

Draft revised evaluation policy of UNICEF

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Item 10: Draft revised evaluation policy of UNICEF

Background and approach

Fixed function, evolving alongside its context

- Fourth iterative UNICEF evaluation policy since 2008: **Evaluation function remains constant, but must evolve** with the organization and its operating context; this is the end purpose of the iterative revision of the evaluation policy
- Review and revision of the policy took place in parallel with **Independent Peer Review**, called for in 2018 UNICEF evaluation policy and completed in February 2023; report finalized April 2023 and publicly available, with management response currently underway (<https://www.unicef.org/evaluation/documents/united-nations-evaluation-group-uneq-peer-review-evaluation-function-unicef-2023>).
- **Policy review process** was **inclusive** and **extensive, focused** and **methodical**
- **Policy revision process** was **pragmatic, principled, evidence-based, results-oriented** and **child-focused**
- UNICEF Global Evaluation Committee (GEC) briefed on Independent Peer Review and policy review and revision 10 February; **GEC feedback incorporated into policy**
- **Independent Peer Review directly informed the revised policy** owing to close synchronization of the two exercises

Incremental policy revision embodying significant continuity and significant change of existing elements

Every change rooted in a **clear and explicit problem statement** that a policy revision can help resolve

All choices related to continuity and change intended with a **singular goal in view**:

strengthening the evaluation function so that it is ideally positioned to fulfil its organizational learning and accountability role, and thus help UNICEF and its partners (including the Executive Board) achieve the best results possible for children in the Decade of Action

Areas of continuity with 2018 policy



MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE

- ✓ Overall structure of the function
- ✓ Almost all management and governance arrangements
- ✓ Establishing more detailed policy positions
- ✓ Grounding in established international norms and standards for evaluation
- ✓ Central importance of independence and of arrangement to support this

- ✓ Necessity of adequate human and financial resources
- ✓ Centrality of costed evaluation plans and IMEPS; close links with RBM/Planning

RESOURCING



COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIPS

- ✓ Criticality of close collaboration and partnership, both internally and externally
- ✓ Reliance upon external expertise, especially for implementation and quality control
- ✓ Stakeholder rights of inclusion; intent to build counterpart and civil capacities
- ✓ Importance of partnership based on comparative advantages and common interests

- ✓ Designating certain activities as mandatory
- ✓ Focus on utilization, not on just producing evaluation products
- ✓ Diverse evaluation products/activities to benefit varied contexts & stakeholders

UTILITY & USE



CULTURE

- ✓ Importance of developing the evaluation culture as well as technical capacities
- ✓ Attention to risks and risk mitigation

Areas of change from 2018 policy

Problem statements

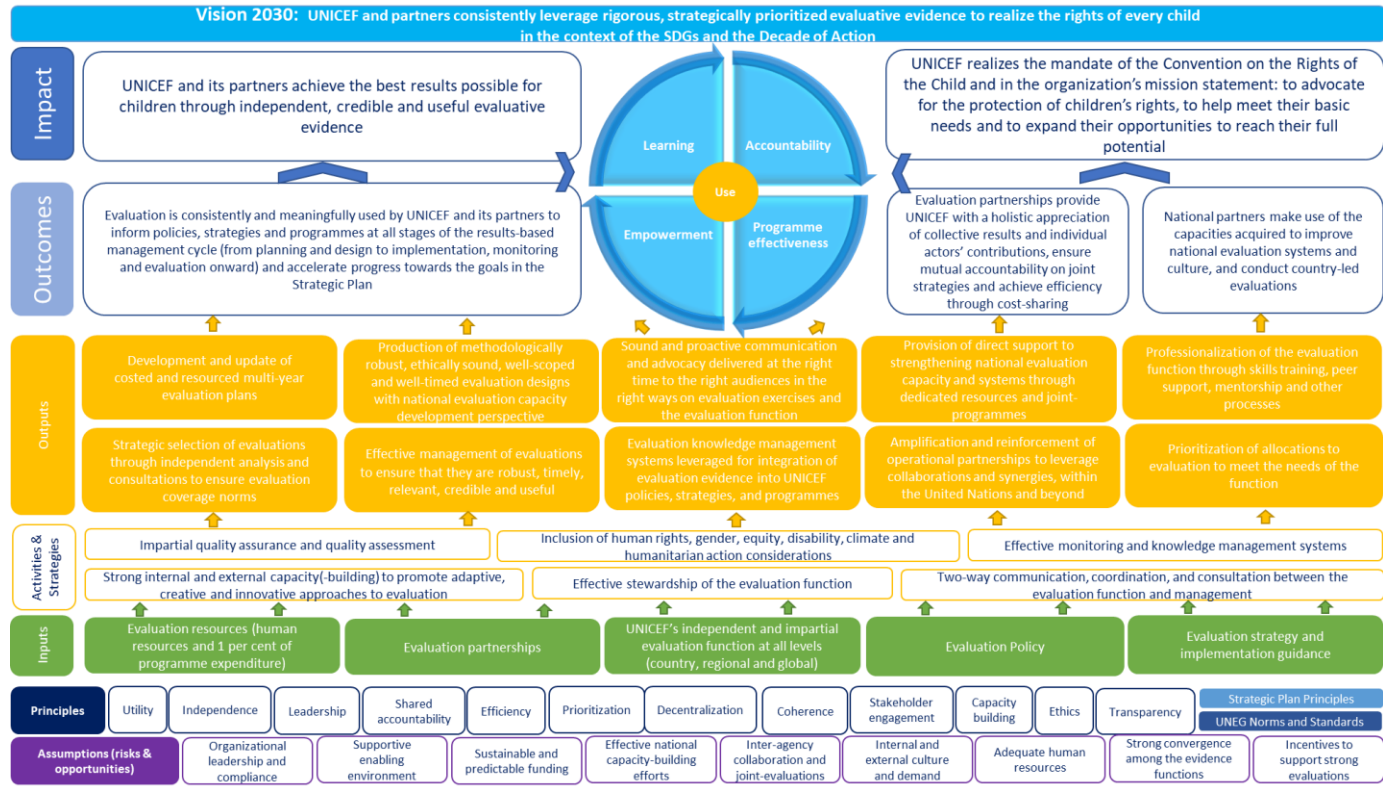
1	The evaluation function is not well understood throughout the organization due to the dry and overly technical language used in the current policy. It reads like standard operating procedures instead of being rooted in core principles that are important to the organization and its stakeholders. This misses an opportunity to raise awareness of the function and strengthen the evaluation culture.
2	The standard definition of evaluation is not suitable for UNICEF's context, which now includes a broader range of evaluative exercises. Current coverage targets are inflexible and do not allow these exercises to contribute to the organization's evaluation commitment.
3	Since 2018, more focus has been put on meeting quantitative key performance indicators, but it is unclear if evaluations are effectively contributing to organizational results.
4	The current policy lacks specific guidance on how the evaluation function can maintain independence for credibility while staying connected to management for relevance and utility, especially within the organization's decentralized structure.
5	UNICEF's evidence functions are not fully leveraging their common interests and comparative strengths.
6	External partnerships, particularly in relation to national evaluation capacity development, have been underemphasized in the policy.
7	Human resource investments in evaluation are vaguely defined in the policy, and financial investments are inconsistently applied across the organization over time.

Associated policy solutions in draft document

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Greater precision surrounding the purposes of evaluation2. Explicit explanation of the key principles underlying the evaluation function and the specific provisions contained in the policy
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Contextualization of the core UNEG definition within UNICEF2. Refinement of coverage targets to reflect new realities
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Improved guidance on evaluation planning methods2. Clearer, more expanded role of evaluation managers3. Measures to enhance evaluation use
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Adjustment of senior management roles to the evolving context2. Adaptation of evaluation function roles to the evolving context
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Demarcation between evaluation and other evidence functions and a commitment to coordination and collaboration
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. More explicit commitment to partnering with governments, academia and private sector in addition to traditional partners2. Stronger commitment to national evaluation capacity development
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Clearer expectation-setting around human resources targets2. Clearer expectation-setting around financial resources

Changes derived from Independent Peer Review

- ✔ **Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities** clarified and strengthened, including at decentralized level
- ✔ **Theory of change for evaluation** in the organization significantly revised
- ✔ **Commitment to sufficient and predictable resourcing of the function** reinforced and the 1 per cent target and related resourcing issues clarified
- ✔ **Commitment to coordination and collaboration** with other distinct but complementary evidence functions, and with external partners (including governments), made more explicit and concrete
- ✔ **Human resources and leadership** related to the function stated in more tangible and specific terms



Next steps

By 30 June

- Management response to Independent Peer Review completed and posted on UNICEF and United Nations Evaluation Group websites
- All feedback from Executive Board members received

September

- Final revised UNICEF evaluation policy presented to Executive Board for approval at Second Regular Session

By 7 July

- All feedback of Executive Board members incorporated into draft revised policy and shared with Executive Director, Office of the Secretariat of the Executive Board, and Global Evaluation Committee

October-December

- Evaluation Office drafts and issues guidance to support implementation of the revised policy, uploads guidance document on UNICEF Evaluation Office website



Thank you.