

Global evaluation of UNICEF water, sanitation and hygiene programming in protracted crises, 2014–2019

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[Reference document: E/ICEF/2021/20](#)



Background, purpose and design

Children in extremely fragile contexts are **8 times** worse off in WASH indicators than their counterparts in non-crisis contexts. The average crisis now lasts more than **9 years**.

The evaluation aimed to demonstrate accountability and learning on how has UNICEF responded to increasing WASH needs in some of the most challenging contexts.



Evaluation questions examined:

- **Quality, equity and inclusion**
- **Leadership and coordination** roles
- **Results** monitoring and reporting
- **Capacity** to implement timely and effective response
- Linkages of WASH **humanitarian action with development** objectives

Methods:

- Extensive **document review** (600+ documents)
- 4 **case studies**: Cameroon, Lebanon, Somaliland, South Sudan
- 2 **thematic case studies**: WASH action in public health crises and WASH in urban crisis settings
- Online **survey and key informant interviews** of UNICEF staff and partners, including NGOs, CBOs

Evaluation Findings

What works well in WiPC

- ✓ UNICEF met targets for water supply; number of water beneficiaries doubled from 2014-2018
- ✓ WASH rightly positioned within a public health context.
- ✓ Extensive data on WASH outputs
- ✓ Significant emphasis and understanding of norms and standards for service provision and coverage.
- ✓ Partnerships are a core strength, particularly with government and local authorities
- ✓ Global WASH Cluster regarded as the best expression of UNICEF leadership for WiPC
- ✓ Operational sector or cluster coordination is strong.
- ✓ Urban WASH framework builds on core strengths: government relationships, convening power
- ✓ Ambitious UNICEF agenda in linking humanitarian and development (LHD) programming
- ✓ Highly capable WASH staff in these contexts; surge rosters best filled of any sector



What needs improving in WiPC

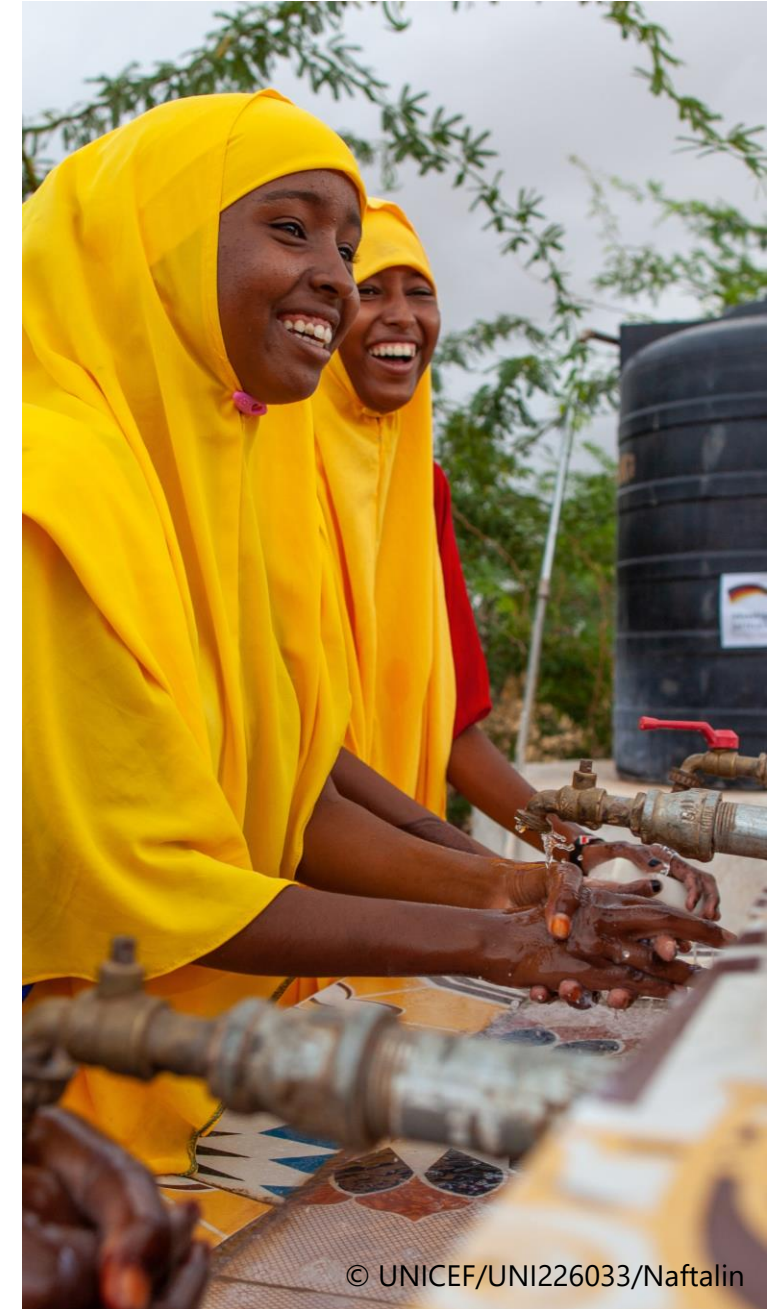
- ✗ No **institutional definition** of protracted crises or clear trigger for different ways of working; siloed humanitarian and development perspectives
- ✗ Wider **changes in lives** expected from WiPC action not clearly articulated
- ✗ Lack of suitable **data on outcomes** impeding a true understanding of programme effectiveness
- ✗ Unequal priority given to **equity and quality** standards
- ✗ WiPC partnership not driven by a long-term view or **localization strategy**
- ✗ UNICEF is widely considered to have lost ground in terms of **thought leadership** on WiPC
- ✗ Need for stronger cluster leadership on **longer-term approaches**; “provider of last resort” role entails risks
- ✗ Lack of appropriate expertise/processes for large-scale **urban WASH** infrastructure projects
- ✗ Significant gap between what is happening on the ground and what is required by the **new LHD procedure**
- ✗ Country office WASH sections in protracted crises **stretched to capacity** just to ensure basic WASH services; little bandwidth to implement required changes



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Recommendations

- R 1 – Develop an **organizational definition** across UNICEF (not only WASH) to trigger different ways of working
- R 2 – Ensure an equal focus on water and **sanitation/hygiene**.
- R 3 – Establish a clear understanding of **intended changes** of WiPC
- R 4 – Improve collection and use of **data** for WiPC
- R 5 – Ensure **quality and equity** given the same weight as coverage.
- R 6 – Enhance current **partnerships** models to embody all aspects of the UNICEF commitment to localization
- R 7 – Build on current efforts to reclaim UNICEF **thought leadership** for WiPC
- R 8 – Strengthen UNICEF accountability as **cluster lead** agency for WASH
- R 9 – Focus WASH work in **urban settings** on systems strengthening
- R10 – Ensure COs are fully aware of how to **meet LHD commitments**
- R11 – Provide adequate support to country offices to meet UNICEF ambitious **LHD agenda**



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Thank you.



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