work as influencing policy change falls short of recognizing the importance of following policy influence through to implementation.

UNICEF has also been particularly effective – and increasingly so over the evaluation period – in influencing national sector groups and/or processes across all contexts, and in acting as an intermediary to open up space for dialogue.

There was some evidence of UNICEF investing successfully in capacity building/system strengthening, besides policy change. However, these results as for other donors are fraught with sustainability issues (for example when human resource capacity is built) and with dependency issues (for example when technical assistance is provided to develop systems). It is not clear that UNICEF is any better or worse than average among development partners at capacity building and system strengthening: the evaluation found evidence of success as well as failure. However, the expected result chains from UNICEF's efforts to strengthen systems through technical assistance and other interventions to building the capacity of government officers were not clear. This finding relates to the lack of a common understanding of system strengthening including capacity building.

A key lesson from the country case studies is that building capacity in a sustainable manner is difficult and carries risks. There is as yet not enough work by UNICEF to understand how its comparative advantages could be exploited to develop more effective UNICEF capacity development/system strengthening interventions.

UNICEF's global engagement in education bears significant results insofar as UNICEF is good at influencing global education debates and frameworks, with its presence in many countries (and country-wide in many of them) giving it a comparative advantage. However, the evaluation found that UNICEF should not assume that it would automatically gain upstream capability and results through its taking on the management of pooled or vertical funds (such as GPE) at country level. Such an outcome is highly dependent on country office and education team capacity and country circumstances.



The evaluation also identified concerns with regards to UNICEF's relevance to global aid effectiveness priorities in the way that it manages pooled and vertical funds where it has taken on this responsibility. These weaknesses are not only an issue in terms of the relevance of UNICEF's upstream work to the aid effectiveness agenda, but also in terms of its own upstream objective of system strengthening.

A key lesson from the evaluation, therefore, is that managing funds on behalf of partners is an important step towards upstream results, but it will only bear fruit if it is coupled with effective donor coordination, UNICEF using country systems to the maximum extent, and capacity

in the UNICEF country office to leverage the task of managing the funds into policy influence and system strengthening. The relative size of the funds also counts, but in principle managing any funds over and above UNICEF's own funds should contribute to UNICEF's influence, as long as the circumstances are conducive.

UNICEF has, however, successfully used global partnerships to strengthen an upstream perspective in its own and other development partner engagement in emergency situations and post-conflict or fragile states (see Box 4 for a summary discussion of UNICEF's upstream effectiveness in fragile states).

BOX 4**Summary assessment: UNICEF's work in post-conflict and emergency countries**

The TOR required the evaluation to assess UNICEF's work in post-conflict and emergency countries to assess its performance in capitalizing on opportunities created by humanitarian crises to advance education policy development and advocacy, leveraging resources for 'building back better' in order to strengthen the education system response.

This box brings together evidence from elsewhere in the report to answer the questions posed by the TOR. The fieldwork case study countries included one post-conflict country (Afghanistan) and one in which a humanitarian emergency was declared during the evaluation period (Zimbabwe). Both these case studies provide evidence of UNICEF using its unique position to lead rebuilding and transformation of the education sector. In Zimbabwe, for example, UNICEF was in the lead when the Education Cluster was convened, and used this and its post-emergency role to coordinate donors, leverage resources and enable the recovery of the education system. While respondents in Zimbabwe – who felt that they had a very good education system even ten years ago – did not agree with the 'building back better' terminology, there was recognition of the role UNICEF had played and was playing in raising awareness on the state of education, focusing on equity issues such as orphans and vulnerable children in a Southern African context and investing through the ETF in rebuilding the system. UNICEF was one of the first organizations in Afghanistan after the defeat of the Taliban. The Afghanistan case study reports that in the early post-conflict years UNICEF leveraged its access from humanitarian assistance to focusing on coordinating donors towards development assistance, including by supporting the establishment of an education ministry. Its back-to-school campaign and work on getting girls into school have borne fruit. This has been through (cost-effective) school construction models that provide boundary walls and separate latrines, through building capacity for female teachers, running advocacy campaigns, and establishing an Afghanistan Girls Education Initiative linked to UNGEI. These are good examples of where UNICEF has used its humanitarian assistance position to work for strengthened, more equitable education systems.

The cost-effective schools initiative in Afghanistan is a good example of where UNICEF gained upstream access through its downstream demonstration of the models, but follow-through to coordinate donors and enforce the standards did not take place (even in relation to the girl-child-friendly aspects) because



Box 4 (cont'd)

of capacity shortfalls in the country office. Issues emerged in the case study around the management of the GPE fund and whether absorbing capacity for this task without ensuring that it leverages upstream influence is a strategic choice. This highlights the importance of access to government downstream capacity, and the ability to coordinate and persuade international partners in a complex governance context as mutually necessary components of upstream work in 'building back better'. In Zimbabwe, by contrast, these elements came together with UNICEF demonstrating its capacity through the delivery of textbooks, and leveraging that and its long-term influence to coordinate donors and support government.

A key challenge for UNICEF in these situations is demonstrated by the Afghanistan case: it is often difficult to get staff profiles right when capacity both upstream and downstream is demanded, and more so given the difficulty of attracting sufficient numbers of quality staff in these situations. Given the increasing profile of UNICEF in managing GPE grants – which in principle could give it leverage to 'build-back-better' – two systemic props would assist in ensuring that UNICEF and partnership inputs result in the type of outputs that will have sustainable upstream results: ensuring sufficient capacity support for such situations from regional offices, headquarters and other UNICEF country offices, and developing the corporate mechanisms to ensure the aid-effective management of GPE (and other pooled funding like the ETF).

Finally, the discussion of UNICEF's global partnerships in education details its contributions to policies and guidelines in disaster planning, preparedness and response. The evaluation found evidence for these being implemented through UNICEF initiatives in several countries around the globe, including in Brazil, the LACRO region, the Seychelles, countries in EAPRO and others. The scope of the evaluation did not allow investigation of the effectiveness in terms of upstream results or the effect on equity concerns these may have had.

Overall, the evaluation found that the likely focus areas and pathways to upstream results differ between middle-income, low-income and fragile-status countries. By 2012 UNICEF was dealing with more middle-income countries than in 2003, and mostly with middle-income countries. With lower programming resources in these countries, and given the country context, the upstream focus should be different. If UNICEF is to stay in these countries, it is important for it to take stock of how upstream work in middle-income countries is effective, and develop the organizational know-how to maximize results.

The evaluation was not able to assess reliably how **efficiently** UNICEF has converted inputs to results, as financial and systematic results data were not available. UNICEF is, however, perceived to be efficient in its upstream work by interview and survey respondents. But human resource policies and practices, and weak planning and budgeting of upstream activities, can detract from the efficiency of upstream work. The evaluation supports the common

view that upstream work is a more efficient use of resources than downstream work, insofar as it can potentially affect the lives of more education rights holders through system-wide changes. This however ties efficiency to achieving results in terms of implementing changed policies successfully, something that UNICEF has been less effective at than getting the policies changed.

There is some internal **coherence** in UNICEF's upstream work, through the shared understanding of upstream work and collaboration between different levels of UNICEF. However, there are differences between how different levels of UNICEF understand the most strategic pathways to upstream results. This is exacerbated by the lack of coherent and systematic strategy, management, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to target, manage and report upstream work.

In terms of external coherence, UNICEF developed constructive partnerships with other UN agencies and partners at the global and country level, drawing on the relative strengths of



different organizations. Inevitably, tensions do arise over turf, resources and approaches to upstream work, but the evaluation found no significant evidence that such tensions are not managed for the most part or that they interfere with upstream work.

The evaluation found that UNICEF upstream work can result in fully **sustainable** upstream results when it goes beyond raising awareness and policy results to work for the financing and implementation of the policy changes by government partners. Anything short of that remains more or less dependent on UNICEF's own or its partners' funding, both of which are vulnerable to a number of internal and contextual factors. The evaluation also identified concerns about sustaining UNICEF upstream inputs, on account of declining funding and sometimes limited human resources relative to the scope of country upstream work.

11.3 WHICH FACTORS CAN EXPLAIN UNICEF'S ACHIEVEMENT OF RESULTS IN UPSTREAM WORK IN EDUCATION?

UNICEF input factors

The country assessments showed that the analytical skills, as well as leadership, lobbying and negotiation skills (particularly at the senior level) of country teams were key factors in effective upstream work. While there is evidence of UNICEF's capacity for upstream work improving over the evaluation period at the global level and in some countries, staffing and skill constraints remain a key factor hampering UNICEF's upstream effectiveness.

The related lesson from the evaluation is that recruiting and developing competent senior education advisors who have the necessary upstream technical skills as well as the capacity to develop effective lobbying strategies is critical for effective upstream work.

UNICEF does not target, measure, monitor and support upstream work in a way that recognizes achievement or supports sustainability of inputs and programming. While UNICEF global strategies and monitoring and evaluation frameworks over the evaluation period included specific upstream key result areas and targets, the articulation of these (for example countries adopting Headquarters-endorsed models and frameworks), did not allow the measuring of the upstream effort and results that occurred at country level. Countries that prepared explicit strategies for upstream work and budgeted staff time for the activities that arose from them were therefore also the exception rather than the norm.

If differences in pathways in different countries were understood better, and different types of upstream work and associated results, and if key performance indicators were adjusted to take better account of how countries perform in upstream work, this would support improved framing and monitoring of upstream work.

Where there is weak collaboration between UNICEF education and social policy staff within countries, this hampers more frequent and effective targeting of government budgets to deepen UNICEF's policy influencing results. There are examples of where such collaboration is happening with some success. The collaboration between UNICEF regional and country offices supports upstream results in many cases. There is, however, greater potential for regional and headquarters support to compensate for capacity weaknesses at the country level in upstream work, particularly in difficult contexts.

UNICEF context and output factors

The evaluation found that a key comparative advantage for UNICEF in upstream work stems from its history in country and its mandate. UNICEF's reputation, presence in countries, credibility and existing relationships with governments are important enabling factors



and represent crucial ‘upstream work capital’ built up over years and sometimes decades of country programming. Partners, governments, international and local CSO partners trust UNICEF and see it as neutral, while recognizing the legitimacy of its mandate and its position as a UN organization.

The related lesson is that this UNICEF organizational ‘upstream work capital’ should be treated carefully when making choices in upstream work. The country case studies showed trade-offs between UNICEF’s engagement in upstream work and perceptions of it as credible and neutral.

UNICEF’s downstream experience and exposure is another key comparative advantage in upstream work. UNICEF’s downstream experience provides it with credibility at the global and country levels. UNICEF is differentiated from many other partners because it is able to bring realities from the ground to national policy dialogues, and global priority- and standard-setting. Having offices at sub-national level helps. Furthermore, its capacity to implement projects allows it to pilot models and approaches, gather evidence and convince partners and governments.

The related lesson from the evaluation therefore is that effective, relevant upstream work in which UNICEF has a comparative advantage over many of its partners requires continued downstream capability.

UNICEF’s increased focus on evidence has brought upstream results that otherwise might not have occurred. This conclusion is linked to the previous point, insofar as piloting generates evidence of what works within specific country contexts. Other approaches, for example, analytical studies, support for improved education sector research and data systems, and support to better data use in country strategies, also generate evidence that UNICEF successfully utilized in its upstream work.

The relevance of investing in upstream work that generates evidence is the related lesson for future work, as it hints at which types of upstream work would be important to invest in, and confirms the route taken by the UNICEF Global Education team in developing tools such as OSCI and SEE to support upstream work in line with UNICEF’s mandate and priorities.

UNICEF’s high level of decentralization of authority and country autonomy is important for relevant, effective upstream work: In the three ‘highest achieving’ mini-case studies the initiatives supported were strongly framed by UNICEF’s global priorities (equity, realization of children’s rights), but rooted in country-responsive choices by the country office. The ability of country offices to respond quickly and flexibly to opportunities and changes in context is also important.

The related lesson from the evaluation is that upstream work should not be about getting countries to adopt UNICEF global models and approaches, but primarily about using UNICEF’s comparative advantage within the country context to develop country-relevant initiatives that fulfil UNICEF’s mandate. However, the CFS and ELDS approaches or labels may at times be useful for this purpose.

Partner factors

Partners’ inputs were also pivotal, both as enabling and as constraining factors. The case studies illustrated the positive and potentially enabling contribution of the political context and the composition of development assistance volumes and capacity in countries.



CHAPTER 12

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: UNICEF Strategic Policy and Strategy Division should develop an organization-wide framework for defining, targeting, measuring and reporting on the results of upstream work.

Such a framework should not be linked to specific focus areas of UNICEF, or to specific models, approaches or frameworks (e.g. CFS or ELDS), but should rather allow organization-wide consistent targeting of intermediate upstream results whatever the substantive focus of the upstream intervention.

The framework should take care to define upstream work as ultimately targeting what the evaluation framework described as 'behavioural change', i.e. the actual sustainable financing and implementation of targeted policy change by governments. It should however acknowledge the validity of and allow for the measurement of intermediate changes, such as policy commitments, formal legislation and policy change, and procedural change.

The framework should also be clear on how the terms 'policy influence', 'capacity building' and 'system strengthening' relate in the strategic language of UNICEF, and how they are to be measured.

Such a framework can be integrated into MORES where the strategies to address bottlenecks involve upstream work. It will allow the measurement of results in terms of how states and actors behave as an intermediate result on the way to addressing identified bottlenecks.

While this can be done without a framework, on a country-by-country basis, a framework will bring clarity and consistency to the strategic language used, and, more importantly, allow for the aggregation of results across

countries in way that is currently not possible beyond saying that a number of countries have adopted specific, identifiable UNICEF-branded approaches as policies. This will address donor concerns about UNICEF not reporting systematically on the work supported by Thematic Funding, and could contribute to continuing funding for upstream work.

The generic nature of the framework will allow upstream results to be targeted globally, but will also allow country offices to develop specific focuses and strategies aligned to country context, as intended by MORES.

Recommendation 2: UNICEF's introduction of multi-dimensional budget and expenditure codes in 2014 is commended. However, UNICEF Headquarters should ensure that the Generic Intervention Codes in the new coding system comprehensively and clearly denotes upstream work in order to budget and track expenditure on upstream work, and enable better reporting to donors.

Country offices' assertions that they do not have the tools to budget for and manage upstream work were valid: the activity codes in place at the time of the evaluation were a mix of types of work and allocations to issues, making it impossible to track both at the same time. The new coding system introduced in 2014, however, enables simultaneous tracking of expenditure by UNICEF objective, programme areas and intervention strategies, amongst others. UNICEF can enhance its capacity to track upstream work, and measure its effectiveness and efficiency through this work, by ensuring that the intervention strategies (or Generic Intervention Codes) offer a high level but comprehensive typology of upstream work with mutually exclusive categories.



Recommendation 3: UNICEF Headquarters needs to develop the mechanisms to manage funds in ways that are more aid-effective, including the use of country systems without imposing parallel systems or additional transaction costs on developing countries.

As UNICEF takes on managing and supervising entity roles for pooled funding of different kinds, it needs to improve its organizational capability to undertake these roles in ways that strengthen country government systems.

There is a significant literature on assessing and managing (rather than avoiding) risk when using country systems to manage aid, and on appropriately balancing short-term fiduciary and reputational risk with medium- to long-term development effectiveness. There is also significant experience in the post-Busan global development partnership on less harmful safeguards when managing aid to government in various conditions.

While UNICEF faces constraints in terms of its status as a UN organization and its financial management arrangements, an important piece of work would be to develop the mechanisms/modalities that would allow it to manage funds on behalf of other donors to finance country education programmes, while using country systems to the maximum extent. This would include developing risk assessment tools (or deciding to utilize harmonized risk assessments), decision thresholds, decision processes and a common pathway to the use of country systems for country offices to use.

As part of this work UNICEF would benefit from an independent review of its current experience in managing pooled funds. While the evaluation was able to investigate UNICEF's management of pooled funds in Afghanistan, Zimbabwe and Cambodia directly, and engage with UNICEF's partners at the global level, it was able to source only limited documentation on UNICEF's experience elsewhere. Given that UNICEF is acting in SE or ME capacity in a growing number of GPE countries, the potential for bringing

lessons together in a coherent manner at this point is significant.

Recommendation 4: UNICEF Global Education team needs to consider requesting a global formative evaluation of capacity building/system strengthening work so as to build its understanding of what works when and where.

Building the capacity of education systems is a clear aspect of upstream work. It is also a type of upstream work often undertaken by UNICEF. This presents an opportunity for UNICEF Global Education team to learn from its own experiences how it as an organization best undertakes this kind of upstream work, whether to build human resource capacity in education management and technical systems or to build the systems and institutions themselves. A theory of change-based evaluation would be an appropriate mechanism for the learning, as it would allow the organization to describe different pathways to effective capacity building, and at the same time identify ways to target and measure capacity building, linked to processes under Recommendation 1.

Recommendation 5: UNICEF BEGE needs to expand its efforts to build country education team capacity for upstream work. This has implications at the global, regional and country levels.

This involves the Global Education team urgently putting in place formal training in the technical and analytical skills for upstream work. The gap left by the discontinuation of the WBI course should be filled.

It also involves the Global Education team reviewing the current standardized job description for the Chief of Education position. The current description includes some recognition of upstream work, but it is an add-on to the job description used ten years ago, and the formulation falls short of what is required in practice, including in its time allocation compared to other tasks. It would be important to review this description and redraft it in its entirety from an upstream perspective, particularly if upstream



work is at the core of what UNICEF does in non-emergency contexts.

While there are benefits for upstream work in international staff rotation (such as learning across countries), there are also drawbacks, such as loss of relationships. Maximizing continuity is key. In this regard, Country Representatives should ensure that key positions do not fall empty at the same time, so that a change in education leadership at the country level does not coincide with changes in other key education staff, or in country leadership. UNICEF Regional Education Advisors should monitor this. Secondly, country offices should look at appointing national citizens to fulfil key roles for upstream work, to provide continuity as international staff rotate.

The Sharepoint platform for knowledge exchange on upstream work is a step in the right direction. However, given the pressures that increased GPE responsibilities are putting on country education programmes, the education section at Headquarters and regional level should look at short- and medium-term knowledge management and peer learning initiatives that go beyond it. This could involve support across countries by education teams and institutionalizing regional upstream peer learning forums and events.

Regional offices should establish shared capacity among countries for upstream work. While Regional Advisors take up some of this role, their time for direct country support is limited. Upstream work would benefit from Headquarters budgeting for and Regional Offices placing additional experienced staff in regions who could provide direct support to countries on a full-time basis. Such technical support would also enable cross-country learning. As UNICEF upstream work takes on more GPE roles this capacity would be used well.

The country office leadership and Education Chief should more explicitly budget for and build capacity for upstream work. This includes far better collaboration between sectors to share experience in upstream work, and particularly

much more collaboration with Social Policy Advisors to strengthen the UNICEF Education team's capacity to engage on sector budgets.

Recommendation 6: The 2007 UNICEF Global Education Strategy approach of balancing upstream and downstream work at the country level was appropriate. UNICEF Education should continue to seek this balance: country offices and education teams should target and link upstream and downstream work appropriately, depending on their circumstances.

UNICEF's downstream presence and capability in education is important to its effectiveness in upstream work. Should its portfolio of downstream work and exposure to conditions on the ground diminish, it will lose a key global and country upstream work comparative advantage, and the capability to pilot and build evidence. What an appropriate balance between downstream and upstream work is, would depend on country circumstances and should be struck in country programmes by country offices. However, the UNICEF Global Education team should support such an approach through its strategic guidance.

In non-emergency contexts the sustainability of the UNICEF Education overall work portfolio would be maximized if all downstream work were undertaken to provide support for upstream work, focused on trying out country-specific approaches in the field in order to approach government with proposals for scaling up. Even in emergency contexts, if the building-back-better objective is to be realized, UNICEF BEGE teams should see their first line responses in education as opportunities to gather evidence for global and country policy influence and systems strengthening, even as they focus on delivering education goods and services.

In middle-income countries upstream work is possibly the only work that should be undertaken, given that resources are far less of an issue than in low-income countries. Available resources for country offices may also limit downstream work.



APPENDIX 1

TABLE A3 UNICEF evaluation themes and their coverage

Evaluation Objective/Theme	Evaluation Questions	in report section
Shared Definition		
To articulate UNICEF's education upstream approach, examine the extent to which there is a shared understanding of this approach in education programming, and whether outcomes and pathways to achieving results in policy advocacy work are articulated clearly.	1.1 Is there is a shared understanding of what constitutes 'upstream' work in BEGE? How well is it understood by Education programme staff at all levels? To what extent are goals of upstream engagement in BEGE shared by national counterparts?	Chapter 7
	1.2 Is there a common approach (explicit or implied) or common principles of upstream engagement in BEGE that can be adapted to different contexts? What is the underlying theory of change (explicit or inferred)? Are desired outcomes stated clearly? Are there realistic pathways to achieving results?	Chapter 7
	1.3 To what extent has formal learning been applied to this area, and with what results? What tools, processes and approaches have been developed by countries to facilitate their upstream engagement? What good practices for linking upstream work to midstream or downstream work have been developed in BEGE programming?	Chapter 3 Chapter 9
UNICEF Positioning		
To identify and review approaches, principles, best practices and benchmarks in education policy development and other aspects of upstream engagement for comparison with UNICEF strategies and practices, relative to UNICEF's comparative advantage.	2.1 Who are the leading global players working upstream in education? What are their respective strengths/niches? Are there identifiable approaches, tools and practices and systems that they have in common? What challenges are they facing?	Chapter 2
	2.2 What differentiates UNICEF from other organizations that work upstream in education? What relative strengths does UNICEF bring to the global policy dialogue in comparison to other global actors? What does UNICEF gain from collaborating with external partners in education upstream work?	Chapter 8
	2.3 What critical lessons and/or good practices does UNICEF need to adopt in order to enhance its effectiveness, visibility and credibility in future education upstream work?	Chapter 11 Chapter 12
	2.4 What, if any, are the new priorities for upstream engagement in education for MTSP (2014–17)? Do these align with UNICEF's priorities (e.g. children's rights, equity, gender)? Is there significant divergence or misalignment between UNICEF's priorities and those of the global education development community?	Chapter 2 Chapter 8



Table A3 (cont'd)

Evaluation Objective/Theme	Evaluation Questions	in report section
Building back better		
To examine UNICEF's performance in capitalizing on opportunities created by humanitarian crises to advance education policy development and advocacy, leverage resources for 'building back better' in order to strengthen education system response.	3.1 How well has UNICEF used its unique position in post-conflict countries to rebuild and transform the education sector? What are the strengths and weaknesses in the way that UNICEF engages and links upstream with downstream in post-conflict settings?	Box 4
	3.2 What "good practices" have been developed in emergency-conflict settings to link upstream and downstream work? What partnerships, capacities, and tools have enabled this work? In linking upstream and downstream work in emergency settings, what are gaps that persist?	Chapter 9, Box 4
	3.3 What improvements are necessary if UNICEF is to maintain its comparative advantage in working in upstream linked to downstream in post-conflict settings?	Chapter 11, Box 4
	3.4 What contribution has UNICEF made in the development of policies and guidelines in disaster planning, preparedness, and response, as they relate to education? To what extent has UNICEF advanced its agenda with respect to rights, equity, and gender through these vehicles?	Chapter 9, Box 4
External partnerships		
To examine whether UNICEF's engagement in different types of partnerships is strategic and credible, and whether UNICEF's partnership strategy contributes significantly to advancing education policy advocacy and education outcomes in countries of different typologies, including countries undertaking humanitarian programming;	4.1 What partnerships and mechanisms does UNICEF utilize to engage in BEGE upstream work? What aspects of BEGE upstream work were carried out through collaboration with key partners in education development? What proportion of BEGE upstream work do those constitute? What are the key results that were achieved through these partnerships and mechanisms?	Chapter 9 Chapter 4 Chapter 6
	4.2 What capacities has UNICEF strengthened through its engagement in key partnerships? What trade-offs were made to ensure that partnership arrangements work as intended? What risks were incurred?	Chapter 4 Chapter 6 Chapter 8
	4.3 How do partners view as UNICEF's contributions to the partnership? What is the most valuable asset that UNICEF brings into its collaboration with others? Do collaborators view UNICEF as a credible partner? What improvements are necessary?	Chapter 8
	4.4 Is UNICEF's involvement in key partnerships contributed to its efficiency and effectiveness of upstream strategies in various programming contexts (LDCs, MICs, education in emergency)? What improvements are necessary to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of upstream engagement efforts?	Chapter 6 Chapter 11



Table A3 (cont'd)

Evaluation Objective/Theme	Evaluation Questions	in report section
UNICEF-wide collaboration		
To determine the extent to which BEGE collaborates and coordinates internally with respective divisions, sections and offices in UNICEF to advance UNICEF's upstream agenda in education.	5.1 What aspects of BEGE upstream work and results were achieved through cross-sectoral collaboration with others in UNICEF? What proportion of BEGE upstream work do those constitute?	Chapter 7
	5.2 In what ways has upstream work carried out in a cross-sectoral framework achieved different or better results than work carried out by BEGE alone?	Chapter 7
	5.3 What gaps in BEGE's capacity were filled by taking a cross-sectoral approach? What challenges has the Education Section experienced working cross-sectorally?	Chapter 7
	5.4 In what way has cross-sectoral engagement been managed to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in achieving results?	Chapter 7
Capacity		
To identify core skills, tools, systems and institutional arrangements required for UNICEF's upstream education work, assess their adequacy, and evaluate efforts at building capacities of UNICEF education staff and key partners in government for future upstream engagement.	6.1 What are the key skills, tools, and systems required for effective engagement in education upstream work? What the required institutional arrangements and accountabilities?	Chapter 9
	6.2 To what extent has the BEGE's capacity building strategy taken into account the special skills and capacities that are required for effective advocacy with senior government officials?	Chapter 10
	6.3 How do current capacities of BEGE staff and programmes compare against repertoire of skills required for upstream engagement? What gaps exist between current capacity and required capacity? How well do the current capacity building strategies (Harvard Programme and other HR and operations initiatives) address these gaps?	Chapter 10
	6.4 Has UNICEF articulated the skills, tools and capacities to enable national counterparts to engage effectively in policy dialogue and other upstream activities? Are there corresponding capacity development/improvement plans for national counterparts?	Chapter 9



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Page 34

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A girl reads aloud at the front of a class in Bam Sarai Government Primary School in Bam Sarai Village, in the central Bamyan Province. More than 650 children, many of them ethnic Hazara, attend the UNICEF-supported school in two shifts.

Page 50

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A girl writes at her desk at the UNICEF-supported Mavambo Learning and Education Centre in the suburb of Mabvuke on the outskirts of Harare, the capital. The centre provides orphans and vulnerable children, who would otherwise have no access to basic education, a place to learn and spend their days. One in four children is orphaned, the majority due to HIV/AIDS.

Page 67

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Girls and boys play in a daycare centre in Bairro da Paz, a slum area on the outskirts of Salvador, capital of the eastern state of Bahia. Over 100 children attend the centre, which consists of two large schoolrooms, a playground, showers and a small kitchen where lunch is prepared daily. The centre was started over 20 years ago by one woman, Maria Conceição dos Santos, 45, (not pictured) and has grown to become self-sufficient, thanks to the donations of parents, friends and the community.

Page 104

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