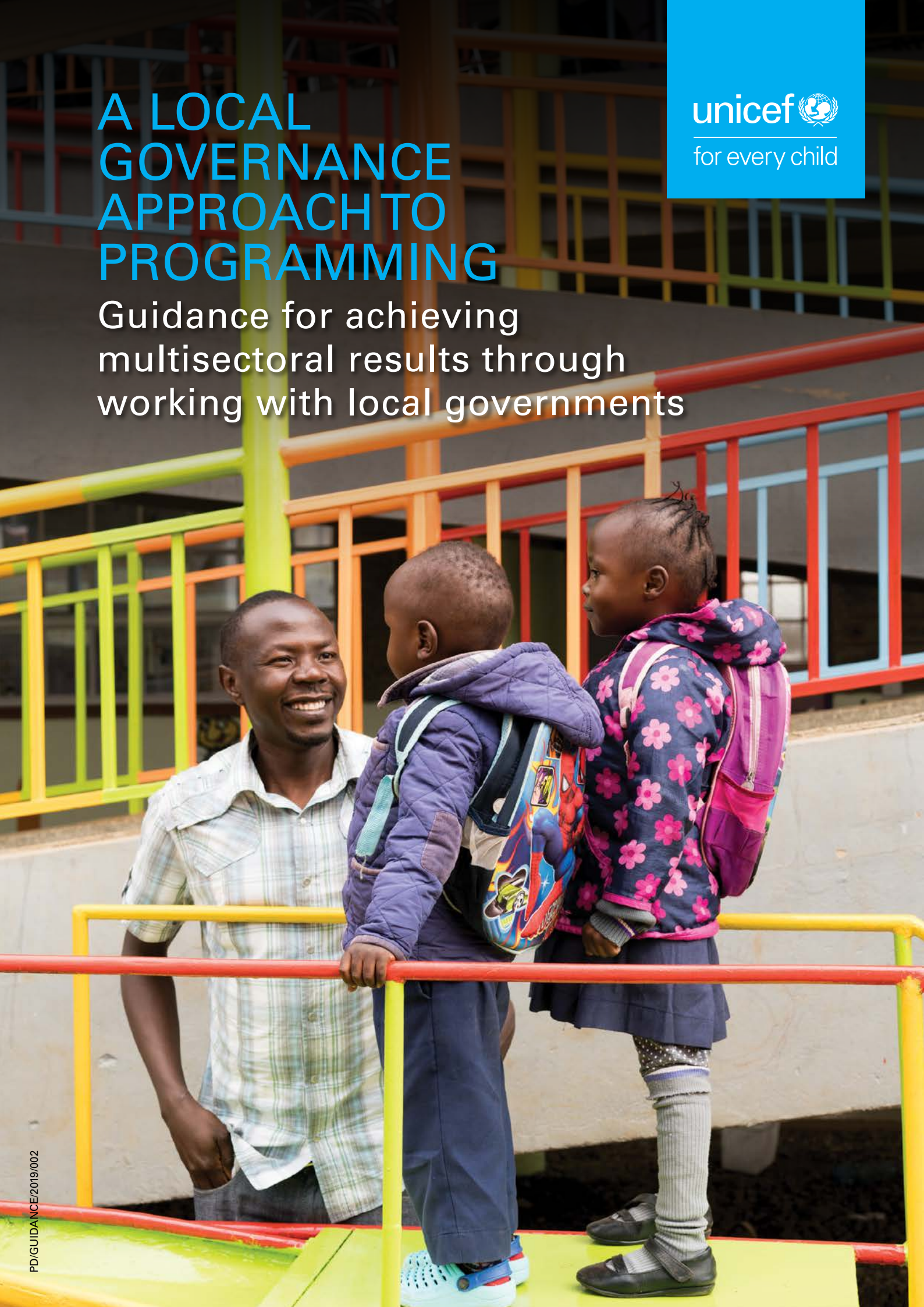


# A LOCAL GOVERNANCE APPROACH TO PROGRAMMING

Guidance for achieving multisectoral results through working with local governments

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for every child







A girl smiles as she participates in violence-reduction recreational activities funded by UNICEF-supported local municipalities in El Progreso, Honduras, on 13 March 2019.

# A LOCAL GOVERNANCE APPROACH TO PROGRAMMING

Guidance for achieving  
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Cover photograph: © UNICEF/UN066583/Ohanesian  
Emmanuel Thomas, age 40, plays with his children Leah Grace,  
age 5, and Wycliffe, age 3, on the playground at the Little Rock Early  
Childhood Development Centre in Kibera, Nairobi, Kenya, May 15, 2017.

Contents page photograph: © UNICEF/UN0302835/Soares  
Children are playing in the afternoon. Uaimori-Tula village,  
Viqueque municipality.

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For their safety, 1-year-old baby Siyou and his mother were relocated by local government officials on the day of a storm to a school that now serves as temporary shelter in Arcahaie, a commune in the Ouest department of Haiti, 50 kilometres from the capital. 7 October 2016.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**The well-being of children and adolescents is frequently determined by decisions made by local governments.** Following a wave of decentralization starting in the 1990s and a world-wide trend towards urbanization, local government, together with ministry departments at the subnational level, local private sector actors and others play a crucial role in ensuring access to goods and basic services, including for the most marginalized communities.

**Globally, this role of local government is increasingly recognized, including in humanitarian contexts.** Many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the work of local actors.<sup>1</sup> SDG11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) highlights the importance of local solutions and a bottom-up approach for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit further emphasized the importance of respecting, supporting and strengthening local leadership and capacity in crises.<sup>2</sup>

**UNICEF has extensive experience with sector and cross-cutting programming with local government and other local stakeholders, in a wide range of development, fragile and humanitarian settings.** Social sectors under the UNICEF mandate, such as child protection, education, social protection, health and

water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) often include strong subnational components, particularly in context of UNICEF work on systems strengthening.<sup>3</sup> From a cross-cutting perspective, UNICEF frequently focuses on community engagement and adolescent participation in local decision making, including through programming platforms such as the [Child Friendly Cities Initiative](#).<sup>4</sup> Social Policy sections often engage on the broader enabling environment at subnational level by focusing on such issues as local development planning and budgeting and local coordination. As part of the localization agenda, UNICEF increasingly works with local governments in the areas of disaster risk preparedness, peacebuilding and humanitarian response.<sup>5</sup>

**This guidance supports sector and cross-cutting results by setting out a strategic approach to UNICEF work with local governments in rural and urban settings together with or in support of local sectoral actors.** This guidance establishes a common understanding of how to apply a local governance approach to programming (see Box 1); sets out four interlinked action areas which address common local bottlenecks and which support local government action for change (see Part 3: Action areas); and provides key programming considerations to support implementation of the action areas and ensure that this engagement achieves lasting and at-scale results for children (see Part 4: Programming considerations).

<sup>1</sup> For example, of the 169 SDG targets, 21 per cent can only be implemented with the help of local actors, while an additional 24 per cent should be implemented with the help of local actors. Source: adelphi and Urban Catalyst, Sustainable Development Goals and Habitat III: Opportunities for a successful New Urban Agenda, Cities Alliance Discussion Paper No. 3, Cities Alliance, Brussels, November 2015. Available at: <<https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/Opportunities%20for%20the%20New%20Urban%20Agenda.pdf>>, accessed 6 December 2018. See also: <https://www.localizingthesdgs.org/>.

<sup>2</sup> World Humanitarian Summit, Commitments to Action, 2016. Available at: <[https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017/Jul/WHS\\_commitment\\_to\\_Action\\_8September2016.pdf](https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017/Jul/WHS_commitment_to_Action_8September2016.pdf)>, accessed 4 February 2019.

<sup>3</sup> e.g., health systems strengthening, community systems strengthening, urban WASH, etc.

<sup>4</sup> See <https://childfriendlycities.org/>.

<sup>5</sup> See the guidance notes: UNICEF, Strengthening Resilience through Risk-informed Decentralization and Local Governance Programming, UNICEF, New York, forthcoming in 2019; de Wijn, Marija, Local Governance and Sustaining Peace: A UNICEF guidance note, UNICEF, New York, 2019; and UNICEF, Review of UNICEF's Approach to the Localization Agenda in Humanitarian Action, UNICEF, New York, forthcoming in 2019.

## Box 1. A local governance approach to programming

Local governance refers to the way local decisions are made and implemented, including those related to the delivery of services for children, adolescents and their families. A local governance approach recognizes that:

- Local needs and priorities may differ across communities and neighbourhoods, particularly in context with high disparities;
- Challenges and bottlenecks to local service delivery and provision of public goods can be technical but also financial or political in nature;
- Multiple actors – including local government, service points, ministry departments, the private sector and civil society – play a role in the production and delivery of local goods and services;
- The delivery of local goods and services is shaped by formal national, regional and local government policies and procedures, and also by informal interactions and (power) relationships between various levels of government and other local actors (e.g., local elites, private sector); and
- Participation by children, adolescents and their families and bottom-up accountability are critical for equitable delivery of goods and services at the local level. This includes a strong focus on the equal participation of girls and boys, women and men.

**This guidance contributes to the realization of children’s rights by supporting local government, together with other local actors, to respond to the needs and priorities of children, adolescents and their families in an inclusive and equitable manner.** The guidance outcomes contribute to achieving those goals set out in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021<sup>6</sup> by providing a roadmap towards four objectives:

- Geographically disaggregated data and evidence, including on the most vulnerable and marginalized children, are available to and utilized by communities and local decision makers.
- Local government has the capacity and resources to develop and implement local plans and budgets that respond to the priorities of children, adolescents and their families in an efficient, effective and equitable manner.
- Communities, including children and adolescents, are empowered and provided with the mechanisms to monitor local service provision and influence local decision making in a systematic and inclusive manner.
- Local governments effectively implement, coordinate and provide oversight over local service delivery arrangements for children, adolescents and their families.

**Four interlinked actions constitute the basis of country-level local programming and advocacy, in close collaboration with other development partners.** The action areas are based on current

UNICEF programming strengths and the organization’s comparative advantage vis-à-vis other development partners. Partnerships are also key to success: complementary expertise in local governance and decentralization can be found among other United Nations agencies, bilateral agencies, global local government associations and development banks. Engagement across the action areas listed below is needed to produce results for children, adolescent and their families.

### **Action Area 1: Support local government and other stakeholders in the generation and analysis of geographically disaggregated data and evidence.**

#### **Key activities:**

- Assist in improving local government’s routine administrative data systems with a focus on data and evidence pertaining to children, adolescents and their families.
- Support local government, together with other stakeholders, to generate data on local service delivery performance, including through cross-sectoral data dashboards.
- Support local government, together with other stakeholders, to strengthen local child/adolescent and community-based needs assessments, including through district or neighbourhood ‘profiles’ or risk maps.
- Generate evidence on local government performance to highlight local and regional disparities in child outcomes, including through comparative assessment indices.

<sup>6</sup> Supporting local government and other local stakeholders to improve children’s access to local goods and services enables every child to survive and thrive, learn, be protected, live in a safe and clean environment and

have an equitable chance in life. UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. Available at: <[www.unicef.org/about/execboard/index\\_48196.html](http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/index_48196.html)>, accessed 19 February 2019.



## Action Area 2: Strengthen local planning and budgeting processes and support resource mobilization.

---

### Key activities:

- Strengthen local government capacity in the preparation of evidence-based plans that address the needs of children, adolescents and their families.
  - Integrate emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into local planning and budgeting systems.
  - Support local government in developing and executing efficient, effective and equitable local budgets.
  - Support local government in resource mobilization and work with ministries of finance to strengthen the design and execution of intergovernmental fiscal transfers.
- 

## Action Area 3: Empower communities and provide them with the tools and mechanisms to influence local decision making and monitor local service provision.

---

### Key activities:

- Facilitate participation by supporting local governments to systematically involve children, adolescents and their families in local decision making.
  - Partner with local civil society organizations and build the capacity of communities to participate in local decision making.
  - Support civil society organizations and communities in the monitoring and oversight of local service delivery through social accountability mechanisms.
  - Help national governments institutionalize local participatory and accountability mechanisms for children, adolescents and their families through national legal frameworks.
- 

## Action Area 4: Support local government in the implementation, coordination and oversight of local service delivery arrangements.

---

### Key activities:

- Support local government in the design, costing and implementation of child-focused local service packages, including through contracting private providers.
  - Support local government to coordinate service delivery stakeholders by strengthening existing horizontal and vertical coordination structures and mechanisms.
  - Strengthen local government capacity to design, implement and enforce child-sensitive regulations and standards (e.g., minimum service quality standards, building codes, land use planning).
  - Convene local government, sector ministries and development partners to increase clarity about local roles and responsibilities.
- 

## The practical programming considerations in the final section of this guidance support effective implementation of the action areas, guiding country offices to:

1. Ensure that local programming is fit for the context.
  - Engage in a situation analysis prior to programme design and during implementation to support the contextualization and appropriateness of local programmes.
  - Ensure that expected results and programming approaches are appropriate for the selected regions, districts, municipalities or villages.
  - Avoid overloading local government counterparts.
2. Establish or strengthen partnerships with influencers.
  - Strengthen partnerships with United Nations agencies, bilateral agencies, development banks and global local government associations and their regional chapters.
  - Strengthen partnerships with existing UNICEF partners such as ministry of local governance, ministry of finance, local government associations, etc.
3. Be explicit about how local programmes and initiatives can be replicated, scaled up and sustained over the long term.
  - Identify replication and scaling aims from the outset.
  - Make use of policy windows of opportunity and generate evidence for advocacy purposes.
  - Ensure practical replication measures such as the availability of tools (e.g., standardized manuals) and realistic budgets.
4. Choose the right subnational support modality (e.g., field monitoring visits, the establishment of a field office, etc.).
5. Promote collaboration (for implementation, monitoring and reporting) among sector, social policy, cross-cutting and emergency teams through joint situational analyses, intersectoral work planning (internally or with government partners) and joint outputs.
6. Improve results monitoring by formulating theories of change and more robust progress indicators in local governance across all programme results areas, and by evaluating the contribution of local governance to improving coverage of social services, especially for the most marginalized children, adolescents and their families.

# GLOSSARY



During lunchtime a young school girl holds up a tray she has washed after a nutritious school lunch. She is at Hua Ngai Primary School, in Muong Cha, Dien Bien, Viet Nam. UNICEF has worked with local government to have lunches subsidized in the remote areas of Dien Bien.

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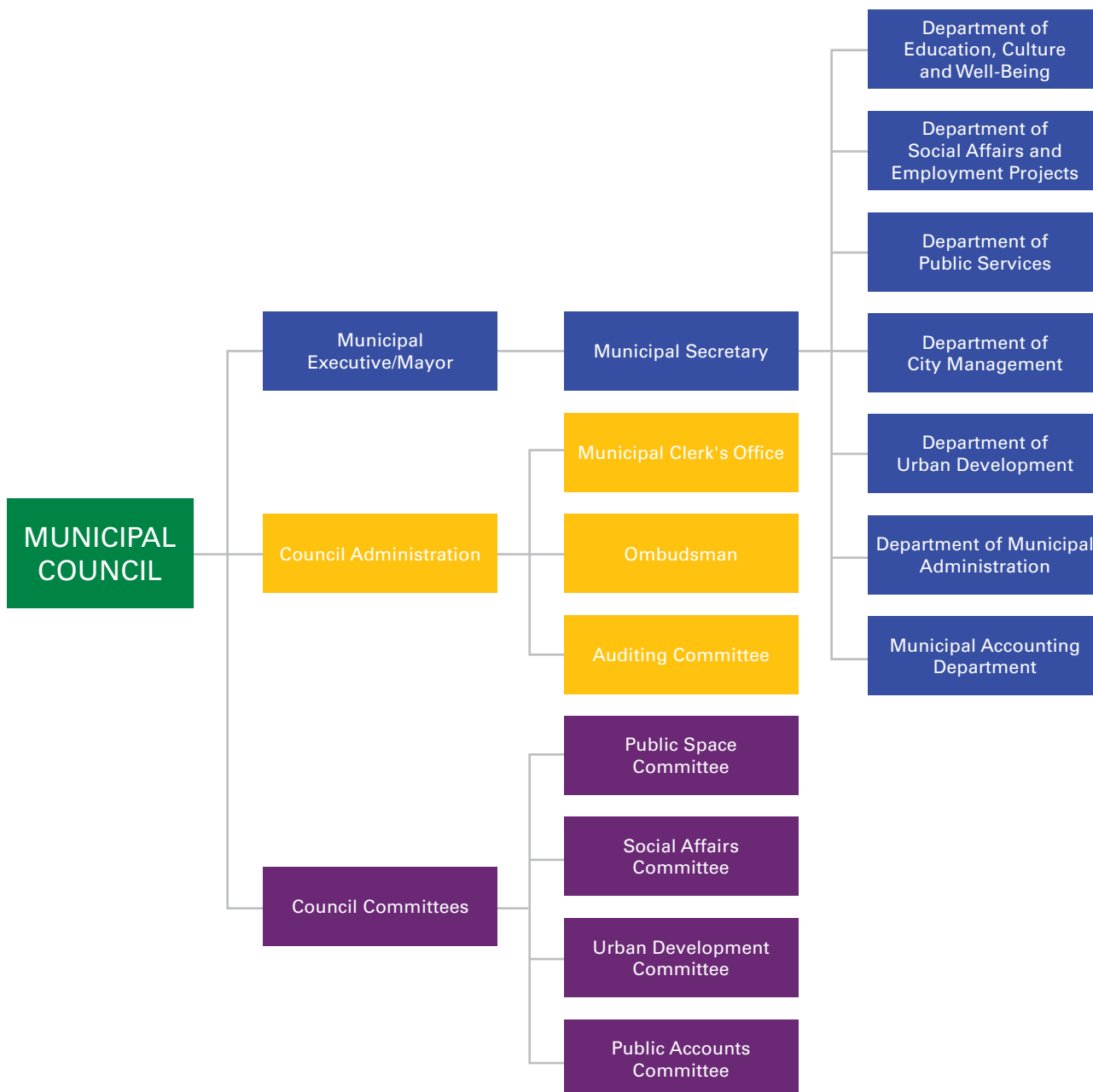
**Decentralization** is a process in which authority for planning, management and resource allocation is transferred from the central government to regional or local government departments. There are three types of decentralization: devolution is the transfer of authority to local government; delegation is the transfer of authority to semi-autonomous public authorities (e.g., housing authorities); and de-concentration is the transfer of authority to ministry departments at the subnational level.

**Local governance** refers to the way local decisions are made and implemented. This includes decisions regarding the prioritization, availability and delivery of local goods and services and ultimately – whether explicit or implicit – who will benefit. Local governance is shaped by formal national, regional and local government policies and by informal interactions and relationships among various levels of government and local actors (e.g., local government, private sector, civil society, communities, traditional or religious leaders).

While decentralization is intended to formalize local governance, local governance takes place in both centralized and decentralized contexts.

**Local government** refers to local-level bodies and institutions created by a constitutional, legislative or executive power for the purpose of carrying out specific functions. The term 'local government' includes all levels of government below the national level (or state level, in federal contexts). Local government exists in contexts that are rural (e.g., districts, communes) and urban (e.g., towns, municipalities). Local government includes institutions with varying mandates and powers, for example: mayor or governor (appointed or elected); local councillors or assembly members (appointed or elected); technical and administrative units that deliver services assigned to local government (e.g., education department, social affairs department); and local offices of semi-autonomous government agencies (e.g., water authority). Local governments usually play a prominent role in local governance. (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Local government: Sample organizational structure<sup>7</sup>



**Local (public) goods** are tangible objects in the built environment (e.g., libraries, school buildings, parks, roads) that can be enjoyed by community residents.

**Social accountability** is an approach by which communities can act individually or collectively to create and participate in organizational and institutional arrangements to understand and control their government(s) – that is, hold government accountable.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Structures of local government may differ from country to country, particularly between francophone and anglophone countries.

<sup>8</sup> McGee, Rosemary, and John Gaventa, *Synthesis Report: Review of impact and effectiveness of transparency and accountability initiatives*, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, 2010.





A mother brings her daughter, Alifa, to the Integrated Community Health Services post in Balibo of Bobonaro Municipality, Timor-Leste, to have a nutritional status screening.

# 1. BACKGROUND

## 1.1 WHY IS LOCAL GOVERNMENT IMPORTANT?

Local government, along with other local stakeholders, play a key role in ensuring access to goods and basic services, including for the most marginalized communities. Following a wave of decentralization starting in the 1990s and a world-wide trend towards urbanization, local government, together with subnational ministry departments, private sector actors, etc., often exercises substantial control over services like education, social protection, primary health care, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). (See Table 1)

Globally, the role of local government in ensuring access to goods and services is increasingly recognized, including in humanitarian contexts. Many of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have targets that are directly or indirectly related to the work of local actors.<sup>9</sup> SDG16, emphasizes the importance of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. SDG11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) highlights the importance of local solutions and a bottom-up approach to

achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2016 World Humanitarian Summit further emphasized the importance of respecting, supporting and strengthening local leadership and capacity in crises.<sup>10</sup>

UNICEF has extensive sector and cross-cutting programming with local government and other local actors in development, fragile and humanitarian settings. Social sectors under the UNICEF mandate, such as the child protection, education, social protection, health and WASH sectors often include strong subnational components, particularly in the context of UNICEF work on systems strengthening.<sup>11</sup> From a cross-cutting perspective, UNICEF frequently focuses on community engagement and adolescent participation in local decision making, including through programming platforms such as the Child Friendly Cities Initiative.<sup>12</sup> Social policy sections often work on the broader enabling environment at the subnational level by focusing on such issues as local development planning and budgeting, local coordination, etc. As part of the localization agenda, UNICEF increasingly works with local government in the areas of disaster risk preparedness, peacebuilding and humanitarian response.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For example, of the 169 SDG targets, 21 per cent can only be implemented with the help of local actors, while an additional 24 per cent *should be implemented with the help of* local actors. Source: adelphi and Urban Catalyst, *Sustainable Development Goals and Habitat III: Opportunities for a successful New Urban Agenda*, Cities Alliance Discussion Paper No. 3, Cities Alliance, Brussels, November 2015. Available at: <<https://www.citiesalliance.org/sites/default/files/Opportunities%20for%20the%20New%20Urban%20Agenda.pdf>>, accessed 6 December 2018.

<sup>10</sup> World Humanitarian Summit, *Commitments to Action*, 2016. Available at: <[https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017/](https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017/Jul/WHS_commitment_to_Action_8September2016.pdf)

[Jul/WHS\\_commitment\\_to\\_Action\\_8September2016.pdf](https://www.agendaforhumanity.org/sites/default/files/resources/2017/Jul/WHS_commitment_to_Action_8September2016.pdf)>, accessed 4 February 2019.

<sup>11</sup> e.g., health systems strengthening, community systems strengthening, urban WASH, etc.

<sup>12</sup> See <https://childfriendlycities.org/>.

<sup>13</sup> See the guidance notes: UNICEF, *Strengthening Resilience through Risk-informed Decentralization and Local Governance Programming*, UNICEF, New York, forthcoming in 2019; de Wijn, Marija, *Local Governance and Sustaining Peace: A UNICEF guidance note*, UNICEF, New York, 2019; and UNICEF, *Review of UNICEF's Approach to the Localization Agenda in Humanitarian Action*, UNICEF, New York, forthcoming in 2019.

**Table 1. Key local government functions**

Local social services	Local environmental services	Local public goods
Water and sanitation	Drainage	Local spatial plans
Primary health care	Solid waste management	Local development plans
Early childhood development	Excreta management	Emergency preparedness and recovery plans
Primary and secondary education	Wastewater management	Local building codes
Child protection/social welfare	Land use management and zoning	Public space and parks
Social protection	Pollution management	Public transport
Emergency services	Environmental protection	Roads and sidewalks
Local employment development	Land development	Community centres

## 1.2 PURPOSE, SCOPE AND OUTLINE OF THIS PROGRAMME GUIDANCE

This guidance supports sector and cross-cutting results by setting out a strategic approach to UNICEF work with local government in rural and urban settings together with or in support of local sectoral actors. The guidance does this through the following: establishing a local governance approach to programming (see Box 1, above); setting out four interlinked action areas which address common local bottlenecks and which support local government action for change (see Part 3: Action areas); and providing key programming considerations to support implementation of the action areas and ensure that this engagement achieves lasting and at-scale results for children (see Part 4: Programming considerations).

The action areas and the programming considerations set out in this guidance are based on current UNICEF programming strengths and the organization’s comparative advantage vis-à-vis other development partners. This guidance is informed by a variety of internal and external resources,

including the *Global Stocktake of UNICEF Engagement in Decentralization and Local Governance, 2011–2015*,<sup>14</sup> various regional- and country-level evaluations of UNICEF subnational programming (see Annex 1); Results Assessment Module (RAM) data; and discussions with UNICEF regional office and country office staff.

The entry point of the guidance is UNICEF engagement with local government in rural and urban settings and the interactions local governments have with other actors at the local level. However, local government is significantly influenced by regional and national laws, policies and actors. The action areas and programming considerations therefore include and emphasize linkages to regional and national policy advocacy and change, including around decentralization.<sup>15</sup> Understanding the larger inter-governmental system – the different levels of government, their roles and responsibilities and how they formally and informally relate to each other – will be crucial for adapting the tools provided in this guidance to the local context and for overall programming success (see also Part 4: Programming considerations).

<sup>14</sup> de Wijn, Global Stocktake of UNICEF Engagement in Decentralization and Local Governance, 2011–2015, UNICEF, 2016. Available at: <[www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/DLG-Stocktake.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/DLG-Stocktake.pdf)>, accessed 19 February 2019.

<sup>15</sup> A separate guidance note on decentralization will be developed in 2019.





A female nurse from a local government hospital speaks to a group of pregnant women about the importance of proper nutrition, regular check-ups and danger signs during the different stages of gestation at an outreach clinic in Busura, West Coast region, Gambia.

© UNICEF/UN0218583/Noorani

This guidance is applicable to development, fragile, conflict-affected and other humanitarian contexts. UNICEF experience suggests that working with local government is relevant in nearly all settings; indeed, it can be a crucial in strengthening social cohesion and enhancing the social contract in ways that support peacebuilding and future stability for children.<sup>16</sup> Even where UNICEF operates in emergency situations, strengthening the capacity of local actors may be an effective and sustainable approach towards addressing children’s needs within their communities and to integrating humanitarian response and development.<sup>17</sup>

The audience for this guidance is UNICEF managers and staff throughout all UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 goal areas.<sup>18</sup> This includes deputy representatives; planning, programme and field office chiefs; emergency managers; and country office and field office staff. Regional advisers and other regional office staff may find the guidance useful in support of country offices. The guidance can also be of interest to external stakeholders, including development partners who seek to understand UNICEF work in this area.

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, de Wijn, Marija, *Local Governance and Sustaining Peace: A UNICEF guidance note*, UNICEF, New York, 2019.

<sup>17</sup> See UNICEF, *Integrating Humanitarian Response and Development: Programme framework for fragile contexts*, UNICEF, New York, April 2018. Available at: <<http://unicef.inemergencies.com/downloads/>>

[eresource/docs/Fragility/Integrating%20Humanitarian%20Response%20and%20Development-%20Programme%20Framework%20for%20Fragile%20Contexts.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/eresource/docs/Fragility/Integrating%20Humanitarian%20Response%20and%20Development-%20Programme%20Framework%20for%20Fragile%20Contexts.pdf).

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. Available at: <[www.unicef.org/about/execboard/index\\_48196.html](http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/index_48196.html)>, accessed 19 February 2019.





A child smiles while receiving a measles and rubella vaccination during a UNICEF-supported mobile vaccination campaign in Aden, Yemen on 9 February 2019.

## 2. OVERVIEW OF THIS GUIDANCE

This section sets out the overarching goal, outcomes and objectives of this guidance, and identifies the actions needed to achieve these

results. An overview of the goals, outcomes, objectives and action areas described in this section is shown below (see Table 2).

**Table 2. Overview of the programme guidance**

Goal				
To contribute to the realization of children’s rights by supporting local government, together with other local actors, to respond to the needs and priorities of children, adolescents and their families in an inclusive and equitable manner.				
Outcomes				
To survive and thrive	To learn	To be protected	To live in a safe and clean environment	To have an equitable chance in life
Objectives				
Geographically disaggregated data and evidence, including on the most vulnerable and marginalized children, are available to and utilized by communities and local decision makers.	Local government has the capacity and resources to develop and implement local plans and budgets that respond to the priorities of children, adolescents and their families in an efficient, effective and equitable manner.	Communities, including children and adolescents, are empowered and provided with the mechanisms to monitor local service provision and influence local decision making in a systematic and inclusive manner.	Local government effectively implements, coordinates and provides oversight over local service delivery arrangements for children, adolescents and their families.	
Action areas				
1. Support local government and other stakeholders in the generation and analysis of geographically disaggregated data and evidence.	2. Strengthen local planning and budgeting processes and support resource mobilization.	3. Empower communities to influence local decision making and monitor local service provision.	4. Support local government capacity to coordinate and leverage expertise and resources across public, private and non-government service providers.	





17-year-old Ines speaking live from Abidjan during the weekly young reporters' radio show broadcasted in nine locations across Côte d'Ivoire. Financed by UNICEF, the programme aims at engaging children on issues that concern them and gives children a voice.

© UNICEF/UN061368/Dejongh

## 2.1 GOAL, OUTCOMES, OBJECTIVES AND ACTION AREAS

The overarching goal of this guidance is to the realization of children’s rights by supporting local government, together with other local actors, to respond to the needs and priorities of children, adolescents and their families in an inclusive and equitable manner.

The guidance outcomes contribute to the achievement of those set out in the UNICEF Strategic Plan<sup>19</sup> by providing a roadmap towards four objectives:

- Geographically disaggregated data and evidence, including on the most vulnerable and marginalized children, are available to and utilized by communities and local decision makers.
- Local government has the capacity and resources to develop and implement local plans and budgets that respond to the priorities of children, adolescents and their families in an efficient, effective and equitable manner.
- Communities, including children and adolescents, are empowered and provided with the mechanisms to monitor local service provision and influence local decision making in a systematic and inclusive manner.
- Local government effectively implements, coordinates and provides oversight over local service delivery arrangements for children, adolescents and their families.

Four interlinked actions constitute the basis of country-level local programming and advocacy. They are:

- Action Area 1: Support local government and other stakeholders in the generation and analysis of geographically disaggregated data and evidence.
- Action Area 2: Strengthen local planning and budgeting processes and support resource mobilization.
- Action Area 3: Empower communities and provide them with the tools and mechanisms to influence local decision making and monitor local service provision.
- Action Area 4: Support local government in the implementation, coordination and oversight of local service delivery arrangements.

These action areas should not to be approached in isolation. Engagement across the action areas is needed to elicit results for children, adolescents and their families. Collaboration with partners is also key to success. This includes national partners, such as ministries of local government and finance and national local government associations, but also development partners with expertise in local governance and decentralization, such as other United Nations agencies; bilateral agencies; global local government associations and related regional chapters; and development banks. (See also Part 4: Programming considerations.)

<sup>19</sup> Supporting local government and other local stakeholders to improve children’s access to local goods and services enables every child to survive and thrive, learn, be protected, live in a safe and clean

environment and have an equitable chance in life. UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. Available at: <[www.unicef.org/about/execboard/index\\_48196.html](http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/index_48196.html)>, accessed 19 February 2019.



Kiran Bauri, 18, is an advocate for girls right to education in her community. Last year, she saved her friend from getting married at early age by reporting the case to local authorities. Kiran's dream is to become a lawyer and solve challenges that girls face.





Trained healthcare workers organize Family Health Unit data files at the Asmeat Primary Healthcare Unit, Kafr Shukr town, Qalyubia Governorate, Egypt.



# 3. ACTION AREAS

## ACTION AREA 1: SUPPORT GEOGRAPHICALLY DISAGGREGATED DATA AND EVIDENCE

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### Key activities:

- Assist in improving local government's routine administrative data systems with a focus on data and evidence pertaining to children, adolescents and their families.
  - Support local government, together with other stakeholders, to generate data on local service delivery performance, including through cross-sectoral data dashboards.
  - Support local government, together with other stakeholders, to strengthen local child/adolescent and community-based needs assessments, including through district or neighbourhood 'profiles' or risk maps.
  - Generate evidence on local government performance to highlight local and regional disparities in child outcomes, including through comparative assessment indices.
- 

It is impossible for local government in rural and urban settings to be responsive to the specific needs of children, adolescents and their families without improved information and the capacity to analyse this information. Information includes administrative data and evidence on the status of children as well as data on service delivery performance, whether at the subnational level or within UNICEF priority regions, districts, municipalities or villages. Operational types of evidence at the local level include local child needs assessments, neighbourhood profiles and geo-maps. UNICEF country offices also generate evidence on local government performance to highlight local and regional disparities in child outcomes.

UNICEF investments to improve local government administrative data systems (in partnership with local government, central ministries and development partners) can yield large gains for children quickly as well as institutional benefits over the long term. Local government often has significant management control over civil registration and vital statistics systems. Along with population census data, complete and timely civil registration, vital statistics and routine administrative information is key to knowing: (1) the location and composition of vulnerable populations; (2) what types of goods and services to provide; and (3) the quantity of goods and services to provide.

UNICEF country offices work with both local government and central ministries to improve the collection, analyses and public availability of geographically disaggregated child outcome data. Often, this work is in support of those municipalities and regions where the worst child deprivations are concentrated. Innovations include the design of data dashboards – for example, UNICEF Malawi's HIV data dashboard, used in all 28 districts – that aggregate local census and administrative data and partially automate their analysis to reduce the transaction costs of updating evidence on local socio-economic conditions in villages, municipalities and subnational regions. In Indonesia, UNICEF supports the roll-out of a Community Based Development Information System that assists local government in evidence-based education planning for out-of-school children (see Box 2). UNICEF country offices can use global databases such as [EQUIST](https://www.equist.info/)<sup>20</sup> and [District Health Information System 2](https://www.dhis2.org/) (DHIS2)<sup>21</sup> to link information on local service delivery performance to geographically disaggregated child outcome data.

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<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.equist.info/>.

<sup>21</sup> See <https://www.dhis2.org/>.



In Baidoa, Somalia, residents and water vendors queue to fetch water with their donkey-drawn carts at a kiosk run by Warjaay Water Supply Company. The company supplies free water to hospitals, local government offices, state institutions and camps for internally displaced people at an affordable price.

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## Box 2. Community-based Development Information System in Indonesia

In Indonesia, UNICEF support interventions to address out-of-school children issues. At subnational level, this included the continued roll-out of a Community-based Development Information System (CBDIS) that supports evidence-based education planning for out-of-school children. In 2018, CBDIS helped more than 7,000 such children, including children with disabilities, to enrol in school. Furthermore, UNICEF equipped district and village stakeholders with knowledge and skills on how to reflect this data in evidence-based education planning for out-of-school children. Through UNICEF advocacy, CBDIS was integrated into Ministry of Villages, Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration regulations to enable its wider and sustained use by village governments nationwide.

Using data and evidence to inform local government needs assessments or situation analyses can accelerate results for children. For example, UNICEF makes systematic efforts to develop child-focused assessments of the spatial distribution of risk across distinct geographical areas to: (1) raise awareness of and prioritize actions to strengthen social cohesion; (2) reduce the risk to children of disasters and emergencies; and (3) inform government efforts to adapt plans and resource allocation for emerging threats such as climate change. Examples also include coverage assessment methods such as Semi-Quantitative

Evaluation of Access and Coverage (SQUEAC) in the community-based management of acute malnutrition, and child-centred disaster risk maps.<sup>22</sup>

The format in which information and evidence are presented matters as much as getting these data into the right hands. At the local level, this means geographically disaggregated data that show disparities across neighbourhoods and other local constituencies and which are meaningful to local decision makers. Activities to strengthen the generation, analysis and use of evidence in local needs assessments

<sup>22</sup> Myatt, Mark, et al., *Semi-Quantitative Evaluation of Access and Coverage (SQUEAC)/Simplified Lot Quality Assurance Sampling Evaluation of Access and Coverage (SLEAC) Technical Reference*, FHI 360/Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance III Project, Washington,

D.C., October 2012. Available at: <[www.fantaproject.org/sites/default/files/resources/SQUEAC-SLEAC-Technical-Reference-Oct2012\\_0.pdf](http://www.fantaproject.org/sites/default/files/resources/SQUEAC-SLEAC-Technical-Reference-Oct2012_0.pdf)>, accessed 14 February 2019.

should be undertaken with counterparts in local government, though UNICEF country offices should make efforts to also include community-based organizations, civil society partners and other development stakeholders present in the local area.

A growing trend is to present consolidated information in district or neighbourhood 'profiles' or geo-maps (see Box 3), which can be used by a variety of actors to inform action plans beyond advocacy. In Lebanon, UNICEF collaborated with UN-Habitat to develop neighbourhood profiles – reports which contain spatialized data and analysis, generated within an area-based framework, and focus on responding to the evidence needs of sector specialists, multisector practitioners and local authorities.<sup>23</sup>

### Box 3. Geo-mapping

A geographical information system (GIS) is a system designed to capture, manage, analyse and visualize geographical data. By visualizing data, local decision makers can more easily understand information that could otherwise take considerable time to analyse. It can support problem solving and decision making processes in both development and humanitarian contexts. Geospatial data can, for example, be analysed to determine (1) the location of features (e.g., schools<sup>24</sup>) and relationships to other features (e.g., water-points); (2) in which neighbourhoods or communities most and/or least numbers of these feature exists; (3) information on density (e.g., population density); (4) what is happening within a specific neighbourhood or community (e.g., a map that shows a flood event); and (5) and how features in a specific neighbourhood or community have changed over time.

UNICEF has various tools and licenses available to support this work. Visit [Data for Children](https://data.unicef.org/) for examples or reach out through the Data Helpdesk if you'd like to know more about geospatial data, talent and technology (internal UNICEF access only). External partners can visit <https://data.unicef.org/> and <https://www.unicef.org/innovation/> for more information.

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Geographically disaggregated data and evidence can be the basis for accountability. It can inform dialogue with communities and advocacy with key decision makers at all levels of government. UNICEF generates data and evidence on local government performance to highlight local and regional disparities in child outcomes, including through comparative assessment indices (see Box 4). UNICEF, together with local government, can also use data and evidence to raise awareness around local child rights with regional and national stakeholders. As part of its migration response, for example, UNICEF works with local government to generate data on the situation of migrant children to inform advocacy with national governments around removing or easing restrictions on family reunification and on providing migrant children with legal status.<sup>25</sup> Where the data and evidence generated are made available to civil society partners, these can be used to strengthen community oversight and accountability.

### Box 4. The District League Table in Ghana

In Ghana, UNICEF, in partnership with the Ghana Center for Democratic Development, the University of Ghana, the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Office of the Head of Local Government Service, has constructed a comparative assessment index, the District League Table (DLT).<sup>26</sup> The DLT ranks all of Ghana's districts by their level of social development and service delivery. The DLT helps government ministries, departments and agencies at the national and district levels understand disparities. It has informed both district and national level policy dialogue and decision making.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> UNICEF Lebanon, Tabbaneh Neighborhood profile, Tripoli, Lebanon, August 2018. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/626/file/Lebanon-report-3-tabbaneh.pdf>, accessed 10 April 2019.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, UNICEF work around school mapping: <http://school-mapping.azurewebsites.net/>.

<sup>25</sup> UNICEF, 'Children Uprooted: What local government can do', UNICEF, (n.d.). Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/Children-Uprooted-What-Local-Governments-Can-Do.pdf>, accessed 19

February 2019.

<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/press-releases/district-league-table-reveals-unexpected-results-related-social-development-ghana>.

<sup>27</sup> UNICEF Ghana, 'The District League Table reveals unexpected results related to social development in Ghana', press release, 18 June 2018. Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/reports/201819-district-league-table-ii>, accessed 4 July 2019.





Children having fun at a youth center of Ndjamena, the capital of Chad.

Generating local data and evidence is important in all country contexts. This includes humanitarian contexts, where UNICEF may wish to strengthen the collection, generation and use of geographically disaggregated data and evidence to support local government and other local actors in their humanitarian response, recovery and wider risk reduction measures.

Engagement in Action Area 1 is necessary for carrying out programme activities in the other three action areas. Geographically

disaggregated data and evidence are important inputs for actions in relation to local planning and budgeting (Action Area 2), community empowerment (Action Area 3) and local service delivery arrangements (Action Area 4).

#### Action Area 1 programming tools

Summarized below are select programming tools for Action Area 1, plus suggestions of scenarios for using them and potential programming partners (see Table 3).



#### Helpful tip: How to gain access to relevant geographically disaggregated data

It is often a challenge to ensure the availability of and access to relevant geographically disaggregated data at the neighbourhood level. UNICEF country offices can increase their likelihood of gaining access by:

- Strengthening existing national databases such as education and health management information systems and supporting data sharing protocol across government so that data re accessible to local decision makers;
- Working with national statistical authorities to provide local government with data in useful formats – e.g., UNICEF Cuba supported the National Office of Statistics and Information to produce the Atlas of Childhood and Adolescence in Cuba, which covers all 168 municipalities in the country;
- Helping local government authorities (in priority regions, districts, municipalities or villages) develop their own management information systems – e.g., UNICEF Maldives partnered with the United Nations Population Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Office for Project Services and the World Health Organization to create LaamuInfo, an information system to manage climate vulnerability and community-based disaster risk reduction data at the island and atoll level; and
- ‘Piggybacking’ on other organizations’ activities to generate local data – e.g., SDI runs the Know Your City campaign, which provides socio-economic and demographic information for 7,712 slum settlements in 224 cities.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Know Your City, ‘Explore our data. The Know Your City Campaign – Hard Data & Rich Stories. Community-driven data on slums.’, SDI, <[http://](http://knowyourcity.info/explore-our-data)

[knowyourcity.info/explore-our-data](http://knowyourcity.info/explore-our-data)>, accessed 27 February 2019.

**Table 3. Programming tools for Action Area 1**

Tool	Description	Scenario/When to use	Potential partner(s)
<a href="#">District/ neighbourhood profiles</a> <sup>29</sup>	Provide comprehensive information on the status of children within a specific administrative area (e.g., district, city, village)	Local government lacks comprehensive information on the status of children within its administrative area	Local government; ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning; sector ministries
Data dashboard	Website/portal that provides data trends within a specific sector or across multiple sectors within a specific administrative area (e.g., district, city, village); the dashboard can be internal or public-facing	Local government lacks comprehensive social sector (performance) data for its administrative area	Local government; ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning; sector ministries
<a href="#">Spatial risk assessment</a> <sup>30</sup> (child-centred risk mapping)	Quantifies and maps the spatial distribution of risk across distinct geographical areas	Local government has concerns over disaster risk	Local government; ministry of emergency management; civil society organizations (CSOs)
Local deprivation index	A measure of deprivation within a population, typically a composite of multiple quantitative indicators that, via some formula, delivers a single numerical result	Government has concerns over equity within a specific administrative area	Local government; ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning; ministry of planning; CSOs
Geo-mapping	Visualizes complex information to support problem solving and decision making	Local government lacks comprehensive information on the status of children and service delivery within its administrative area	Local government; ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning; sector ministries
MICS 6/Child poverty	Supports the collection and analysis of geographically specific information that can support the identification of local patterns of child poverty and multiple deprivation	Government has concerns over child poverty and equity within a specific administrative area	Local government; ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning; sector ministries
<a href="#">District league table</a> <sup>31</sup> / <a href="#">child-friendly local governance audit</a> <sup>32</sup> / <a href="#">municipal seal of approval</a> <sup>33</sup>	Assesses the performance of administrative areas (e.g., districts, cities) on a nationwide basis using specific indicators	Government has concerns over equity/ local government performance across administrative areas	Local government; ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning; CSOs

<sup>29</sup> See <https://www.unicef.org/lebanon/media/626/file/Lebanon-report-3-tabaneh.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> See [https://www.preventionweb.net/files/36688\\_36688rosaccriskassessmentfeb2014.pdf](https://www.preventionweb.net/files/36688_36688rosaccriskassessmentfeb2014.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> See <https://www.unicef.org/ghana/press-releases/district-league-table-reveals-unexpected-results-related-social-development-ghana>

<sup>32</sup> See <https://www.dilg.gov.ph/issuances/ic/Revised-Child-Friendly-Local-Governance-Audit-CFLGA-and-Implementation-Guideline/118>

<sup>33</sup> <https://childfriendlycities.org/brazil-municipal-seal/>.

## ACTION AREA 2: STRENGTHEN LOCAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING PROCESSES AND SUPPORT RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

### Key activities:

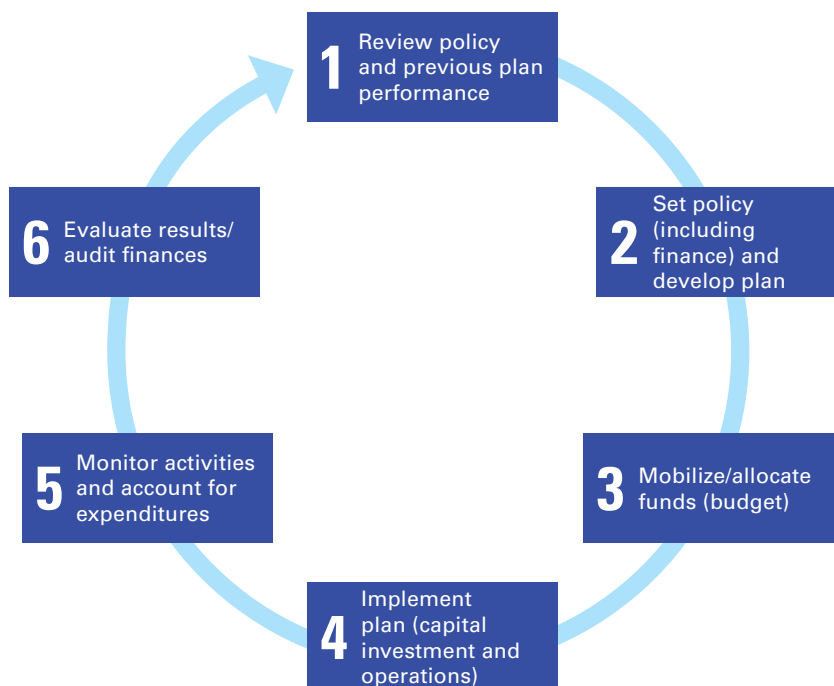
- Strengthen local government capacity in the preparation of evidence-based plans that address the needs of children, adolescents and their families.
- Integrate emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into local planning and budgeting systems.
- Support local government in developing and executing efficient, effective and equitable local budgets.
- Support local government in resource mobilization and work with ministries of finance to strengthen the design and execution of intergovernmental fiscal transfers.

UNICEF works with local government, ministries of finance and development partners to strengthen local planning and budgeting processes and help them mobilize resources for better child and adolescent outcomes and equity. Local planning encompasses a variety of instruments, processes and stakeholders, with significant differences in technical capacity and approach between, for example, large metropolitan areas and small rural settlements.<sup>34</sup>

UNICEF knowledge of child development combined with the organization's extensive field presence creates many opportunities to improve the child focus during various stages of the local development planning cycle, to ensure that planning is connected to improvements in child outcomes and equity and is carried out in a systematic manner (see Figure 2).

UNICEF supports mayors, local councillors and local government staff in sector and public works departments in planning, implementation and oversight. UNICEF country offices often provide technical assistance for developing local planning guidelines. While this work is often undertaken with central ministries, it should be done in close collaboration with local government stakeholders to ensure practicality and applicability of the developed instruments. Country offices also train local government stakeholders on child rights and child-sensitive local planning. This work helps local decision makers reflect local priorities and national child-related laws, policies and regulations (i.e., standards) and localize commitments around the SDGs during design of local development plans.<sup>35</sup> To further strengthen bottom-up planning and the identification of local priorities, many offices support community participation in local planning processes (see Action Area 3).

Figure 2. The local development planning cycle<sup>36</sup>



<sup>34</sup> For more information on spatial planning, see UNICEF, Shaping Urbanization for Children: A handbook on child-responsive urban planning, UNICEF, New York, May 2018. Available at: <[www.unicef.org/publications/index\\_103349.html](http://www.unicef.org/publications/index_103349.html)>, accessed 14 February 2019.

<sup>35</sup> See, for example, <https://www.localizingthesdgs.org/>

<sup>36</sup> Smoke, Paul, 'Urban Finance: Strengthening an overlooked foundation of urban planning', chapter 12 in The Routledge Companion to Planning in the Global South, edited by Gautam Bhan, Smita Srinivas and Vanessa Watson, Routledge, London, 2017, p. 156.



To stimulate progress in implementing local development plans and expand access to services among poor and excluded children and families, UNICEF country offices, in collaboration with development partners, provide seed funds to local government. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, for example, UNICEF helped select municipalities identify gaps in social service provision for the most vulnerable groups and provided seed funding to establish new social services, with the condition that the municipalities sustain the new services from their budgets after seed funding ends.

Country offices should determine the extent to which target local planning frameworks, processes or instruments are:

- Based on physical (land use or physical infrastructure) vs. development (socio-economic) plans;
- Connected to a strategic vs. statutory planning process;
- Comprehensive (territorial) vs. single-sector;
- Expert-driven vs. participatory (i.e., involving committees or consultations with citizen inputs);
- Dependent on local tax/fee revenue vs. intergovernmental fiscal transfers or private finance; and
- Guided by minimum standards and regulations vs. determined by an ad hoc process.

As part of broader sector and cross-sectoral initiatives to improve service coverage, UNICEF helps throughout the planning, resourcing, implementation and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) stages of local development planning to identify barriers to achieving the vision for children, adolescents and their families as set out in the local development plan. Many country offices train local government stakeholders in results-based management to strengthen performance monitoring, evaluation and learning throughout local government, whether within a specific disadvantaged region, across an entire class of local government (e.g., urban municipalities) or for all local government authorities in a country. Country offices use programme platforms such as child-friendly cities and existing national processes, such as training programmes, to link these efforts on the ground with results at scale.

There are also nascent efforts to integrate emergency preparedness, disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change into local planning systems (see Box 5). This is a cost-effective way to link humanitarian and development work since local government are especially suited to limiting exposure to hazards and thereby directly reducing people's vulnerability to recurrent shocks and stresses.<sup>37</sup> In particular, where local governments are undertaking child-centred spatial risk assessments, including vulnerability and risk mapping exercises (see Action Area 1), UNICEF country offices can consider:



#### Helpful tip: How to gain access to relevant geographically disaggregated data

UNICEF country offices are strongly encouraged to identify the characteristics of existing urban and rural local government planning instruments before finalizing tools and strategic approaches to support the achievement of country programme outputs involving local development planning.

Country offices should determine the extent to which target local planning frameworks, processes or instruments are:

- Based on physical (land use or physical infrastructure) vs. development (socio-economic) plans;
- Connected to a strategic vs. statutory planning process;
- Comprehensive (territorial) vs. single-sector;
- Expert-driven vs. participatory (i.e., involving committees or consultations with citizen inputs);
- Dependent on local tax/fee revenue vs. intergovernmental fiscal transfers or private finance; and
- Guided by minimum standards and regulations vs. determined by an ad hoc process.

<sup>37</sup> *Strengthening Resilience through Risk-informed Decentralization and Local Governance Programming*, forthcoming in 2019.

- Providing national disaster management authorities and local government with technical assistance to design and implement local disaster risk assessments, ensuring that the latest risk information is packaged in a way suitable to local decision making and made universally available to hazard-prone communities;
- Providing support for local government and private sector and civil society partners to organize community consultations to identify achievable risk reduction measures and priority spending on preparedness – and incorporating the experience into national guidelines for both statutory and strategic local planning instruments; and
- Engaging with private sector and civil society partners to calculate the financial costs of risk reduction and preparedness investments such as shock-responsive social protection, child-responsive community resettlement and local early warning systems.

#### Box 5. Disaster risk reduction planning in Peru

In Peru, UNICEF supported national, regional and local government to adapt and implement strategies to manage and reduce disaster risks, prepare for emergencies and mitigate the effects of climate change on children, adolescents and their families. As part of this work, UNICEF provided technical assistance to regional and local government to adapt their development plans in line with the National Plan for Disaster Risk Management. As a result, 117 communities and 22 local governments prepared community risk maps and action plans for risk reduction. Furthermore, 20 local government from the Lima region were collectively allocated an additional US\$3.3 million to reduce their vulnerabilities and respond to future emergencies.

Many of the principles and processes of national government budgeting are equally relevant at the local level. Local governments typically prepare an annual budget submission, highlighting new proposals and priorities. They seek to balance their service delivery responsibilities within their available

financial resources. Potential sources of local government funds are typically conditional or unconditional transfers from national or state governments (in federal contexts) and local revenue. At the local level, governments can experience budget-related bottlenecks due to limited revenue raising potential or capacity, overly restrictive funding streams (e.g., inflexible or prescriptive earmarked transfers that do not correspond to local priorities or needs) or late transfer of intergovernmental grants. Local governments can also experience additional challenges in coordination given the need to link local plans to both the local budget process and, potentially, a national planning and budgeting process.

Because UNICEF partners with local government to address barriers to critical services for children, there is an increasing focus on addressing bottlenecks in local budgeting.<sup>38</sup> This work includes engaging with local government to link local and inter-governmental planning and budgeting processes, strengthening budgeting systems and practices and influencing resource allocation to improve equity and the quantity and quality of local services. Some of the approaches and tools that UNICEF applies are analysis of the sufficiency, efficiency and equity of subnational budgets; provision of technical assistance to strengthen local government capacities in preparing evidence-based budget submissions; strengthening the link between expenditure and data on child outcomes, and capacity building for local government officials in evidence-based budgeting. UNICEF also undertakes child-focused budget analysis. Staff apply a child lens to local budgets to identify support for children across sectors, agencies and different stages of the life cycle, and to highlight resource gaps and improve measurement and monitoring of spending for children.

A new area of UNICEF engagement is local resource mobilization. Local government implementation of child-sensitive local development plans is contingent on sufficient resources. A potential quick win in resource mobilization is to provide technical support to local governments to help them access national performance funds or to access development assistance or private sector resources. UNICEF also works on local revenue mobilization,

<sup>38</sup> See also UNICEF, *UNICEF's Engagements in Influencing Domestic Public Finance for Children (PF4C): A global programme framework*.

especially in terms of efficient and effective municipal tax administration (see Box 6). Other types of engagement include assessments of the local fiscal space, supporting local government to develop sector financing strategies and identify affordable tariffs, particularly in sectors such as WASH. This work relies on strong in-house public finance expertise and close collaboration with key development partners, such as the World Bank, IMF and UNCDF, etc.

Local planning and budgeting processes are heavily influenced by financial and political relationships that span different levels of government. The execution of local development plans and budgets often depends on intergovernmental fiscal transfers. As many UNICEF country offices go beyond simply advocating for child sensitivity in local development plans and budgets, programming to influence national resource allocation to local government has become increasingly common.<sup>39</sup> UNICEF country offices can consider the following engagement ideas for this area:

- Revising national budget guidelines/social sector expenditure guidelines (see Box 7) for local government, including those related to monitoring, evaluating and reporting the use of conditional or earmarked transfers;
- Supporting performance incentives and performance-based budgeting;

- Facilitating intersectoral round tables, district/county-level forums and municipal meetings to discuss and review budget transfers from central to local government;
- Generating evidence on intergovernmental fiscal transfers, with a focus on their efficiency, adequacy and equity, and engaging at the national level in evidence-based policy dialogue; and
- Strengthening intergovernmental frameworks and coordination, including improving equity, targeting and timeliness of intergovernmental fiscal transfers and strengthening systems and processes for coordinating bottom-up and top-down planning and budgeting.

Changes to local planning, budgeting and national resource allocation processes can impact on children's realization of their rights and their access to essential services. For this reason, UNICEF support focuses on ensuring that national and local planning and budgeting standards and guidelines have a child focus and that child outcome indicators are included in the results matrices of development plans and budget allocations at the local level. As with the national budget process, local budget processes and decisions around local resource allocation are highly political. A thorough understanding of political economy factors is therefore crucial for success when engaging in this area.

## Box 6. Improving local tax administration in Cameroon

UNICEF Cameroon has traditionally supported communes in child-sensitive local development planning. A recent assessment, however, showed that implementation of the plans that had been developed was weak. One of the main reasons identified was inefficient local taxation. Local taxes represent an average between 40 and 53 per cent of communal resources. So in 2017, UNICEF Cameroon decided to expand its scope of engagement on local taxation and use of local resources as a way to support local government to respond to the needs and priorities of children within their communities. Based on a situation analysis, eight communes, the lowest level of local government in Cameroon, were selected for UNICEF support. In collaboration with a World Bank-supported project, UNICEF identified key actors at the commune level, including local civil society organizations, state services at local level, community leaders and youth and women representatives. A series of workshops involving these participants covered types of local taxes and fees (such as livestock slaughter tax, municipal tax on livestock, firearms tax, parking fees, etc.). Then obstacles and bottlenecks encountered to the collection of each type of tax – and ways to address these obstacles – were analysed. At the end of the series of workshops, each commune developed its own road map to address the identified bottlenecks to collecting these types of revenues, in support of the implementation of child sensitive local development plans.

<sup>39</sup> The forthcoming Resource Guide on Public Financial Management in Subnational Governments.





### Box 7. Subnational budget guidelines for social services in Cambodia

In Cambodia, UNICEF facilitated stronger collaboration among central ministries, including the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Economy and Finance to provide joint and harmonized guidance and support for capital and provincial administrations (CPAs) to formulate plans, budgets and implement social services that are responsive to children. Specifically, UNICEF facilitated a series of inter-ministerial meetings, which resulted in production of a joint calendar for subnational administration planning and budget formulation and an orientation document and a menu of options for social service projects for CPAs, including a minimum threshold for social budget allocation for all 25 CPAs in the country. The Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Economy and Finance jointly organized workshop/coaching sessions for CPA planning and finance officers and representatives from social sector departments to discuss and agree on proposed social service projects for inclusion in their annual budgets. As a result, for the first time all seven target CPAs proposed a significant number of social projects for children, adolescents and their families in their annual budgets.

Supporting local planning and budgeting processes is relevant in most country contexts for at least some services. Entry points vary depending on whether the local government has some discretion over how local resources are allocated. In contexts where there is limited or no local discretion, or where local government have insufficient resources to distribute, work on local planning and budgeting processes can inform advocacy with higher levels of government on the sufficiency and equity of intergovernmental transfers.

Engagement in this area is often strongly linked to the other three action areas. Evidence-

based planning and budgeting depend on the availability of geographically disaggregated data (Action Area 1) and the participation of communities (Action Area 3). Local resource mobilization supports work to improve local service delivery arrangements (Action Area 4).

#### Action Area 2 programming tools and resources

Summarized below are select programming tools for Action Area 2 (plus suggestions of when UNICEF country offices can use them) and potential programming partners (see Table 4). Also provided are key UNICEF technical resources to support programming in this area.

**Table 4. Programming tools and resources for Action Area 2**

Tool	Description	When to use	Potential partner(s)
Evidence-based/child-focused local planning and budgeting	An approach that supports local planning and budgeting, using locally owned and generated data to highlight problems and find solutions	There is a need to increase the priority, capacity and government funding of child-related services at the subnational level	Ministry of local government, ministry of planning, sector ministries, local government
Fiscal space assessments	Assesses how local government can create fiscal space to finance local child-related goods and services	When local government has concerns about the affordability of certain child related investments	Ministry of finance, local government
Costing	Costing provides the basis for assessing cost effectiveness of service packaging (integrated or separate) and delivery modalities (add-on or new).	When local government has concerns about affordability of service delivery packages	Local government, ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning; ministry of finance
Participatory planning and budgeting	An approach that supports the systematic participation of communities in local development planning and budgeting processes	There is a need to increase the priority, capacity and government funding of child-related services across the subnational level	Ministry of local government, ministry of planning, local government, NGOs and CBOs
Subnational budget brief	Summarizes data in budget reports using easy-to-read analyses of spending trends in key social sectors	When there is a need for evidence for advocating for greater local government investments in children	Ministry of finance, local government
Public expenditure tracking survey (PETS)	A PETS tracks the flow of resources through the various layers of government bureaucracy (e.g., from central government to local government) to the service points (e.g., schools) to determine what proportion of allocated resources reaches each level and how long it takes to get there	When there are concerns about fund leakages, resource capture or spending bottlenecks; a PETS can inform recommendations for improving the efficiency of (local) public spending and the quantity and quality of services	Ministry of local government, ministry of finance, ministry of planning, local government
Subnational public expenditure review (PER)	APER assesses quantity and quality of local public spending over time against policy goals and performance indicators	When there is a need for evidence for advocating for greater local public investments in children or a need to generate information that enables local government to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of existing spending	Ministry of finance, local government

**Technical resources**

UNICEF, [UNICEF's Engagements in Influencing Domestic Public Finance for Children \(PF4C\): A global programme framework](#), UNICEF, New York, December 2017<sup>40</sup>

UNICEF, [Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers](#) (draft), PF4C Technical Guidance Note Series, No. 2, UNICEF, New York, 2017<sup>41</sup>

UNICEF, [A Resource Guide on Public Financial Management in Subnational Governments](#) (forthcoming)

<sup>40</sup> Available at: <[www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/UNICEF\\_Public\\_Finance\\_for\\_Children.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/UNICEF_Public_Finance_for_Children.pdf)>, accessed 5 December 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Available at: <[www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Intergovernmental\\_Fiscal\\_Transfers\\_DRAFT.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Intergovernmental_Fiscal_Transfers_DRAFT.pdf)>, accessed 6 December 2018.

### ACTION AREA 3: EMPOWER COMMUNITIES, INCLUDING CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

#### Key activities:

- Facilitate participation by supporting local governments to systematically involve children, adolescents and their families in local decision making.
- Partner with local civil society organizations and build the capacity of communities to participate in local decision making.
- Support civil society organizations and communities in the monitoring and oversight of local service delivery through social accountability mechanisms.
- Help national governments institutionalize local participatory and accountability mechanisms for children, adolescents and their families through national legal frameworks.

Participation is a crucial means for children, adolescents and the wider communities to negotiate and advocate for the realization of their rights. This could be in the form of shaping local plans and budgets or providing direct feedback on the delivery of local (public) goods and services. Child, adolescent and community participation can thus lead to better local services, more responsive local policies and plans and the more effective use of local budgets to support local priorities.

Local governments that foster participation also benefit: they can gain access to innovative ideas and solutions to pressing local challenges related to service delivery and the local environment. Participation increases the visibility of the problems that children, adolescents and their families confront in their neighbourhoods and makes local government more aware of their responsibility to improve child-related services. Involving children and adolescents in local governance provides them with the opportunity to both learn about and practise responsible citizenship. Opportunities for constructive participation in political decision making can strengthen state-society relations<sup>42</sup> and societies that offer such opportunities tend to be less prone to violence (see Box 8).<sup>43</sup>

For participation to happen, communities need suitable opportunities to participate. This means

#### Box 8. Participatory planning in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the Government of Ethiopia and UNICEF jointly support integrated community-based participatory planning in 384 districts.<sup>44</sup> This programme platform enhances the efficiency and responsiveness of social service delivery: it encourages communities to own local development planning; allows sectors to better target and coordinate local development activities; and supports community problem-solving. It also plays a key role in building social cohesion because it enhances social ties and facilitates day-to-day discussions among community members.<sup>45</sup>

that children, adolescents and their families require access to institutionalized mechanisms through which they can influence local decision making and monitor service delivery. Participation also requires a special emphasis on redressing inequities. To reach the most disadvantaged children and communities, local participatory mechanisms should be organized in a way that allows disadvantaged groups to participate and meaningfully contribute.<sup>46</sup> This includes a strong focus on gender equity.

UNICEF country office contributions in this area can include:

- Supporting local government in transparency and ensuring the availability and accessibility of meaningful local information (e.g., service outages, budget information), including for the most vulnerable and marginalized groups (see Action Areas 1 and 2);
- Supporting local government to pilot or expand regular community dialogue/ consultations or accountability mechanisms, with special attention to the equal participation of women and men and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups;
- Supporting local government to put in place inclusive child/adolescent participatory mechanisms, with special attention to equal participation of girls and boys and children from disadvantaged groups;
- Deploying information and communications technology (ICT) assets (e.g., U-Report) to

<sup>42</sup> de Wijn, *Local Governance and Sustaining Peace*, 2019.

<sup>43</sup> United Nations and World Bank, *Pathways for Peace: Inclusive approaches to preventing violent conflict*, World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2018. Available at: <<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>>, accessed 5 December 2018.

<sup>44</sup> As of 2018.

<sup>45</sup> UNICEF, 'Evaluation of Integrated Community Based Participatory Planning (ICBPP) in Tigray Region, Ethiopia', UNICEF, Addis Ababa, 2013.

<sup>46</sup> de Wijn, Marija, *Child Participation in Local Governance: A UNICEF guidance note*, UNICEF, New York, 2017. Available at: <[www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/UNICEF\\_Child\\_Participation\\_FINAL\\_4.2018\\_v2.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/UNICEF_Child_Participation_FINAL_4.2018_v2.pdf)>, accessed 19 February 2019.



- solicit local ideas, priorities and preferences for local improvements (see Box 9);
- Creating awareness among local government of the value of child/adolescent and wider community participation in local planning and budgeting or other local processes; and
- Developing or strengthening national standards and guidelines for child/adolescent and community participation in local governance.

Effective participation also involves increasing the capability children, adolescents, women and men to use participatory and accountability mechanisms. Capability to participate is determined in part by the individual resources that children, adolescents and communities possess. Such resources include financial or material resources, knowledge and information, the skills and confidence to speak up and the motivation to do so. Capability to participate is also partly determined by 'social capital' (e.g., trust), which enables people to act collectively.

UNICEF country office contributions in this area can include:

- Using appropriate channels to publicize how to access participatory and accountability mechanisms;
- Strengthening the twenty-first century skills of the most vulnerable children, adolescents and communities, with special attention to gender equity;
- Capacity building for vulnerable children and adolescents and communities on how to participate in local governance, including, for example, understanding local budgeting processes and budgets, with special attention to gender equity;
- Reducing the financial costs of participation to enable the most vulnerable children, adolescents and communities to participate, with special attention to gender equity;
- Accompanying the most vulnerable children and adolescents through progressive engagement with participatory mechanisms;
- Collaborating with youth organizations (e.g., scouting or similar groups); and
- Partnering with CSOs and local child rights organizations and brokering their access to local government decision making processes.

### Box 9. Using information and communication technology (ICT) to support of participation in local decision making and in the monitoring of service delivery.

UNICEF country offices are increasingly ICT-enabled platforms, social media and mobile phone technology to support participation and accountability mechanisms.

A promising platform for communication is U-Report. This UNICEF-sponsored social messaging tool engages with signed-up 'U-Reporters' via Short Messaging Service (SMS) texts to gather and amplify community views on the issues that affect them. U-Reporters can use the platform to advocate for their local community, at times even communicating directly with government officials. Several UNICEF country offices are exploring participatory mechanisms through WhatsApp. In Mozambique, for example, UNICEF is linking U-report to WhatsApp, allowing for faster counselling responses and a more interactive experience. In Zimbabwe, real-time monitoring using [RapidPro](#)<sup>47</sup> enables communities to report changes in WASH infrastructure functionality directly to local government extension workers through SMS.<sup>48</sup> The system has reduced distances communities travel to report faults, reduced response times and improved accountability; it has also contributed to improved relations between local government and residents.

Use of ICT tools can play a key role in reaching target audiences, particularly adolescents, and in urban settings with high mobile/internet connectivity. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter are especially effective at attracting adolescent engagement. But while a tool such as U-Report has proved very successful in reaching young people and giving them the opportunity to express their views, it can also present challenges. These include difficulties in reaching the most disadvantaged.<sup>49</sup> In addition, there is no evidence that civic technology initiatives such as U-Report can on their own help communities hold their governments or leaders to account.<sup>50</sup> Real-time engagement can also present risks to communities, and clear guidance for children and adolescents is required before using such tools.

<sup>47</sup> See <https://community.rapidpro.io/>

<sup>48</sup> See <https://www.unicef.org/innovation/stories/accelerating-delivery-water-and-sanitation-services-through-real-time-monitoring-zimbabwe>

<sup>49</sup> Peixoto, Tiago, and Micah L. Sifry, Civic Tech in the Global South: Assessing for the public good, World Bank, Washington, D.C.,

2017. Available at: <<http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/717091503398213001/pdf/119037-PUB-P133525-PUBLIC-21-8-2017-16-46-30-CivicTechPeixotoSify.pdf>>, accessed August 5, 2019

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

Participation in local governance by the most vulnerable children, adolescents and communities must be supported by positive social norms. Local government, service providers and individuals who occupy positions of power need to promote positive social norms about the rights and capacities of all children and adolescents, including the most vulnerable. Inequalities are often exacerbated by prevailing social norms that enable the exclusion of certain groups (e.g., girls and women and the most vulnerable) from decision making processes. Deliberate efforts are often required to shift attitudes towards support for inclusive practices and sanctions for other practices that fail to engage individuals at risk of exclusion. When inclusive approaches to participation continue to meet with resistance due to negative social norms and attitudes, it may be necessary to launch a communications campaign dedicated to reversing this situation. UNICEF country office contributions in this area can include:

- Identifying negative social norms and attitudes around participation by certain groups, such as girls and women, and the most vulnerable children, adolescents and communities;
- Recruiting local leaders, including traditional or religious leaders, to promote positive social norms and attitudes around inclusive participation; and
- Using interpersonal channels and the media to share positive stories about inclusive participation.

Participation in local governance is a core element of social accountability initiatives, which are an emerging priority in relation to strengthening child- and adolescent-focused services. Evidence suggests that such initiatives can contribute to the realization of child rights through increased state or institutional responsiveness. This occurs when social accountability leads to reduced corruption; spaces for adolescent, youth and/or community engagement; empowering local voices; improving the use of budgets; and/or improving service delivery.<sup>51</sup>

UNICEF supports the institutionalization of local participatory mechanisms for children and adolescents and the wider community through

local resource mobilization (to cover the costs of participatory mechanisms) and national policy engagement. Sustaining participatory platforms can be expensive for local government in poor regions with limited revenue. When local government can earmark either national budget transfers or local revenue to fund child, adolescent and community consultations, participation is more likely to be sustained over the long term. Changes to national policies, including regulatory standards and guidelines for inclusive community consultations in local planning and budgeting, can help scale up and institutionalize participation in local governance.

Engagement in this action area is often necessary to effectively carry out programme activities in the other three action areas. Child and adolescent participation, as well as broader community engagement, can be crucial for generating geographically disaggregated data and evidence (Action Area 1), and for ensuring both that local planning and budgeting processes are responsive to child and community priorities (Action Area 2) and that service providers are monitored and deliver good quality and inclusive services (Action Area 4).

Community empowerment is relevant in all country contexts, including humanitarian contexts, where UNICEF supports accountability to affected populations (AAP).<sup>52</sup> In fragile and conflict-affected situations, participation and accountability can play crucial roles in strengthening social cohesion and state-society relations.<sup>53</sup> In development contexts and in high-income countries, participation and accountability are key strategies for ensuring that local government is responsive to the local needs and priorities of children, adolescents and their families.

### Action Area 3 programming tools and resources

Summarized below are select programming tools for Action Area 3 (plus suggestions of when UNICEF country offices can use them) and potential programming partners (see Table 5).

Also included are key UNICEF technical resources that can support programming in this area.

<sup>51</sup> de Wijn, Marija, *UNICEF Engagement in Social Accountability: A stocktake*, UNICEF, New York, 2018.

<sup>52</sup> In India, for example, UNICEF, together with the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, local NGOs and universities, supported the Kerala government in an AAP scheme designed to facilitate the participation

of affected populations, especially marginalized groups, in humanitarian response and recovery by supporting various feedback and complaint mechanisms. See also: Atlee Chait et al., *Accountability to Affected Populations: Why Are States Left Beyond?*, UNICEF and London School of Economics, 2019.

<sup>53</sup> de Wijn, *Local Governance and Sustaining Peace*, 2019.

**Table 5. Programming tools and resources for Action Area 3**

Tool	Description	When to use	Potential partner(s)
Scorecard methodology	A community-based monitoring tool that solicits user perceptions on the quality and efficiency of services and the use of inputs and expenditures, and which generates direct feedback and communication between service users and providers	There is weak accountability to service users	Local governments; ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning; civil society organizations (CSOs); World Bank
<u>U-Report</u> <sup>54</sup>	A Short Message Service (SMS)-based social messaging/communication tool that allows individuals to speak out on development issues and support child rights	Local government is interested in consulting with communities on specific questions; the tool is particularly relevant in contexts with high mobile phone connectivity/ high literacy rates (e.g., urban areas)	Local government, ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning
Feedback and complaints mechanism	A local, formalized way to accept, assess and resolve community feedback or complaints, either in the form of a physical complaints boxes, an online portal/e-grievance mechanism or a mechanism supported by SMS-based technology such as RapidPro	There is weak accountability to service users	Local government, ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning
Localized participation and accountability tools	Many UNICEF country offices work with programme implementation partners that possess local knowledge to develop custom, country-specific, subnational programming tools to strengthen local participation and accountability processes		

#### Technical resources

de Wijn, Marija, Child Participation in Local Governance: A UNICEF guidance note, UNICEF, New York, 2017<sup>55</sup>

UNICEF, Child Participation in Local Governance: UNICEF country office case studies, UNICEF, New York, 2017<sup>56</sup>

de Wijn, Marija, UNICEF Engagement in Social Accountability: A stocktake, UNICEF, New York, 2018<sup>57</sup>

UNICEF, Social Accountability: Case studies, UNICEF, New York, 2018<sup>58</sup>

UNICEF, Minimum Quality Standards and Indicators for Community Engagement, UNICEF, New York, forthcoming in 2019

<sup>54</sup> U-Report Global, <<https://ureport.in/>>, accessed 19 February 2019.

<sup>55</sup> Available at: <[www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/UNICEF\\_Child\\_Participation\\_FINAL\\_4.2018\\_v2.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/UNICEF_Child_Participation_FINAL_4.2018_v2.pdf)>, accessed 19 February 2019.

<sup>56</sup> Available at: <<https://s25924.pcdn.co/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Child-Participation-Case-Studies-Final-1.pdf>>, accessed July 14, 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Available at: <[https://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Social\\_Accountability\\_stocktake.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Social_Accountability_stocktake.pdf)>, accessed July 14, 2019.

<sup>58</sup> Available at: <[https://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Social\\_Accountability\\_Case\\_Studies.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Social_Accountability_Case_Studies.pdf)>, accessed July 14, 2019.



## ACTION AREA 4: SUPPORT LOCAL SERVICE DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

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### Key activities:

- Support local government in the design, costing and implementation of child-focused local service packages, including through contracting private providers.
  - Support local government to coordinate service delivery stakeholders by strengthening existing horizontal and vertical coordination structures and mechanisms.
  - Strengthen local government capacity to design, implement and enforce child-sensitive regulations and standards (e.g., minimum service quality standards, building codes, land use planning).
  - Convene local government, sector ministries and development partners to increase clarity about local roles and responsibilities.
- 

Local governments work within a variety of organizational arrangements to expand access to affordable public infrastructure and basic services. In most countries, service delivery responsibilities are shared among local and national stakeholders. In contexts where CSOs and private sector businesses are involved in the delivery of goods and social services at the local level, local governments have important opportunities to leverage complementary expertise and resources to co-produce child-responsive goods and services.

Local governments often struggle to effectively design and manage the variety of organizational arrangements necessary to implement integrated basic services. UNICEF helps address these gaps by working with partners to design inclusive, child-focused local service packages and programmes. This can be done through joint capacity development programmes that involve local government, local sectoral actors, civil society and private sector. UNICEF country offices often use awards, recognitions and other 'status' instruments (e.g., the Municipal Seal of Approval) to incentivize and catalyse collaborative local action among the various public, private and non-governmental duty bearers. UNICEF also supports local government in the coordination of diverse stakeholders by strengthening existing horizontal and vertical coordination structures and mechanisms – activity that is underpinned by the UNICEF's convening authority. This work responds to

broader concerns that, at the local level, public sector capacity alone is likely to be insufficient to achieve national development priorities and child-related SDGs.

While UNICEF leaves the coordination and oversight of certain local (public) goods and services – such as infrastructure planning – to partners better placed to do so, UNICEF country offices can contribute to specific aspects of service delivery arrangements.<sup>59</sup> Such contributions include:

- Advocating for the design and implementation of child-responsive regulations in such areas as land use management, building construction, air pollution and service delivery;
- Supporting quality inspections of goods and services jointly delivered by public, private and non-governmental sector providers;
- Providing technical support for local government and community-led resource mobilization through nontraditional approaches to expanding funding and in-kind resources for child-focused services and programmes; and
- Strengthening local government capacity in the delivery of social services and providing inclusive access to basic services for women and girls, marginalized groups, etc.

There are concerns that some local service delivery arrangements – such as public-private partnerships – that are not properly costed or enforced can inadvertently exclude the poorest and most geographically marginalized populations. Where local government capacity is weak, UNICEF country offices can help to address gaps in expertise and resources at the local level by working with local government to identify alternative service delivery arrangements. These arrangements may build on existing service user committees or other types of community-based collective management structures at the service point level. It can also include strengthening intermunicipal cooperation arrangements between neighbouring local governments, particularly in contexts where local governments have limited resources or where the benefits of services spill over jurisdictional boundaries such as in metropolitan areas. UNICEF country office contributions in this area may include:

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<sup>59</sup> UNICEF, *Shaping Urbanization for Children: A handbook on child-responsive urban planning*, 2018.

- Building local government capacity to contract out services, manage contracts and regulate private service providers in line with national service delivery standards (see Box 10);
- Conducting value for money analysis and cost evaluations of changes in local service delivery arrangements;
- Evaluating the risks and benefits – in both the short and long term – of restructuring local service delivery arrangements; and
- Supporting the development of intermunicipal collaboration frameworks.

While public-private partnerships and other alternative service delivery arrangements are already important in both rural and urban settings, such approaches will grow in importance as UNICEF renews its commitment to children in urban areas. Millions of children living in cities reside and access services in informal settlement areas. Service delivery in these areas is often fragmented. It often depends on an array of small-scale operators (e.g., water trucks and vendors, informal community health clinics) which local government must learn to coordinate and regulate to ensure equitable, effective, safe and universal coverage.

#### Box 10. Action research on service delivery models for rural water supply in Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, UNICEF has engaged in action research on service delivery models for rural water supply through Public Private Partnerships. The action research tested hypotheses related to three aspects of the sustainability of the model: how to apply the water payment mechanism at municipal scale; how to develop a marketing strategy that creates sufficient service demand and favours financial equilibrium between the operator's investment and the revenues generated from the community's contributions; and how to operationalize the contract and a responsibility pact (with key performance indicators) between stakeholders.

In many countries, the roles and responsibilities of local government and other service providers related to children, adolescents and their families are poorly defined. UNICEF addresses these gaps and works to improve clarity around respective roles and responsibilities by mapping service delivery functions across stakeholders and by convening meetings of sector ministries, local government authorities, local government associations and development partners. In Honduras, for example, UNICEF is working with the government to define a first level of child protection services at the municipal level through the establishment of municipal offices for children and adolescents. This work aims to improve the coordination of state agencies and NGOs through the design of referral protocols as well as a common case management system to improve service provision for child victims of violence, abuse or neglect. In Somalia, UNICEF, as part of the United Nations Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery,<sup>60</sup> is piloting devolved service delivery models in education and health. This encompasses, among other activities, supporting decentralization strategies that clarify service delivery functions and roles and responsibilities of the various levels of government.

Supporting local service delivery arrangements is relevant in all country contexts, including humanitarian contexts. Here, UNICEF may wish to strengthen local government capacity to coordinate and oversee local humanitarian response and emergency relief operations.

Work in this action area is often more effective when complemented by programme activities in the other three action areas. Local data and evidence on the status of service provision are crucial for supporting the oversight function of local government (Action Area 1); engagement in local planning and budgeting ensures that sufficient resources are mobilized and used efficiently and effectively (Action Area 2); and communities have a crucial role to play in the monitoring and oversight of service provision (Action Area 3).

<sup>60</sup> The United Nations Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery (JPLG) is implemented by UNICEF, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).



## Helpful tip: Understanding the service delivery roles and responsibilities of local actors

Effective engagement in Action Area 4 requires a thorough understanding of the service delivery roles and responsibilities of the various levels of government and of private and non-profit service providers.

Information regarding formal local government roles and responsibilities can be found in:

- Supreme laws/constitutions;
- Organic laws/local government acts;
- Decentralization policies;
- Laws and policies for the relevant sectors (e.g., health, education); and
- Local government policies, guidelines and by-laws.

Yet, while national decentralization frameworks establish de jure local government control over specific functional areas, the reality may be quite different. Local government associations and individual local governments are often best placed to provide information on de facto local government functions and on the various service delivery roles and responsibilities of the private sector and civil society within the local area. (See also information of fit-for-context local programming in the programming considerations chapter, below.)

### Action Area 4 programming tools and resources

Summarized below are select programming tools for Action Area 4 (plus suggestions of when UNICEF country offices can use them) and potential programming partners (see Table 6).

Also provided are key UNICEF technical resources to support programming in this area.

**Table 6. Programming tools and resources for Action Area 4**

Tool	Description	When to use	Potential partner(s)
Value for money (VFM) analysis	A VFM analysis collects and analyses data on the costs and results of a specific programme or service delivery arrangement. A key objective of the VFM analysis is to support service delivery and improve performance; it can give useful metrics on appropriate interventions to address service delivery challenges, including through the contracting of private or other non-public providers	When local government wants to assess whether a public-private partnership offers better value than traditional public service delivery arrangements	Local government
Costing	Costing provides the basis for assessing cost effectiveness of different service packaging (integrated or separate) and delivery modalities (add-on, or new)	When local government has concerns about affordability of service delivery packages	Local government, ministry of local government; ministry of urban development/ planning; ministry of finance

#### Technical resources

UNICEF Global Urban WASH Framework (forthcoming)





Titedeyo Gole (sitting on the right), 9, is a third-grade student in Naikia Primary School in Dasenech Woreda, SNNPR, Ethiopia. She loves school because she can learn and play with her friends. Pastoralist children are often excluded from formal education opportunities and are particularly vulnerable to natural shocks like drought. UNICEF works with local authorities and other partners to ensure that children like Titedeyo continue with their education even during difficult times.





A volunteer worker with the Kasese District Local Government types in newly received information into the district's Birth and Death Registration Databank. Birth registration is an important first step for the protection of child rights.

# 4. PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS

This section outlines recommendations for UNICEF country offices on how to strengthen programming with local government and other local stakeholders. These programming considerations should help UNICEF regional and country offices, as well as UNICEF headquarters divisions, improve the effectiveness of local governance approaches in their work. They will improve UNICEF's ability to support scaled-up, equitable and sustainable services for children, adolescents and their families. These considerations, which were highlighted in the evaluations of various local programmes (see *Annex 1*), are summarized below and described in detail in the subsections that follow.

Programming considerations:

1. Ensure that local programming is fit for context.
2. Establish or strengthen partnerships with influencers.
3. Be explicit about how local programmes and initiatives can be replicated, scaled up and sustained over the long term.
4. Choose the right subnational support modality for local programming.
5. Promote collaboration between sector, social policy, cross-cutting and emergency teams, through joint situational analyses, intersectoral work planning (internally or with government partners) and joint outputs for implementation, monitoring and reporting.
6. Improve results monitoring by formulating theories of change and more robust indicators of progress in local governance in all programme results areas and by evaluating the contribution of local governance in improving coverage of social services, especially for the most marginalized children, adolescents and their families.

## 4.1 FIT-FOR-CONTEXT LOCAL PROGRAMMING

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to programming with local government. Substantial variation in policy, institutional and cultural contexts exists not only across countries but also within countries. Global programming platforms or initiatives thus require substantial adaptation to the national context to be effective. The specific obstacles and solutions to improving child outcomes can also vary substantially within a country (see Table 7).

Engaging in a situation analysis prior to programme design and during implementation supports the contextualization of local programmes. Contextualization – adapting programmes to the specific local context – increases the sustainability of initiatives and limits the risk of failure. The situation analysis can help UNICEF country offices identify strategic pathways for institutionalizing local initiatives. It also establishes baseline data for monitoring and evaluation purposes. The situation analysis also provides a strong foundation for the development of the country office's Programme Strategy Notes and Country Programme Document.

The situation analysis for women and children conducted as part of the UNICEF country programme development process is a key opportunity for such analysis. The situation analysis can describe the context within specific priority regions, districts, municipalities or villages or focus on the local government system within the country more broadly (see Box 11). Where country offices are involved in substantial subnational engagement, or in contexts where there is a strong push for



**Table 7. Domestic variation in contexts at the subnational level**

Context	Areas of potential variation
<b>Social/cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local needs and priorities</li> <li>• Ethnic/religious make-up of communities</li> <li>• Existence of migrant/refugee populations</li> <li>• Patterns of exclusion</li> <li>• Prevailing attitudes towards children, adolescents, youth, women, people with disabilities, etc.</li> <li>• Perceptions of state legitimacy</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty levels, including child poverty (monetary and non-monetary)</li> <li>• Income inequality</li> <li>• Economic development</li> </ul>
<b>Governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Status/classification and structure of local government</li> <li>• Local government responsibilities (assignment of specific functional areas)</li> <li>• Local government capacities and resources</li> <li>• Local autonomy in decision making</li> <li>• Role of private and other non-public service providers</li> <li>• Role/influence of religious or traditional structures</li> <li>• Political relationships within the council/assembly</li> <li>• Political relations between local government and central government</li> <li>• Inclusiveness of local government processes</li> </ul>
<b>Geographical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geography (e.g., urban/rural and lowland/highland)</li> <li>• Location/remoteness</li> <li>• Exposure to hazards such as floods and earthquakes</li> <li>• Fragility and conflict</li> <li>• Population size and density</li> <li>• Population growth rate</li> <li>• 'Urban sprawl' (dispersed urbanization)</li> </ul>

decentralization, a stand-alone analysis may be warranted. In Vietnam, for example UNICEF conducted a series of provincial situational analyses as well as an analysis of the situation of children in Ho Chi Minh City.<sup>61</sup> In the United Republic of Tanzania, the UNICEF country office developed a situation analysis that took stock of the status of decentralization and local governance in the country as part

of the development of the *UNICEF Tanzania Decentralization and Local Governance Support Strategy for Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar*.<sup>62</sup> Other analysis can support work in specific action areas. In the Philippines, for example, UNICEF undertook a [data landscape diagnostic](#)<sup>63</sup> and a study on options for the integration of equity in subnational public financial management systems in the Philippines.

<sup>61</sup> UNICEF, *Situation analysis of Children in Ho Chi Minh City Viet Nam 2017*, UNICEF, 2017, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/media/1516/file> accessed April 12, 2019; UNICEF, *Report on Situation Analysis of Children in Lao Cai*, UNICEF, 2016, available at: <https://www.unicef.org/vietnam/media/1426/file>, accessed April 12, 2019.

<sup>62</sup> Tidemand, Per, 'Situation analysis For UNICEF Tanzania Decentralization and Local Governance Support Strategy (Mainland and Zanzibar)', UNICEF Tanzania, 8 June 2018 available at: <https://www.unicef.org/tanzania/media/1491/file/DeLOG-Assessment-Stocktake.pdf> accessed August 5, 2019.

<sup>63</sup> See [https://www.developmentgateway.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/UNICEF\\_Philippines\\_Diagnostic.pdf](https://www.developmentgateway.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/UNICEF_Philippines_Diagnostic.pdf)

## Box 11. Reflecting on decentralization and local governance in the situation analysis for women and children

The situation analysis can focus on several topics, including the following:

1. Local needs and priorities;
2. An analysis of the local government system (the main actors, their roles and responsibilities as well as their capacities and resources – see also Helpful tip: Understanding the service delivery roles and responsibilities of local actors, page 26);
3. A political economy analysis;
4. A review of the decentralization process (planned or ongoing);
5. An analysis of the wider institutional landscape (relevant regional and national stakeholders, development partners); and
6. A review of potential risks (e.g., economic, social, political).

While it is often impossible and impractical to address all such aspects in the situation analysis, the country profile can help prioritize areas for analysis. For example, while it is imperative to conduct an analysis of the local government system and a political economy analysis for any type of local programming, a review of the decentralization process might be unnecessary in contexts with a mature decentralized system. In contrast, in countries currently undergoing decentralization reform, UNICEF country offices must develop a thorough understanding of the trajectory of the reform process and build their knowledge of the key decision makers and their incentives. There must also be an understanding of the diverse ways decentralization affects certain sectors.

For specific guidance on how to conduct a subnational situation analysis, see 'Toolkit: New generation situation analysis', Field Results Group, UNICEF, New York, May 2019, pp. 45–49.

UNICEF should ensure that expected results and programming approaches are appropriate for the selected priority regions, districts, municipalities or villages.<sup>64</sup> UNICEF often selects priority districts based on an assessment of child deprivations or vulnerability, thereby inadvertently selecting those districts where local government have limited capacities and resources. While work in such districts may be crucial from an equity perspective, the results that can be reasonably expected in these contexts are more limited than in districts with greater capacities. Where UNICEF intends to model innovative approaches, working in lower-capacity districts may set the model up for failure. Selecting districts that are more representative of the country as a whole is a more appropriate strategy for a modelling approach. Generally, it is better to focus attention on developing innovative, added-value programmes in a few priority districts rather than trying to support a large number of subnational entities.<sup>65</sup>

While this programme guidance argues for a holistic approach and highlights the significant interconnections across the four core action areas, UNICEF should be careful not to overload local government counterparts. Local initiatives sometimes fail because they are based on an unclear understanding of the formal roles and functions of local government (see Helpful tip: Understanding the service delivery roles and responsibilities of local actors – page 26). They can also fail because they require greater capacities and resources than are available within the local context. Instead of focusing on all four action areas, it can be more appropriate – especially in lower-capacity contexts – to sequence programming based on the priorities of local government and the community. Dedicated engagement in one action area may naturally lead to broader engagement in other action areas. Furthermore, it might be unnecessary for UNICEF to undertake all actions directly. Depending on the country's programming entry points, the extent of UNICEF

<sup>64</sup> For further discussion on this topic, see Cook, Mitchell, 'Improving the Selection of Geographic Priorities in Country Programme Engagement', social policy discussion paper, UNICEF, New York, forthcoming in 2019.

<sup>65</sup> Shiva Kumar, A. K., and Katherine Hay, *Thematic Evaluation of UNICEF's Response to Decentralization in East Asia and the Pacific: 2006–2012*, evaluation report, New Delhi, May 2013. Available at: [https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Thematic\\_Evaluation\\_of\\_UNICEFs\\_Response\\_to\\_Decentralization\\_in\\_East\\_Asia\\_and\\_the\\_Pacific\\_-\\_2006-2012.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Thematic_Evaluation_of_UNICEFs_Response_to_Decentralization_in_East_Asia_and_the_Pacific_-_2006-2012.pdf), accessed 6 December 2018.

## Resources for situational analysis

Toolkit: New generation situational analysis, Field Results Group, UNICEF, New York, May 2019 (chapter on subnational situation analysis pages 45-49)

Cook, Mitchell, 'Improving the Selection of Geographic Priorities in Country Programme Engagement', social policy discussion paper, UNICEF, New York, 2019

UNICEF, *Guidance on Risk-informed Programming*, UNICEF, New York, 2018

de Wijn, Marija, *Local Governance and Sustaining Peace: A UNICEF guidance note*, UNICEF, New York, 2019

UNICEF, *Plausible Pathways for Change: A primer on political economy analysis*, forthcoming in 2019

local governance work is likely to be shaped not only by the organization's comparative advantage vis-à-vis other development partners but also by the programmes and initiatives supported by these partners.

## 4.2 PARTNERSHIPS WITH INFLUENCERS

UNICEF continues to work closely with development partners and leverage its comparative advantage in the local governance–service delivery nexus. Important partners include other United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme; bilateral agencies such as Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (or GIZ, the German government's development cooperation agency); global and regional local government associations such as United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and related regional chapters (e.g., UCLG Asia-Pacific); and development banks such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Such partnerships allow UNICEF to benefit from external local governance expertise while contributing a child, equity and social services perspective to partners' work.

Partnerships can take the form of joint assessments and analysis, joint programmes or joint advocacy. As part of the design phase of a programme inspired by the Child Friendly Cities Initiative, for example, UNICEF Belize

partnered with the UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean to assess local government capacity, and so benefited from UNDP expertise in this area. In Somalia, UNICEF is part of the United Nations Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery.<sup>66</sup> In this joint endeavour, UNICEF adds value from a service delivery perspective. UNICEF focuses on strengthening local government capacities to take on service delivery functions; clarifying service delivery roles and responsibilities; and ensuring the alignment of decentralization and sector policies and plans.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, advocacy around such highly politicized topics as intergovernmental fiscal transfers is often more successful when done in collaboration with partners. In Armenia, for example, the partnership between UNICEF and the World Bank was found to be instrumental in promoting child-focused approaches in the area of fiscal transfers.<sup>68</sup>

UNICEF works with a variety of domestic stakeholders. UNICEF counterparts traditionally include social sector ministries. However, such actors' influence on local affairs is potentially limited. When engaging at the local government level, engaging a wide range of national, regional/provincial and local actors becomes important (see Box 12). UNICEF country offices should identify key programming partners through the situation analysis or through partnership mapping. Working with the right partners at all levels is crucial for successfully scaling up and institutionalizing local initiatives.

<sup>66</sup> The United Nations Joint Programme on Local Governance and Decentralized Service Delivery is implemented by UNICEF, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, the United Nations Development Programme, the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Capital Development Fund.

<sup>67</sup> See the example of UNICEF Somalia in de Wijn, *Local Governance and Sustaining Peace*, 2019.

<sup>68</sup> UNICEF, 'Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers' (draft), Public Finance for Children, PF4C Technical Guidance Note Series, No. 2, UNICEF, February 2016. Available at: [www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Intergovernmental\\_Fiscal\\_Transfers\\_DRAFT.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/socialpolicy/files/Intergovernmental_Fiscal_Transfers_DRAFT.pdf), accessed 6 December 2018.



## Box 12. Potential partners

### National level

- Presidential/prime ministerial committees
- Parliament
- Ministry in charge of territorial administration, urban development, planning or local governance, finance
- Sector ministries
- Bilateral and multilateral agencies, including United Nations agencies and the World Bank
- International and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs)
- Local government associations
- National civil service academies or training institutes
- Universities
- Private sector actors

### Regional/provincial level

- Departments or ministries at the state, provincial or district level (depending on the government system)
- Regional civil service academies or training institutes
- Local NGOs
- Private sector actors

### Local level

- Metropolitan authorities
- Legislative and/or executive branches of local government
- Civil society organizations and local NGOs
- Youth organizations
- Non-state actors, including traditional and religious leaders
- Private sector actors
- Land and property developers
- Local utilities/service providers

In fragile and conflict-affected settings and in humanitarian contexts, partnerships should be guided by the 'do no harm' principle and by the humanitarian principles (humanity, neutrality and impartiality). In fragile and conflict-affected settings, it is important to understand that the local governance dimension is an inherent part of the overall conflict system. A conflict necessarily affects local governance and vice versa. The various interests and motivations of local, regional and national actors (e.g., mayors, local councillors, ministries) are often overlooked during conflict analysis. Conducting a partnership analysis from a conflict-sensitive perspective is therefore

essential.<sup>69</sup> In humanitarian contexts, the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality are key in deciding the types of partnerships UNICEF should cultivate.

### 4.3 REPLICATING AND SCALING UP LOCAL PROGRAMMING

Evaluations show that UNICEF country offices encounter difficulties with scaling up and sustaining local interventions. While UNICEF supports innovative approaches and has typically had considerable early success on a small scale, efforts to replicate programmes and initiatives on a larger scale often lose

<sup>69</sup> See de Wijn, *Local Governance and Sustaining Peace*, 2019.

momentum.<sup>70</sup> As a consequence, UNICEF country offices should place a strong emphasis on planning how to approach the replication and scaling up of local programmes and initiatives.

Programming on a local scale requires UNICEF to be specific about its replication goals for local programmes or projects. The three main options are to either: (1) sustain initiatives among target children and communities – e.g., for highly context-specific initiatives, such as a slum upgrading programme, the long-term goal may be to sustain results within the given context rather than to replicate the initiative to other locations; (2) scale up initiatives to encompass more communities – e.g., for initiatives that are particularly relevant for specific localities, such as flood-prone localities or localities in a conflict-affected region, the goal may be replication among all localities facing similar issues rather than scaling up on a nationwide basis; or (3) pursue national policy reform – e.g., for local initiatives that have relevance across the country, UNICEF increasingly adds value by creating and testing models that are then taken to scale by national governments.

Outlining replication goals for local programmes and initiatives is critical because their initial design must often be modified when the programme or initiative is scaled up or adopted nationally. Structures and processes of local governance may differ substantially even within a single country, especially where there is a high degree of decentralization. In federal contexts, for example, the degree of decentralization and local government decision making autonomy can vary considerably across states. Similarly, what works for a high-capacity and well-resourced local government may not work in localities lacking capacity and resources. Such variation only becomes a barrier to scaling up local programming when these differences in the institutional, political and social contexts are not accounted for in the specific goals for programme replication.

Similarly, UNICEF should consider from the outset how to scale up and sustain local programming over the long term. Peer-to-peer learning or help from local government associations can support replication across localities. Working with or national civil training/resource centres can be a sustainable and cost-effective approach to capacity development. In India, for example, UNICEF's collaboration with National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj is a springboard to establishing a national child rights resource unit. Objective of the unit is to integrate child rights within ongoing training of local rural government representatives and policy makers working at the national and subnational levels. National policy reform can be supported by engaging both central and regional governments from the start and by ensuring that there is a clear understanding that programme models are intended to influence policy and to be taken to scale.<sup>71</sup>

Successfully scaling up local programmes and initiatives also, crucially, depends on policy windows of opportunity and strong M&E. Finding a way to combine UNICEF objectives with existing political agendas can be very effective. National decentralization reform, in particular, provides a strong opportunity to pilot and scale up local solutions. For example, in the late 1990s, Cambodia initiated decentralization reform by establishing commune councils. 'Piggybacking' on this opportunity, UNICEF Cambodia piloted Commune Committees for Women and Children in six provinces. Once UNICEF Cambodia could demonstrate with evidence that communes participating in the pilot generated better local-level outcomes for children than non-participating communes, the Cambodian government expanded the Commune Committees nationwide.<sup>72</sup> This example also highlights the need for reliable data and high quality evaluations as a prerequisite for advocacy.

<sup>70</sup> Shiva Kumar and Hay, *Thematic Evaluation*; Woodhouse, Stephen, and Kelsey Atwood, 'Decentralization and Taking Pilots to Scale in East Asia and the Pacific Region', UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, November 2008.

<sup>71</sup> Woodhouse and Atwood, 'Decentralization and Taking Pilots to Scale in East Asia and the Pacific Region', 2008.

<sup>72</sup> Royal Government of Cambodia, National Committee for the Management of Decentralization and Deconcentration Reform, 'The Functioning of Commune Committee for Women and Children', NCDD, August 2008. Available at: <<https://kdevelop.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/2008-hip-pocket-on-the-functioning-of-the-commune-snagkat-committee-for-women-and-childreneng.pdf>>, accessed 6 December 2018.

Successfully scaling up local programmes and initiatives also requires the availability of tools and realistic budgets. Practical measures such as the development of standardized manuals, revisions of laws and ordinances and observation tours are needed to support the replication and institutionalization of local programmes and initiatives. However, efforts by

UNICEF country offices are often insufficient in this regard.<sup>73</sup> Another way in which replication can be supported is through cost-effective and realistic budgets. For example, UNICEF should ensure that government-set unit costs are adhered to and that the programme or initiative can be implemented with limited management support requirements.<sup>74</sup>

## Resources

Woodhouse, Stephen, and Kelsey Atwood, 'Decentralization and Taking Pilots to Scale in East Asia and the Pacific Region', UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, November 2008

## 4.4 DECIDING ON THE SUBNATIONAL SUPPORT MODALITY FOR LOCAL PROGRAMMING

UNICEF local programming can benefit tremendously from a subnational presence. UNICEF country offices use a number of subnational support modalities. The most common of these are: (1) field offices in certain subnational locations; (2) partnerships with local implementing partners (e.g., NGOs, private sector); (3) UNICEF country office field visits; (4) local consultants/technical advisers or United Nations Volunteers embedded in local government departments; and (5) outsourcing technical assistance.<sup>75</sup> This is often combined with direct cash transfers to local or national governments to support local government capacity building. To maximize this presence, it is important to be explicit about the rationale for choosing a particular subnational support modality.<sup>76</sup>

Which subnational support modality should be used for a specific local programme depends on a variety of factors. Such factors include: the type of local support required; the expected time frame for this support; the associated financial and administrative costs; and various contextual factors (e.g., country size, or degree of fiscal and political decentralization). For example, while field offices provide an opportunity to establish strong working relationships with relevant counterparts and enable the development of an in-depth understanding of subnational realities, they involve high administrative and financial costs. Supporting local programmes through a local implementing partner is less cost-intensive and allows the UNICEF country office to build on the partner's in-depth understanding of local realities. This modality, however, relies on the availability of partners who share the same values as UNICEF, have the capacity to undertake the work and possess strong local credibility. (For more about the various subnational support modalities and associated considerations, see Annex 2).

## Resources

Court, Alan, [An Evaluation of UNICEF Programming at Sub-national Level in Latin America: An evaluation for the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean](#), July 2011.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Woodhouse and Atwood, 'Decentralization and Taking Pilots to Scale in East Asia and the Pacific Region', 2008.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Court, Alan, *An Evaluation of UNICEF Programming at Sub-national Level in Latin America: An evaluation for the UNICEF Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean*, July 2011. Available at: [https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2011\\_TCRO\\_-\\_Sub-National\\_Programming\\_in\\_LAC.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2011_TCRO_-_Sub-National_Programming_in_LAC.pdf), accessed 6 December 2018.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Available at: [https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2011\\_TCRO\\_-\\_Sub-National\\_Programming\\_in\\_LAC.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2011_TCRO_-_Sub-National_Programming_in_LAC.pdf), accessed 6 December 2018.



## 4.5 PROMOTING COLLABORATION BETWEEN UNICEF TEAMS

A collaborative intersectoral approach is integral to effectively implementing this programme guidance. During the planning stage of a UNICEF country programme, the intersectoral identification of local governance barriers to improving outcomes for children can be undertaken together with national and local government partners, along with the identification of the activities and joint outputs required to address them. Furthermore, because in-depth knowledge of the local context frequently resides with UNICEF field office staff, it is essential that priorities defined by field offices receive top-down support from sector teams in UNICEF country offices and that field offices are adequately involved in strategy and planning.<sup>78</sup> Undertaking programme planning, implementation and M&E across UNICEF sections and between the country office and field offices can encourage a collaborative approach and at the same time enhance the effectiveness of the country programme.

The action areas outlined in this guidance can be approached from a thematic, sector-specific or cross-sectoral perspective. A thematic or sector-specific approach to local programming can involve activities such as: improving the accuracy, coverage and disaggregation of local government data relating to the relevant theme or sector; aligning local plans with thematic or sector policies and programmes; enhancing sector-specific participatory or accountability mechanisms; supporting local government capacity to design, implement and enforce minimum service quality standards; and supporting the design and costing of child-focused local service packages.

Depending on UNICEF staff capacity, these activities can sometimes be led by specialists in a specific sector, in communication for development (C4D) or in adolescent engagement or by staff working in other thematic areas. In such cases, coordinating efforts with social policy staff can provide both parties with additional technical insights. For example, while C4D or adolescent engagement sections can lead work to promote adolescent participation in local governance, social policy staff can provide crucial insights into local government structures, decision-making

processes and national regulations regarding participation in local decision making. Social policy sections can also facilitate relationships with partners key to the success of such initiatives, including ministries, local government associations and development partners that focus on decentralization and local governance (see Table 8).

Often, multi-sectoral approaches can greatly enhance the impact of local programmes. Many of the most critical issues affecting child rights require multi-sectoral approaches, which are usually easier to achieve subnationally than through silo-dominated central ministries. While the assignment of responsibilities varies between and within countries, most local governments share responsibilities spanning the education, health, social welfare and WASH sectors. These multiple responsibilities facilitate integrated programming and allow UNICEF to reduce the multiple and overlapping deprivations that beset the poorest and most vulnerable children and adolescents in a cost-effective manner. Social policy sections and field offices, with support from sector and thematic sections, are often well placed to take a leading role in implementing such programmes. Considering the cross-sectoral nature of a local governance approach, it is particularly important to ensure strong coordination across UNICEF sections as well as between the UNICEF country and field offices, where applicable.

Internal coordination mechanisms may look different depending on which section leads the work, but in many country offices, the Deputy Representative takes a leading role and supports internal coordination. Generally, experience shows that the overall commitment of country office leadership is key to effective coordination.

## 4.6 MONITORING RESULTS

While the ultimate result of local programming should be better outcomes for children, adolescents and their families, it is important to monitor the progress of such efforts based on a theory of change. The results chain should include local governance results, translate those results into appropriate and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound) indicators and systematically link

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<sup>78</sup> Shiva Kumar and Hay, *Thematic Evaluation*, 2013.

**Table 8. Suggested roles and responsibilities of UNICEF teams per action area**

Action Area	Sub-activity (if applicable)	Primary lead	Secondary lead
<b>Action Area 1:</b> Support geographically disaggregated data and evidence	Cross-sectoral data and evidence	Social policy, emergency teams, field services	Sectors, emergency teams, field services, gender/disability focal points
	Sectoral data and evidence	Sectors and field services	Social policy, emergency teams, field services, gender/disability focal points
<b>Action Area 2:</b> Strengthen local planning and budgeting processes and support resource mobilization	N/A	Social policy	Sectors, emergency teams, field services, gender/disability focal points
<b>Action Area 3:</b> Empower communities, including children and adolescents	Local government participatory and accountability mechanisms (supply side)	Social policy	Sectors, emergency teams, field services, gender/disability focal points
	Child, adolescent and community engagement (demand side)	C4D, adolescent, gender	Social policy, sectors, field services, gender/disability focal points
<b>Action Area 4:</b> Support local service delivery arrangements	Cross-sectoral coordination, oversight, service packages	Social policy or field services, emergency teams (e.g., in humanitarian response)	Sectors
	Sector-specific coordination, oversight and service packages	Sectors	Social policy, field services

these indicators to sector- and country-level results. As there can be significant variation in contextual conditions across local government within a country, it is important that the results chain is place-specific.

The first step in effective M&E is assessing local governance-related challenges and designing local governance responses during country programme development. When this work is explicitly done, UNICEF country offices are best

placed to make systematic use of indicators throughout the country programme cycle, monitor progress, adjust programming and achieve results. Country offices can select from standard local governance-related Results Assessment Module (RAM) indicators and tailor these to programme contexts for planned actions. They can then track progress towards reaching each milestone, monitoring progress along the results chain throughout the country programme cycle (see Box 13).

### Box 13. Standard local governance-related RAM indicators (under UNICEF Strategic Plan Goal 14)<sup>79</sup>

#### Outcome-level indicator

- Local government (including municipalities) with implemented plans and budgets that reflect local child priorities, including priorities for the most vulnerable children

#### Output-level indicators

- Local government (including municipalities) that produce disaggregated child data
- Local government (including municipalities) with development plans that include specific activities to address child priorities
- Local government (including municipalities) with budget allocated to child priorities
- Local government (including municipalities) that mobilize local revenue for child-specific programmes
- Local government (including municipalities) with functioning mechanisms for child/adolescent and/or community participation in local planning, budgeting and monitoring processes
- Local government (including municipalities) with functioning social accountability mechanisms
- Local government (including municipalities) with functioning coordination mechanisms to strengthen the delivery of child-focused services
- Local government (including municipalities) with public–private partnerships that contribute to the improvement of service coverage
- National decentralization legal and policy framework reflects equity and child rights considerations

Results of local governance actions can be monitored and outcomes for children, adolescents and their families traced by following a pathway of change from activities to outputs, outcomes and overall impact. Local governance output-level indicators measure the extent to which UNICEF actions lead to positive changes (e.g. in the knowledge and capacity of key local government actors). Outcome-level indicators measure the extent to which such positive changes lead to more responsive programmes and local services for children. Monitoring impact-level results can be facilitated through support for evaluations of (local) government programmes to which UNICEF programming has contributed. Given the diversity of local contexts, however, it is important to create space in M&E for local priorities: Outputs and outcomes should be established in conjunction with local government stakeholders and allow for local challenges to be addressed.

UNICEF country offices are encouraged to explore available data sources or partner with others to measure indicators. It is often a challenge to ensure availability of and access to relevant geographically disaggregated data. UNICEF country offices can support M&E by working with national statistical authorities to generate local data and by integrating relevant indicators into local government management information systems. For example, in Nepal, M&E of child participation in local governance is supported via the central government's existing reporting system, which requires all levels of local government to report on standard indicators (including an indicator on child participation) using a computerized system. Piggybacking on global initiatives is another possibility. For example, the Habitat Commitment Index monitors and assesses progress at the city level for certain indicators.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>79</sup> These will be aligned more closely with the action areas set out in this programme guidance as UNICEF work in the area of local governance progresses.

<sup>80</sup> Global Urban Futures, 'The Habitat Commitment Index', [www.globalurbanfutures.org/habitat-commitment-project](http://www.globalurbanfutures.org/habitat-commitment-project), accessed 19 February 2019.



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# ANNEX 1

## COUNTRY AND REGIONAL OFFICE EVALUATIONS

Year	Country/region	Title
2018	Bangladesh	Evaluation of local capacity building and community empowerment programme in Bangladesh: <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/LCBCE_Evaluation_Report_Bangladesh_2018-001.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/LCBCE_Evaluation_Report_Bangladesh_2018-001.pdf</a>
2016	India	Energising Panchayats for Better Child Governance in Tamil Nadu: <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_94401.html">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_94401.html</a>
2015	Morocco	Evaluation du Programme de Développement Local et Droits des Enfants et des Jeunes: <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/RapportEvaluationFinaleDELDEJ_Morocco_2015-001.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/RapportEvaluationFinaleDELDEJ_Morocco_2015-001.pdf</a>
	Senegal	Evaluation participative a mi-parcours du programme de l'UNICEF "Budgétisation Participative / Collectivités Locales Amies des Enfants (BP/CLAE)": <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_90247.html">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_90247.html</a>
	Tajikistan	Evaluation of UNICEF Tajikistan's work in priority districts: <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Tajikistan_FinalEvalReport_vol1_2015-001.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Tajikistan_FinalEvalReport_vol1_2015-001.pdf</a>
2014	Brazil	Evaluation of UNICEF Municipal Seal of Approval Initiative: <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_80825.html">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_80825.html</a>
	Indonesia	UNICEF's Engagement in the Decentralization Process in Indonesia: <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_81182.html">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_81182.html</a>
	Sudan	Child Friendly Community Initiative – Evaluation Report: <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/CFCI_evaluation_report_Sudan.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/CFCI_evaluation_report_Sudan.pdf</a>
2013	Brazil	Final Evaluation Report for Urban Centers Platform (PCU) (Plataforma Dos Centros Urbanos): <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Brazil_2013-100_RELATORIO_UNICEF_FINALv5_EN.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Brazil_2013-100_RELATORIO_UNICEF_FINALv5_EN.pdf</a>
	Ethiopia	Evaluation of Integrated Community Based Participatory Planning (ICBPP) in Tigray Region, Ethiopia. UNICEF (UNICEF), Addis Ababa, 2013
	United Republic of Tanzania	Assessment of Planning, Budgeting, Monitoring and Reporting (PBMR): <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_73030.html">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_73030.html</a>
2012	Lebanon	Evaluation of Child Friendly Community Initiative: <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_69975.html">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_69975.html</a>
	East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (EAPRO)	Evaluation Report Thematic Evaluation of UNICEF's Response to Decentralization in East Asia and the Pacific: 2006-2012: <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Thematic_Evaluation_of_UNICEFs_Response_to_Decentralization_in_East_Asia_and_the_Pacific_-_2006-2012.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/Thematic_Evaluation_of_UNICEFs_Response_to_Decentralization_in_East_Asia_and_the_Pacific_-_2006-2012.pdf</a>
2011	Latin America and Caribbean Regional Office (LACRO)	An Evaluation of UNICEF Programming at Subnational Level in Latin America: <a href="https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2011_TCRO_-_Sub-National_Programming_in_LAC.pdf">https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2011_TCRO_-_Sub-National_Programming_in_LAC.pdf</a>

# ANNEX 2

## SUBNATIONAL SUPPORT MODALITIES

Subnational support modality: UNICEF FIELD OFFICE		
Internal considerations	Contextual considerations	Key issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Field offices provide an opportunity to establish credibility, trust and strong personal relations with relevant counterparts</li> <li>Field offices allow for the development of an in-depth understanding of subnational realities</li> <li>Field offices are high in administrative and financial costs and are dependent on available resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Size, diversity and accessibility of the country and associated logistical issues</li> <li>Degree of fiscal and political decentralization; a presence is increasingly justified as the degree of local autonomy exercised grows</li> <li>Significant internal disparities in country, which would justify the opening of an office in a region that has traditionally been left behind</li> <li>State of development in country; limited government capacity for management could be a reason to create a field office</li> <li>Counterpart attitudes at both the national and subnational level</li> <li>Donor interest in having a subnational presence</li> <li>Security concerns</li> </ul> <p>Degree to which other United Nations agencies are decentralized, enabling UNICEF to benefit from substantive and administrative cooperation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measures of success/exit strategy: The absence of clear indicators for success (or failure) or any exit criteria make managerial decisions regarding the continuity of field offices difficult</li> <li>Level of field office decision making: An in-depth understanding of subnational realities is only useful if this has the potential to permeate up to the UNICEF country office and inform decisions at that level</li> </ul>

**Timeframe:** Long term: For a period spanning at least two programme cycles (five years each)

Subnational support modality: LOCAL IMPLEMENTING PARTNER		
Internal considerations	Contextual considerations	Key issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Having a local implementing partner allows the UNICEF country office to build on the partner's in-depth understanding of local realities</li> <li>Partnership working offers a quick solution to a temporary need to build capacity or concentrate attention in a defined geographical area</li> <li>Partnership working may be used in addition to a field office, to ensure continuity of action as the office winds down or exits the area</li> <li>Partnership working offers an alternative to a field office, where political or financial considerations do not allow that option</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliance on the availability of partners who share UNICEF values; have strong motivation, capacities and competence to undertake the work; and have strong local credibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A demand for greater autonomy of action can lead to the partner's views and practice diverging away from agreements made with UNICEF</li> <li>Close supervision by UNICEF is required</li> </ul>

**Timeframe:** Short or medium term

Subnational support modality: LOCAL IMPLEMENTING PARTNER		
Internal considerations	Contextual considerations	Key issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnership working is cost-effective: The local implementing partner can usually mobilize more people than a field office typically could</li> </ul>		
<b>Timeframe:</b> Short or medium term		

Subnational support modality: LOCAL VISITS BY UNICEF COUNTRY OFFICE STAFF		
Internal considerations	Contextual considerations	Key issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low in cost</li> <li>Reduced visibility of UNICEF due to it having only a part-time presence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More appropriate for smaller, homogeneous countries; countries in which all regions are easily accessible; and/or countries with a centralized system of governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The further away an area is from the capital, or the longer it takes to reach it, the fewer field visits it will receive from UNICEF country office staff</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe:</b> Short or long term		

Subnational support modality: ENGAGING CONSULTANTS SECONDED TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS OR OTHER COUNTERPARTS		
Internal considerations	Contextual considerations	Key issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Useful when direct technical assistance is needed</li> <li>Circumvents administrative, cost and time barriers to seconding a UNICEF staff member</li> <li>This approach does not necessarily or systematically build institutional capacity in counterparts or in UNICEF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliance on the availability of consultants who share UNICEF values; have strong motivation, capacities and competence to undertake the work; and have strong local credibility</li> </ul>	<p>Outsourcing work to individuals or consulting firms requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clear quality assurance</li> <li>regular and systematic follow-up from the UNICEF country office in terms of monitoring and supervision</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe:</b> Short term		

Subnational support modality: OUTSOURCING OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE		
Internal considerations	Contextual considerations	Key issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Useful when UNICEF staff are unable to respond to a need for short-term specialist technical assistance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outsourcing technical assistance to individuals or consulting firms should only be considered if such capacity already exists in country and if the particular individual/consulting firm has a proven track record</li> </ul>	<p>Outsourcing technical assistance to individuals or consulting firms requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>clear quality assurance</li> <li>regular and systematic follow-up from the UNICEF country office in terms of monitoring and supervision</li> <li>highly detailed and specific contracts with clear, time-bound objectives and targets</li> </ul>
<b>Timeframe:</b> Short term		





## DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PAGE

Document Title	A Local Governance Approach to Programming: Guidance for achieving multisectoral results through working with local governments
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Regulatory content the Document Replaces	N/A
Topics Covered	Local governance; urban
Corporate Risk Area	Results-based Management and Reporting;
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Links to Relevant Guidance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF's Engagements in Influencing Domestic Public Finance for Children (PF4C). A Global Programme Framework (<a href="#">PD/GUIDANCE/2017/003</a>)</li> <li>• UNICEF, Guidance on Risk-informed Programming (PD/GUIDANCE/2018/002)</li> </ul>
Links to Relevant Training Materials	N/A
Links to Other Knowledge & Information Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• de Wijn, Marija, <a href="#">Child Participation in Local Governance: A UNICEF guidance note</a>, UNICEF, New York, 2017</li> <li>• de Wijn, Marija, <a href="#">Local Governance and Sustaining Peace: Guidance Note</a>, UNICEF, New York, 2019</li> </ul>







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