

Multi-Country Programme Evaluation
UNICEF Europe and Central Asia (ECA) Region – Bulgaria,
Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine

UNICEF Country Programme Evaluation report
KYRGYZSTAN

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This report represents the evaluation of the Country Programme of Cooperation between the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, 2018-2022, within the framework of the Multi-Country Programme Evaluation covering UNICEF Country Programmes in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Country Programme (CP) for the period 2018 to June 2021, focusing on UNICEF's activities across its three core Outcomes. The evaluation examines the relevance and coherence of the CP, the work of the UNICEF Country Office (CO) with partners, and the impact generated for children. The evaluation is part of the Multi-Country Programme Evaluation commissioned by UNICEF's Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, covering UNICEF programmes in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine. The evaluation aims to support the planning process for the next programming period and to strengthen UNICEF's accountability. Its objectives are to identify good practices, draw lessons, and inform forward-looking recommendations. The evaluation assesses the linkages between international, regional, national and institutional strategies to bring about overall improvement in the status of children. It also evaluates the extent to which interventions focus on and deliver results for the most vulnerable categories of children in Kyrgyzstan. Finally, it evaluates the performance monitoring systems in place at national and UNICEF levels.

Overview of the Country Programme, 2018–2022

The CP has three mutually reinforcing core Outcomes: 1) Child Rights Based Mechanisms for Decision Making; 2) Equitable Access to Services for Child's Survival, Learning and Development; 3) Child Protection and Access to Justice.

Outcome 1: Child Rights Based Mechanisms for Decision Making.

State institutions have capacity to generate and utilize evidence for child rights monitoring, advocacy and policy formulation. Social sector ministries and parliament have improved capacity to manage and oversight public finance for children

Outcome 2: Equitable Access to Services for Child's Survival, Learning, and Development.

Healthcare professionals can provide quality perinatal, modern home-visiting services. The Government can produce multisectoral policies and standards to guide and monitor nutrition services for the most disadvantaged women and children. Service providers can provide adolescent friendly services, including HIV prevention for especially vulnerable adolescents (EVA) and most-at-risk adolescents (MARA). ECD/ECE institutional capacities strengthened to deliver quality early development, learning and school readiness for all, especially the most disadvantaged girls and boys. The education system can provide quality and inclusive learning and development to the most disadvantaged children and adolescents

Outcome 3: Child Protection and Access to Justice.

The education system can provide quality and inclusive learning and development to the most disadvantaged children and adolescents. Justice and administrative bodies can facilitate children's access to justice services and redress mechanisms. Adolescents have and use opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes

The CP integrated activities and strategies across all three outcomes to change social norms that are not favourable to child rights. In addition, the CP used multiple strategies to encourage child and youth participation across all outcomes. Specific activities on this area included in Outcome 3.

The CP was revised in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with several new outputs and activities added to ensure a swift and appropriate response to children's emerging and urgent needs.

Purpose of the evaluation and its audiences

This strategic evaluation covers the whole CP and complements sectoral evaluations and specialized studies conducted in the past five years. The evaluation's purpose is to strengthen UNICEF's accountability to national stakeholders by evaluating its contribution to results for children at scale, particularly for the most vulnerable children in specific areas. The evaluation also aims to inform the development of the next UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) by collating the lessons learned from activities and results. This allows the best use of UNICEF's change strategies in the future.

The primary users of this evaluation are intended to be the UNICEF Country and Regional Offices. Secondary users are the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, UN agencies and development partners with a presence in Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation builds on the agreements made among these partners and assists the establishment of strategies for their ongoing collaboration in the next planning and programme cycle.

Evaluation context

The evaluation was conducted in a context marked by instability and uncertainty. The global COVID-19 pandemic changed lives in Kyrgyzstan, as it did worldwide. The pandemic meant irregular school attendance, and school closures were particularly harmful for the most vulnerable children. This was mitigated by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) developing a remote learning platform for pre-school and school-aged students, with UNICEF support. The pandemic also hampered access to health services, including mental health services for caregivers, children and youth. The pandemic affected their mental well-being, with more than 60 per cent of adolescents reporting elevated levels of pandemic-related anxiety¹, and one fifth of households reported challenges in accessing healthcare services.

Beyond these immediate effects, the pandemic has had severe socio-economic consequences. Kyrgyzstan's real gross domestic product (GDP) declining by 8.6 per cent. In 2020, 50 per cent of households reported a reduction in income. By 2021, falling remittances and incomes, rising unemployment, and rising prices and health expenditures had caused the poverty rate to climb to 25 per cent.²

In addition to the dramatic changes spurred by the pandemic, Kyrgyzstan experienced political changes in 2020-2021. These resulted in a new regime and a new Constitution that have been in place since January 2021.

Evaluation methodology

The Terms of Reference proposed a theory-based approach, based on the CP Theory of Change (ToC) developed by the UNICEF CO. The evaluation questions were structured around the OECD DAC³ criteria of relevance, coherence and impact. The evaluation criteria of effectiveness and sustainability were also covered to a certain extent by the evaluation, being reflected in subsequent evaluation questions under the larger impact criterion. An Evaluation Matrix was developed during the inception phase to map out evaluation questions and sub-questions, judgement criteria, data collection methods and data sources.

An in-depth impact assessment included three selected areas: early childhood development, adolescents' engagement and participation, and social protection to provide lessons learned on UNICEF practices and strategies in achieving impact for children at scale. These areas were selected during the inception phase of the evaluation, based on previously set criteria and consultations with the UNICEF CO in Kyrgyzstan. Other evaluation methods used for the evaluation included stakeholder and social network analysis using systems-based evaluation principles.

The evaluation employed qualitative data collection methods, including a wide-ranging document review and 30 key interviews in Bishkek and the regions. The CO supported the identification of respondents who were consulted using semi-structured interviews. They included interviewees from UNICEF, government entities, UN agencies and other development agencies, and civil society organizations (CSOs). In addition, UNICEF CO staff completed a questionnaire for the social network analysis.

The evaluation methodology fully considered the ethical obligations of evaluators. Child rights, equity and gender were highlighted throughout the evaluation.

Key findings

Relevance

¹ UNICEF and UNFPA, 'Rapid Needs Assessment on the Kyrgyz Youth Situation in the COVID-19 Pandemic', May 2020.

² UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Annual Report 2020; The Economist Intelligence Unit, "Kyrgyzstan: Real GDP contracts sharply in 2020", 25 January 2021; World Bank, 'Kyrgyz Republic COVID-19 Poverty and Vulnerability Impacts', May 2020.

³ The Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

The UNICEF CP 2018-2022 in Kyrgyzstan was based on evidence and lessons learned from the implementation of previous interventions, from needs assessments, and from studies conducted before and during the implementation of the Programme. According to the CP priorities and the context analysis, UNICEF aimed to affect all children in Kyrgyzstan in both the planning and implementation phases of the CP. Periodic, planned interventions identified and addressed the needs of vulnerable children including girls, children with disabilities, and children affected by poverty and social exclusion. Additional interventions addressed the emerging needs that arose when the COVID-19 pandemic began in 2020.

The CP expanded its focus on adolescents and youth. It especially examined the proactive engagement in community dialogue, skills and competence building, employability, and peacebuilding potential of youth from large minority groups and youth living in Kyrgyzstan's border regions.

The proposed solutions for the development of services for children included services for early childhood development and education (ECD and ECE) respective of the limited resources available at local level in small towns and villages. Proposed solutions also encouraged the use of community resources to address the needs of children in rural areas.

The alignment of the CP to children's needs and the national priorities was based on national statistics and strategic planning for children's rights and well-being. Children's needs were further identified as UNICEF Kyrgyzstan responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. These initiatives included the provision of essential supplies to medical personnel working at the frontlines when these supplies were scarce. UNICEF supported the procurement of supplies to front-line medical workers, COVID-19 medication for health facilities, and technical assistance for healthcare providers. UNICEF also supported the MoES's effort to provide remote learning to the more than 1.4 million preschool and school-aged children in 2020, and then re-open schools safely. UNICEF assisted the provision of a Humanitarian Cash Transfer (HCT) for families affected economically. Throughout the pandemic, UNICEF coordinated its activities with development partners and other UN agencies in the country for the overall response to the pandemic.

Coherence

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan used its comparative advantages related to its expertise, strategic focus and adaptability enabled it to build and sustain effective partnerships with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, UN agencies and development partners, and CSOs.

UNICEF used its comparative advantages effectively in collaborating with a range of different partners to drive change for children and their families in Kyrgyzstan. Partnerships contributing to the assessed impact of UNICEF included bilateral cooperation with UN agencies and other international organizations, implementing partners (as in the case of programmes for adolescents' engagement and participation), and partnerships in the framework of the United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF) and the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC). Partnership was an important implementing strategy for UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan, enabling the CO to create synergies with other organizations and institutions, partnership with stakeholders but it was not highlighted as a strategic element in the Country Programme Document. An exception to this limited visibility of the strategic approach to partnership was UNICEF's partnership with the Government, that shapes and leads the Country Programme implementation.

Keeping true to the priorities and objectives of UNICEF and the wider UN, the CO developed strategic partnerships with a range of partners to enhance the delivery of the CP. Social network analysis shows UNICEF was a key and active partner in a strong and large network of stakeholders working for the realization of children's rights in Kyrgyzstan. UNICEF's most strategic partners were public institutions at the central level, including sectoral ministries, public service providers, institutes. UNICEF focused resources and provided information for these partners, and their agendas, in turn, influenced UNICEF activities. Local partners were also instrumental for UNICEF's impact, especially for model projects to evaluate innovative approaches to improve national policies. Partnership with UN agencies and development partners on common points of interest allowed UNICEF to enhance its advocacy capacity

when promoting recommendations to the Government. Finally, CSOs were key partners for advocacy and implementation, enabling UNICEF to mobilize and engage local communities.

Impact

Evidence showed UNICEF Kyrgyzstan's progress in the realization of child rights in most areas where it works. UNICEF contributed to the following areas:

- the adoption of the revised Child Code in July 2021 by Kyrgyzstan's Parliament
- the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2019
- healthcare and nutrition for children, visible in the reduction of infant and child mortality rates
- clinical standards, protocols and the capacity of medical staff in maternal, child and adolescent health in several healthcare facilities
- vaccination capacity
- the adoption of the Food Security and Nutrition Programme 2019-2023
- access to early childhood education and government commitment to accelerate progress in this area
- the 'Education Development Programme for 2021-2040' (EDS) and the Action Plan for 2021-2023, adopted on 4 May 2021
- an education management information system (EMIS)
- legal aid for children
- adolescent participation in targeted communities.

UNICEF used five key strategies to obtain these impacts:

- advocacy for policy development and change regarding national strategies and legal frameworks
- technical assistance to key institutions for child rights and services
- support for capacity building through the training of duty bearers (in the fields of education, health, law-enforcement, judiciary)
- engagement on advocacy with civil society partners at national and local level
- engagement with development partners, especially, but not only, through the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC).

There are, however, other areas where the CP has enhanced the lives of the children and young people who have taken part in specific activities but has been unable to achieve impact at scale. This usually resulted from limited strategic and legal provisions for initiatives that required institutional strengthening for full implementation. Lack of impact at scale in some areas was also linked to the limited number of communities participating in key interventions. There was less change in trends related to gender-based violence (GBV), however, and more activities must address the presence of specific social norms and values that conflict with the human rights approach. For example, the 2021 Situation Analysis identified the continued practices of child marriage, kidnapping for forced marriage, and public tolerance of GBV and violence against children. However, UNICEF implemented model projects successfully in partnership with local government structures and/or CSOs. These projects included the development of home-visiting standards, the development of services for children with disabilities, and support for child- and youth-friendly cities. In these cases, development and scale-up were essential for impact at national level.

In addition to these limitations, political instability and the COVID-19 pandemic generated significant sustainability risks in 2020. These challenges to the impact and sustainability of UNICEF's work include...

- institutional instability
- continuous civil service turnover
- limited capacity for service provision for the realization of child rights at central and local level
- limited policy coordination and cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation
- limited availability of disaggregated data
- limited use of available data for decision making concerning children

- limited fiscal space and financial resources, especially a limited public budget dedicated to services for children
- social norms that are not in line with human rights values concerning the position of children in society and family
- a widespread acceptance of violence against children and women, including the acceptance of child marriage and kidnapping for forced marriage.

Conclusions

The assessment on relevance and impact shows that UNICEF Kyrgyzstan responded to the needs of children in the country, especially those who are the most vulnerable and has supported policy and institutional development. This success was based, in large part, on advocacy and technical assistance to strengthen data analysis and research on children's needs and to promote evidence-based decision making. This ensured that the needs of vulnerable children inform governmental priorities, regardless of political and institutional changes. The elaboration of strategic documents and of specific instruments, including the planned scale-up of the Child Development Centres (CDCs), were evidence of effectiveness.

In addition to its evidence-based advocacy strategy, UNICEF developed and engaged strategic partnerships that moved its agenda forward. This was evidenced by the CP design and adaptation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other contextual changes over the past two years.

UNICEF supported the government's initiatives to strengthen its capacity to collect, analyse and use data through capacity building programmes, including trainings for key stakeholders. UNICEF also worked with state officials on budgeting for social services. UNICEF's impact on improving the lives of children was most apparent on a national scale when UNICEF implemented its strategic focus alongside institutional strengthening activities. For instance, these strategic partnerships resulted in improvements in maternal and child health in maternity hospitals and in ECE (as part of the larger area of ECD). This approach represents good practice that can be used to promote results at national scale in other sub-areas of ECD, including early interventions for children with disabilities and home visiting services.

UNICEF identified and reassessed bottlenecks throughout the implementation of the CP and implemented strategies to cope with them in a changing context. This included advocacy interventions and capacity building programmes, strengthening cross-sectoral cooperation to compensate for political and civil service instability and the associated risks to sustainability.

Stakeholders appreciated UNICEF's contribution to behavioural changes among duty bearers and caregivers, but this impact was limited by deeply embedded social norms and values. It may take longer than the timeframe of a single CP to see substantial results impact in areas such as UNICEF's work to end violence against children and child marriage or improve the situation for children with disabilities.

In addition, it takes time to generate observable impact in areas that require cross-sectoral cooperation. There is, for example, the need to strengthen coordination between different government institutions resulted in slow progress on the development of an early identification system for and provision of services for children with disabilities.

UNICEF improved its approach to gender equality during the CP, with substantial efforts to apply a strategic and systemic approach in all outcome areas. This evaluation concludes that the strategic approach to gender equality increased UNICEF's effectiveness and chances of impact, as evidenced by girls' increased access to services.

UNICEF's case study on the impact on social protection, interviews, and workshops with the CO representatives and staff showed that social work is insufficiently effective in the country. The lack of social workers' numbers, training, prestige, and influence left them unable to fulfil the role of central actors for social inclusion and child protection despite stakeholder interviewers indicating support for social workers in this role.

Lessons learned

Comparing UNICEF Kyrgyzstan's experience in ECD and ECE offers lessons for generating change for children at scale. UNICEF worked with the Government and development partners to integrate ECE with the strategic priorities for the country, with the MoES creating a dedicated ECE department. UNICEF supported capacity building, and trainings to improve ECE budgeting at national and local levels. UNICEF also promoted building the Child Development Centres. This combination of strategic, institutional and local activities contributed to increased access to ECE for children across the country. In contrast, the strategic approach and institutional strengthening activities were not as strong in the promotion of home visits, another component of ECD policy, resulting in fewer visible results in this area.

Experience in ECD and ECE shows the need to develop a vision for strategically strengthening duty bearing institutions for the benefit of staff and rights holders. A systematic approach would also facilitate the monitoring and addressing problems that arise during the programme.

Innovative approaches based on model/piloting projects and the use of innovative technologies have generated impact for children at local levels, as seen in UNICEF's work on adolescent and youth participation. However, these approaches require strategic development on institutional and technical levels if they are to be scaled up by the government. Successful upscale requires full government ownership. This involves planning and budgeting at governmental scale from the outset, and continuous monitoring and evaluation of a programme before and after upscale to inform the institutionalization of programmes at government level.

The impact assessment conducted for this report confirms the importance of evidence-driven decisions for the sake of children, but that is not enough for results at scale. This assessment shows that evidence driven policies can produce results at scale when implemented with strategic partnerships and resourcing for children.

Partnerships with other UN Agencies, local developmental partners and CSOs produced the greatest results when they strategically meet the advocacy goals. UNICEF Kyrgyzstan was successful in leveraging its partnership strategy in some areas, such as social protection, child protection, and ECD, and this could be a model for UNICEF's work in other countries.

The years 2020 and 2021 demonstrated the value of youth engagement in a young society. Young volunteers helped respond to COVID-19, participated in many UNICEF activities, and showed political activism. The youth of Kyrgyzstan have demanded a voice and shown their importance in shaping Kyrgyzstan's future.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Continue to strengthen evidence-based, innovative and diverse approaches in Communication for Development and Behaviour Change (C4D and C4BC). This recommendation considers the social norms that hinder the promotion of child rights. UNICEF should focus on capacity building for partners. This will allow a systematic approach that shifts away from stand-alone and donor-driven campaigns. C4D and C4BC strategies and interventions should be informed by data and evidence driven policy making, as well as social listening. Digital engagement, social mobilization, the engagement of young people and communities, and the use of mobile games and social media can contribute to knowledge building, uptake of and demand for services, and changing harmful behaviours and social norms.

Recommendation 2. Develop clear advocacy strategies and sustainability strategies for each modelling/pilot project, and gain support from development partners and other UN agencies to enhance the impact of advocacy in promoting new policy measures. Evidence collected and lessons learned reveal conditions that need to be met from the moment of planning local pilot and model projects. Projects were most effective when they included realistic strategies for upscale, a recognition of budget limitations and budget uptake by the government, plans for strengthening institutional capacity at local and national level, and means for ongoing monitoring and evaluation. New measures institutionalized by the

government increased the linkage between data analysis and service delivery, increasing the capacity for evidence-based decision making.

Recommendation 3. **The leveraging of partnerships should be continued and extended, particularly in child protection and social protection, including social cash benefits as well as the development of social services and social work.** This supports access for the most vulnerable children to other key services such as child protection, health, education, justice. Placing social work at the centre of a support ecosystem would increase access for the most vulnerable children to other key services. Implementing this recommendation requires a comprehensive evaluation of the existing social protection system to establish a strategy for reform. It also requires the development of social service workers' competencies and public image.

Recommendation 4. **Support the development of cross-sectoral cooperation in areas where it is essential for the realization of child rights and most prominently for the realization of the rights of children with disabilities.** This includes ECE, adolescent empowerment and engagement, fighting violence against children, and mitigating the impact of climate change on children. Planning cross-sectoral approaches at the national level contributes to developing cross-sectoral practices at the local level.

Recommendation 5. **Continue and extend support for the participation of children and adolescents in decision making in relation to public institutions at national and local level.** UNICEF should advocate, with the government and development partners/donors, for consistent support for youth organizations and youth consultative bodies. It should especially promote the participation of children and adolescents in schools, as an entry point for developing their wider public participation.

Recommendation 6. **Develop a strategic approach for partnership and cooperation with development partners, other UN agencies and civil society. Strategic partnerships should extend the scope of partnership and cooperation to enhance the impact of advocacy and enlarge the circle of partners.** A stakeholder analysis at outcome or output levels during CPD planning should identify the most influential potential partners and establish partnerships in the initial phases of the advocacy processes. Strategic partners should assist in planning specific advocacy activities.

Recommendation 7. **Introduce monitoring tools to trace more clearly the change pathways from UNICEF activities to results for children.** Documenting the path from monitoring and research to government policy decisions, to implementation at national and local levels, to the assessment of the results for children should inform future evaluations and decisions. Improving the registration of institutional memory and tracing the connections between advocacy, policy, and declarations on policies or institutional changes would yield a better understanding of how policy change happens.

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	III
LIST OF TABLES.....	XI
LIST OF FIGURES.....	XII
ACRONYMS.....	XII
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. THE CONTEXT AND CURRENT SITUATION	1
1.2. COUNTRY PROGRAMME COMPONENTS AND GOALS.....	6
1.3. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE, AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION	10
2. METHODOLOGY.....	11
2.1. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK: CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS.....	11
2.2. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODS	12
2.3. LIMITATIONS	13
2.4. ETHICAL ISSUES AND CONSIDERATION OF CHILD RIGHTS, EQUITY AND GENDER.....	14
2.5. MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION.....	15
3. MAIN EVALUATION FINDINGS.....	17
3.1. RELEVANCE	17
3.1.1. <i>To what extent has UNICEF responded to the (changing) needs of the most vulnerable throughout the programme implementation?</i>	17
3.1.2. <i>To what extent has UNICEF consistently integrated equity and gender equality in all aspects of programming and implementation, including policy and advocacy?</i>	19
3.1.3. <i>To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to changes in national needs and the rights of the beneficiaries (especially the most vulnerable), as well as changes in national priorities during programme implementation?</i>	20
3.1.4. <i>To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to the shifts caused by crises or major socio-economic and political changes?</i>	22
3.2. COHERENCE.....	24
3.2.1. <i>To what extent has UNICEF's Country Programme kept true to its mandate and aligned with UNICEF's global and regional strategies as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDCF) and the SDGs in any given country?</i>	24
3.2.2. <i>To what extent did UNICEF manage to build effective and sustainable partnerships in working towards addressing the predefined bottlenecks, advocating for evidence for equity and contributing to the results at scale?</i>	25
3.2.3. <i>What are the comparative advantages of UNICEF in relation to other actors in the country, including development partners, the private sector and the non-government sector, and to what extent were they necessary and sufficient for contributing to the results at scale to be achieved?</i>	29
3.2.4. <i>How has UNICEF's approach to strategic partnerships changed over time?</i>	30
3.3. IMPACT	31
3.3.1. <i>Did UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribute to the results at-scale? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i>	31
3.3.1.1. <i>Evaluation of UNICEF impact under each Outcome of the Country Programme.....</i>	32
Positive changes regarding the development of Child Rights Based Mechanisms for Decision-Making (Outcome 1)	32
Positive changes regarding access to services for child's survival, learning and development (Outcome 2)	35
Positive changes regarding child protection and child access to justice (Outcome 3)	40
3.3.1.2. <i>Summary findings on UNICEF's contributions to the observed changes</i>	44
3.3.1.3. <i>Conditions and factors supporting the impact of UNICEF's Country Programme.....</i>	45
3.3.2. <i>Did UNICEF identify and reassess bottlenecks throughout programme implementation? 47</i>	47

3.3.3. Did different groups, including children and the most marginalized, benefit in different ways from the Country Programme?.....	50
3.3.4. Are UNICEF results likely to be maintained over time?.....	55
3.3.5. Which strategies or group of strategies were effective in producing results at scale?.....	55
4. CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND FORWARD-LOOKING RECOMMENDATIONS	58
4.1. CONCLUSIONS	58
4.2. LESSONS LEARNED.....	61
4.3. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	63
5. ANNEXES	66
ANNEX 1. SUMMARY ANALYSIS OF UNICEF KYRGYZSTAN EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT	66
ANNEX 2. CASE STUDIES ON UNICEF IMPACT AND CONTRIBUTION	80
<i>Methodology for Process Tracing.....</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Assessment of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution in the area of early childhood development and education</i>	
<i>80</i>	
<i>Methodology for Contribution Analysis</i>	<i>97</i>
<i>Assessment of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to adolescents and youth development, empowerment and engagement.....</i>	<i>98</i>
<i>Assessment of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to social protection for children.....</i>	<i>110</i>
ANNEX 3. STAKEHOLDERS MAP	115
ANNEX 4. RESULTS OF THE SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS.....	116
ANNEX 5. EVALUATION MATRIX	124
<i>Relevance.....</i>	<i>124</i>
<i>Coherence</i>	<i>125</i>
<i>Impact</i> 126	
ANNEX 6. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES	132
ANNEX 7. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS.....	133
<i>Semi-structured interview guidelines</i>	<i>133</i>
<i>Questionnaire for Social Network Analysis.....</i>	<i>138</i>
ANNEX 8. LIST OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE	142
ANNEX 9. TERMS OF REFERENCES FOR THE EVALUATION	144

List of tables

Table 1. Child Poverty and Deprivation Index in the Kyrgyz Republic 2019	2
Table 2. Bottlenecks and risks identified by the evaluation and those anticipated in the Theory of Change	48
Table 3. The most marginalized and vulnerable children benefiting from UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Country Programme implementation	51
Table 4. Strategies used by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan in three selected areas of impact.....	56
Table 5. Summary analysis of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan effectiveness and impact.....	67
Table 6. Process Tracing summary analysis for the area of Early Childhood Development and Education	96
Table 7. Illustrative evidence for the Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to the Government support for engagement initiatives implemented at local level.....	106
Table 8. Illustrative evidence for the Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to extended coverage of social benefits.....	114
Table 9. Metrics of the Social Network Analysis in Kyrgyzstan	118
Table 10. Top 5 nodes in number of degrees in UNICEF network in Kyrgyzstan	120
Table 11. Top 5 nodes in betweenness centrality in UNICEF network in Kyrgyzstan.....	120
Table 12. Top 5 nodes in closeness centrality coefficients in UNICEF network in Kyrgyzstan.....	121

List of figures

Figure 1. Theory of Change of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Country Programme.....	8
Figure 2. The procedural flow of the Multi-Country Programme Evaluation	15
Figure 3. Type of institutions/organizations indicated as important partners by Kyrgyzstan Country Office respondents.....	26
Figure 4. Social Network of UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan.....	29
Figure 5. Revised Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan's contribution to extended coverage of social benefits	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Figure 6. Revised Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan's contribution to government support for youth engagement initiatives implemented at local level.....	43
Figure 7. Summary of mechanisms enabling UNICEF's contribution to change for children at scale	46
Figure 8. Theory of Change developed for the evaluation of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to early childhood development and education.....	82
Figure 9. Theory of Change developed for the evaluation of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution youth empowerment and engagement (Annex)	101
Figure 10. Revised Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to the Government support for engagement initiatives implemented at local level (Annex)	104
Figure 11. Theory of Change developed for the evaluation of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution social protection for children (Annex)	111
Figure 12. Revised Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to extended coverage of social benefits (Annex)	113
Figure 13 Type of institutions/organizations indicated as important partners by Kyrgyzstan CO respondents.....	116
Figure 14 Type of information or support provided by the partners of UNICEF CO Kyrgyzstan.....	117
Figure 15. Social Network of UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan	118
Figure 16. Social Network of UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan filtered by number of degrees	119
Figure 17. Social Network of UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan filtered by betweenness centrality (higher than 234.939).....	120
Figure 18. Social Network of UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan filtered by closeness centrality	121

Acronyms

C4D	Communication for development
CDC	Child Development Centre
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRC	United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil society organization
DPCC	Development Partners Coordination Council
DRA	disaster risk assessment
DRR	disaster risk reduction
ECARO	Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (UNICEF)
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ECE	Early Childhood Education

EDEI	Early Detection and Early Intervention
ELDS	Early Learning Development Standards
EMIS	education management information system
EQUIST	Equitable Impact Sensitive Tool
EU	European Union
EVA	especially vulnerable adolescent
GBV	Gender-based Violence
IR	Inception Report
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
J4C	Justice for Children
KoM	Kick-off Meeting
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MARA	most-at-risk adolescent
MoES	Ministry of Education and Science
MES	Ministry of Emergency Situations
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training (on Youth)
NSC	National Statistics Committee
PFB	performance-based financing
PHC	primary health care
PPE	personal protective equipment
SAP	Social Assistance Programme
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SitAn	Situation Analysis of Children and Women
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Framework
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAC	Violence Against Children
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
YCFLG	Youth and Child Friendly Local Government

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Country Programme (CP) 2018-2022. The evaluation was commissioned by the Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) of UNICEF. It is part of the Multi-Country Programme Evaluation (MCPE), covering country programme evaluations in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine and includes a synthesis report.

The evaluation was conducted between February and September 2021 and covers the entire UNICEF portfolio during the first three and a half years of the five-year programme. In addition, the evaluation considers previous activities that continued during that time and that contributed to UNICEF impact, considering UNICEF's global strategic plan 2018-2022.

The Kyrgyzstan CP 2018–2022 had an initial budget of US\$6.73 million from regular resources and US\$25 million in other resources. It aimed to reach every child and young person across the whole country through national level policy change and service improvements at every level (national, provincial and district). The CP had three strategic pillars: (1) Child Rights-based Monitoring System and Decision Making; (2) Equitable Access to Services for Child's Survival, Learning and Development; (3) Child Protection and Access to Justice.

This is a strategic evaluation that complements the sectoral evaluations and specialized studies that have been conducted by UNICEF and external experts during this period. The evaluation report complements the Situational Analysis (SitAn) conducted in 2021 in Kyrgyzstan and, together with the SitAn is intended to inform the priorities for the next UNICEF Kyrgyzstan CP and (b) the decisions on the most effective strategies to be used for a CP that has real impact. The evaluation assesses the relevance, coherence and impact achieved throughout the implementation of the CP. It is a contribution to accountability and draws transferable lessons learned for the future and for other UNICEF Country Offices.

UNICEF's partners were usually government ministries, agencies and departments at national level, but a substantial number of the projects and programmes of UNICEF Country Office (CO) in Kyrgyzstan have also aimed to strengthen institutions at regional or local level. Therefore, the evaluation assesses the collaboration of the CP not just with government structures, but also with United Nations (UN) agencies and other development partners, as well as the civil society organizations (CSOs) that participated in the CP as implementing partners or in joint advocacy efforts alongside UNICEF.

This introductory chapter describes the aims, objectives and scope of the evaluation, the context within which UNICEF has been operating, and the overall shape and content of the CP itself. Chapter 2 explains the methodology of the evaluation, including ethical considerations. Its findings are presented in Chapter 3, organized according to the main evaluation criteria of this specific evaluation (relevance, coherence and impact) and the evaluation questions set by UNICEF. Based on the findings, Chapter 4 presents conclusions, lessons learned, and recommendations emerging from the evaluation criteria and with special focus on selected impact areas.

1.1. The context and current situation

Kyrgyzstan is a land-locked, lower-middle-income country of 6.5 million people. Almost half (48.8 per cent) of the population in Kyrgyzstan is under the age of 25, and almost one-third of its people are between 15 and 25 years old.

The country has rich endowments, and there is significant potential for the expansion of its agriculture sector, hydroelectricity production, and tourism industry. Although demographic trends reflect growing urbanization, this remains a strongly rural country, with 65.8 per cent of the population still lives in rural

areas, compared to only an OECD average of 22 per cent.⁴ There are more than 100 minority ethnic communities in Kyrgyzstan, constituting over a quarter (27 per cent) of its inhabitants. Ethnic Uzbeks, who make up the largest minority, and Tajiks live primarily in the southern regions of Osh, Batken and Jalalabad. While ethnic relations have been stable in recent years, they “remain fragile” and issues such as the “underrepresentation of minorities” and “unfair treatment by law enforcement” could “bring the level of inter-ethnic tension to a breaking point”, according to the UN Special Rapporteur on Minority Issues.⁵ In addition, there are still child marriages and the practice of bride kidnaping is tolerated in some communities in Kyrgyzstan⁶. In general, there is a sense that human rights values are not yet embedded across society.

Labour migration has a significant impact on national economic and social development, but there seem to be varying formats for its measurement. The State Migration Service⁷ estimates that over 800,000 Kyrgyz citizens work abroad, mostly in Russia and Kazakhstan, with most migrants coming from the country’s southern regions. Although remittances contribute about 28 per cent of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP), the migration of adolescents and young adults impacts negatively on its social care mechanisms and family patterns and, in the long-term, impedes economic growth and development by eroding its social capital.

In 2019, the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Committee developed a Child Poverty and Deprivation Index, with support from UNICEF. This assessed child wellbeing based on 28 indicators, grouped under six categories – material child poverty; health status; mortality rates; education and ECE; living conditions and quality of life; and childhood risks. This allows for a more nuanced assessment of children’s lives in the Kyrgyz Republic.

Table 1. Child Poverty and Deprivation Index in the Kyrgyz Republic 2019

Group	Indicators	Indicator Type +/-	Indicator Value
1.	Material Child Poverty		
1.1	Child poverty rate as a % of the total population aged 0-17	-	25.7
1.2	Extreme child poverty rate (%)	-	0.8
1.3	Depth of child poverty (%)	-	4.2
1.4	% of children (aged 1-6) who are underweight for their age	-	8.6
2.	Children’s health status		
2.1	% of children born with low birth weight (< 2.5kg)	-	5.0
2.2	Incidence of children (aged 0-14) with tuberculosis/per 100k population	-	14.2
2.3	Incidence of anaemia in pregnant women (%)	-	35.1
2.4	% of children immunised against measles	+	97.2
2.5	% of children immunised against tuberculosis	+	96.4
3.	Mortality rates		
3.1	Infant mortality rate/1000 births	-	15.1
3.2	Peri-natal mortality rate/1000 live and dead births	-	17.5
3.3	Life expectancy for 5-year-olds	+	67.7
3.4	Under-5 child mortality rate/1000 births	-	17.5
3.5	Maternal mortality rates/100,000 live births	-	24.8
4.	Education and ECE		
4.1	% of children (Grade 4) who score well in Maths test	+	39.7
4.2	% of children who score positive on a literacy test	+	40.2

⁴ Noted in Maghnouj S. Fordham E. et al., *OECD Reviews of Evaluation and Assessment in Education: Albania* OECD (2020) Paris (<https://doi.org/10.1787/d267dc93-en>).

⁵ See United Nations Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Fernand de Varennes, Visit to Kyrgyzstan, 6-17 December 2019 OHCHR (<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25422>).

⁶ Confirmed by UNICEF CO Annual reports and SitAn reports in 2016 and 2021.

⁷ Quoted in Melnikovai A. et al., *Gaps in Access to Basic Services for Children Affected by Migration in Kyrgyzstan* UNICEF (2020) Bishkek.

4.3	% of children enrolled in pre-school	+	25.4
4.4	% of children enrolled (net ratio) in primary education Grades 1-4	+	96.7
4.5	% of children enrolled (net ratio) in secondary education Grades 5-11	+	81.5
5.	Living conditions and quality of life		
5.1	% of population without access to health care	-	1.4
5.2	% of births attended by skilled nursing personnel	+	99.3
5.3	% of population without access to clean water	-	5.9
5.4	% of population without access to adequate sanitation	-	68.3
6.	Childhood risks		
6.1	% of juvenile offenders as a proportion of offenders	-	5.7
6.2	% of children born to women under 18 years of age	-	0.5
6.3	Suicide mortality rate of children/adolescents aged 15-24 per 100?000 of the relevant age group	-	7.3
6.4	Registered HIV-positive children aged 0-17 diagnosed for the first time in their life per 100k of the relevant age group	-	1.5
6.5	Number of identified children aged 0-17 without parental care per 100,000 population	-	89.0

Source. National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic /UNICEF, according to SitAn 2021

According to the Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of SDGs in the Kyrgyz Republic, the country is “committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals have been included in public policies and are reflected in the National Development Strategy (2018–2040) of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the “Unity, Trust, Creation” (2018–2022) Program of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, based on people-centered approach.”⁸ According to the report, in the implementation of the Agenda for Sustainable Development, country has virtually eliminated extreme poverty. General education is free, accessible and compulsory. The Kyrgyz Republic has also become one of the first countries in the world to fully resolve the issue of statelessness. However, under Goal 3, the review notes that “not enough attention is paid to the reproductive health of men, related oncological diseases and public awareness raising on these topics”⁹

However, poverty and child poverty are still serious issues in Kyrgyzstan and data show that the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a social and economic crisis, starting in 2021. Poverty continues to be a large problem, with 20.1 per cent of the population living in poverty in 2019, and children overrepresented in poverty statistics.¹⁰ This situation is resulting in poor access to quality services and protection, and it is heightening vulnerability to natural and human-made disasters.¹¹ Children living in poverty miss pre-school and school education and healthcare, and face malnutrition. The poorest children live in rural areas in the southern regions of the country and belong to families with three and more children and families with unemployed adults. Malnutrition rates in Kyrgyzstan decreased for stunting and wasting within biological norms between 2006-2018, but there needs to be further progress to achieve the SDG targets.

Beyond the immediate health impacts, the pandemic has had serious socio-economic consequences. Kyrgyzstan's real GDP declined by 8.6 per cent in 2020 compared to 2019. The World Bank estimates that the poverty rate could increase markedly because of falling remittances and incomes, and rising unemployment, prices, and health expenditures. According to preliminary results of the phone-based follow

⁸ The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2020, Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Kyrgyz Republic,

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26458VNR_2020_Kyrgyzstan_Report_English.pdf

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ (www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/child-poverty)

¹¹ (www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/children-kyrgyzstan)

up Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), 50 per cent of households reported a reduction in income, and one fifth reported challenges in accessing healthcare services in 2020 compared to 2019.¹²

The pandemic and ensuing lockdown highlighted the limited ability of Kyrgyzstan's authorities to mobilize an effective response to such a crisis. Changes of key officials during the pandemic - including the Prime Minister, the Vice Prime Minister for Social Affairs, and the Minister of Health - further inhibited the crisis response. There was, however, an impressive mobilization of volunteers – especially young people who offered invaluable support – to fill the gaps in access to healthcare and services. They assisted patients directly at home, as well as supporting medical staff in hospitals.¹³

Education is another area disrupted by the pandemic. Despite the development of a remote learning platform for all students and preschool children, conducted by the Ministry of Education and Science with UNICEF support. School closures were especially harmful for children with special educational needs who lost all access to psycho-pedagogical professionals. This was a particular challenge, given that Kyrgyzstan only ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in May 2019 and where services were only just starting to develop in line with its provisions.

The pandemic also affected the well-being of children and young people in terms of their mental health. More than 60 per cent of adolescents are now experiencing elevated levels of pandemic-related anxiety.¹⁴

The parliamentary elections of 2020 generated protests related to election fraud. The political upheaval that followed, the election of the new President¹⁵ and the country's constitutional changes¹⁶ raised concerns over the sustainability of reforms and the observance of rule of law in Kyrgyzstan.

In the light of the latest reforms in the country, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic signed the Decree 'On the inventory of the Legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic' (dated 8 February 2021, No. 26) to optimize and improve the entire legislative framework. The country's inter-departmental Expert Group¹⁷ has been conducting a complete inventory of the adopted concepts, strategies, programmes and laws of the Kyrgyz Republic for compliance with the current Constitution and principles of social justice and partnership to eliminate internal juridical contradictions, collisions and gaps. UNICEF have been present in the Expert Group to provide support its works.

In this context, the country remains committed to all major international human rights treaties, as successive governments have supported reform initiatives to transition towards an open, democratic and pluralist society. Article 06 of the 2021 Constitution¹⁸ provides that the norms of international law shall be

¹² UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Annual Report 2020; The Economist Intelligence Unit, "Kyrgyzstan: Real GDP contracts sharply in 2020", 25 January 2021; World Bank, "Kyrgyz Republic COVID-19 Poverty and Vulnerability Impacts", May 2020.

¹³ UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Annual Report 2020.

¹⁴ UNICEF and UNFPA, "Rapid Needs Assessment on the Kyrgyz Youth Situation in the COVID-19 Pandemic", May 2020.

¹⁵ After the referendum on 10 January 2021 (alongside presidential elections when the new President Sadyr Japarov was elected), Kyrgyzstan voted to change the system of government from parliamentary to presidential (with a turnout of around 40 per cent of voters). The new President declared far-reaching constitutional reforms in the country.

¹⁶ The joint opinion of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe notes positive changes in the draft Constitution, such as giving human rights and freedoms a prominent place in the overall framework and re-establishing the Constitutional Court in line with earlier recommendations. But it also finds concerns that many provisions regulating the institutional framework and separation of powers as well as the foreseen timeline and procedures leading to the adoption of the constitutional amendments In addition to demonstrating a lack of respect for the principles of rule of law and legality, they also took place with little or no public consultation or parliamentary debate (www.osce.org/odihr/481864).

¹⁷ The members of the interdepartmental expert group are representatives of the Parliament (Jogorku Kenesh) of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic, the General Prosecutor's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic, executive authorities and local self-government bodies, business structures, non-governmental organizations and independent experts.

¹⁸ See European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) *Draft Law on the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic English Translation* Council of Europe (23 February 2021) ([https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-REF\(2021\)017-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/?pdf=CDL-REF(2021)017-e)).

the constituent part of the legal system of the Kyrgyz Republic and that ratified international agreements, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, shall have direct action.¹⁹

On health, the MICS 2018 indicates that antenatal care overwhelmingly (99.8 per cent) takes place in a health facility, and in most cases (84 per cent) a doctor provides it, with only 15 per cent supplied by nurses, midwives and feldshers. Kyrgyzstan has made progress in halving its child mortality rate from 39 deaths for every 1,000 live births in 2006 to 19 per 1,000 in 2018, and in reducing its neonatal mortality rate, from 19 deaths per 1,000 in 2006 to 13 per 1,000 in 2017). This progress allows the achievement of the achievement of SDG targets.²⁰

In the field of education, the country reported elevated levels of access to education, with almost universal attendance in primary education (98.7 per cent). Data show that students complete compulsory education and that over 86 per cent continue beyond lower secondary education, but less than half of those move on to tertiary education.²¹ However, the quality of education remains a problem, with 59.8 per cent of primary school students not attaining the minimal acceptable reading and comprehension skills in 2017.²² This was an improvement in comparison with 2014, when 65 per cent of children in grade four were not reading at their grade level.²³ Nevertheless, the issue of quality education remains largely unaddressed. There is still a 13-percentage-point gap in reading skills between children in rural and urban areas, with urban children doing better. There are also significant regional differences, with 74 per cent of children demonstrating foundational reading skills in the capital, Bishkek, falling to only 39 per cent in Naryn.²⁴

Kyrgyzstan faces child protection challenges. For example, violence against children and women remains widespread. MICS 2018 found that 47.5 per cent of children in Kyrgyzstan are exposed to physical punishment, and 5.4 per cent of children are exposed to severe physical punishment. In all, 70 per cent of children have experienced psychological aggression. A quarter of adolescents (25 per cent) believe that a husband may beat his wife sometimes.²⁵

There has, however, been progress on statelessness, with Kyrgyzstan becoming the first country to end statelessness in 2019. This followed a nationwide campaign by UNICEF, other United Nations agencies and civil society that identified and resolved the status of 13,700 people without a nationality, including 2,000 children – all of whom had the right to protection from public authorities.²⁶

Meanwhile, fine particulate air pollution (PM2.5) in Kyrgyzstan, and particularly in Bishkek, has reached hazardous levels during winter, primarily the result of coal burning. This trend threatens to compound the impact of respiratory issues induced by COVID-19 and carries long-term health implications for the population, especially children.²⁷

According to the 2021 SitAn, the civil society sector in the Kyrgyz Republic is one of the strongest in Central Asia.²⁸ However, management and communication lines within and across the various levels of government and between government and civil society actors seem complex and sometimes opaque.

Despite criticism by civil society and the international community, Kyrgyzstan's President Sadyr Japarov endorsed amendments to the country's Law on Non-Commercial Organizations and the Law on State

¹⁹ See CRIN Kyrgyzstan: National Laws (https://archive.crin.org/sites/default/files/kyrgyzstan_access_to_justice_0.pdf).

²⁰ The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2020, Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Kyrgyz Republic, https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/26458VNR_2020_Kyrgyzstan_Report_English.pdf

²¹ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2018 (www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/reports/multiple-indicator-cluster-survey-mics-situation-children-and-women-kyrgyzstan).

²² Ibid.

²³ United States Agency for International Development, *Education in the Kyrgyz Republic*, (www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic/education).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Annual Report 2019.

²⁷ UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Annual Reports 2018, 2019, 2020.

²⁸ See AKDN *The Kyrgyz Republic* (www.akdn.org/where-we-work/central-asia/kyrgyz-republic/civil-society-kyrgyz-republic).

Registration of Legal Entities (26 June 2021), which introduce new and burdensome financial reporting obligations for Kyrgyzstan's non-governmental organizations (NGOs).²⁹ Some pre-existing legislation already requires NGOs to provide detailed information on a regular basis about their activities and finances to the tax service, statistical authorities and other state bodies. Civil society and interventionist international organizations raised concerns that the implementation of the new legislation might result in growing pressure on NGOs that challenge public policies and seek accountability for corruption and human rights violations, including violations of the rights of women, ethnic minorities, detainees and other vulnerable groups.³⁰

1.2. Country Programme components and goals

The overall goal of the UNICEF Country Programme 2018-2022 is to contribute to national efforts on behalf of all children and adolescents in Kyrgyzstan, especially the most disadvantaged, to have their rights progressively fulfilled and be able to develop to their full potential in an inclusive and protective society.

Its Theory of Change (ToC) states that all children and adolescents in Kyrgyzstan, and particularly the most disadvantaged, will live in a family environment, free from violence, exclusion and poverty. UNICEF and other organizations and institutions will contribute to this ToC by raising the capacity of Kyrgyz authorities to assist the most vulnerable children, to take evidence-based decisions and to provide services and access to justice for all children. Adolescent participation and stronger social support for child rights are instrumental for the long-term expected impact.

The CP has aimed for three core Outcomes: 1) Child Rights-based Monitoring System and Decision Making; 2) Equitable Access to Services for Child's Survival, Learning and Development; and 3) Child Protection and Access to Justice. An additional operation Outcome, Country Programme Effectiveness and Efficiency, is relevant to this evaluation to the extent that actions undertaken by the CO to ensure programme effectiveness and efficiency and to determine the relevance, coherence and impact of the other outcome areas. The CP aims to contribute to the achievement of 10 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Kyrgyzstan: SDGs 1 (Poverty), 3 (Health), 4 (Education), 5 (Gender equality), 6 (Water and sanitation), 10 (Inequalities), 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), 13 (Climate action), 16 (Peace, justice and strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the goals)

The three Programme Outcomes are mutually reinforcing. Outcome 1 focuses on the capacity of the Kyrgyz Government and civil society to collect, analyse, disseminate and utilize data to develop policy and monitor the barriers faced by the most disadvantaged children, and to base their decisions on credible evidence. For example, the identification of 'hidden populations' in terms of their marginalization and social vulnerability, is vital for the solutions to the challenges they face. Another key component under Outcome 1 is the use of data for budgetary planning that answers the needs of identified vulnerable children.

Outcome 2 supports the improvement of health and education services for the survival and development of vulnerable children. It also includes activities and advocacy for local and national actions and investments to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on children.

Outcome 3 focuses on child rights and includes the strengthening of the child protection system for the most vulnerable children to ensure that it aligns with international standards. This outcome includes interventions on social work, ensuring provisions for children's basic needs, and ensuring child access to justice.

²⁹ The new reporting requirements apply specifically to NGOs – organizations registered as public associations, foundations and institutions, but not to other non-profit organizations, such as religious associations or political parties, or to commercial organizations. The amendments also specifically state that the new reporting requirements do not apply to non-commercial organizations affiliated with state or municipal institutions. For these reasons, the new requirements are discriminatory in nature.

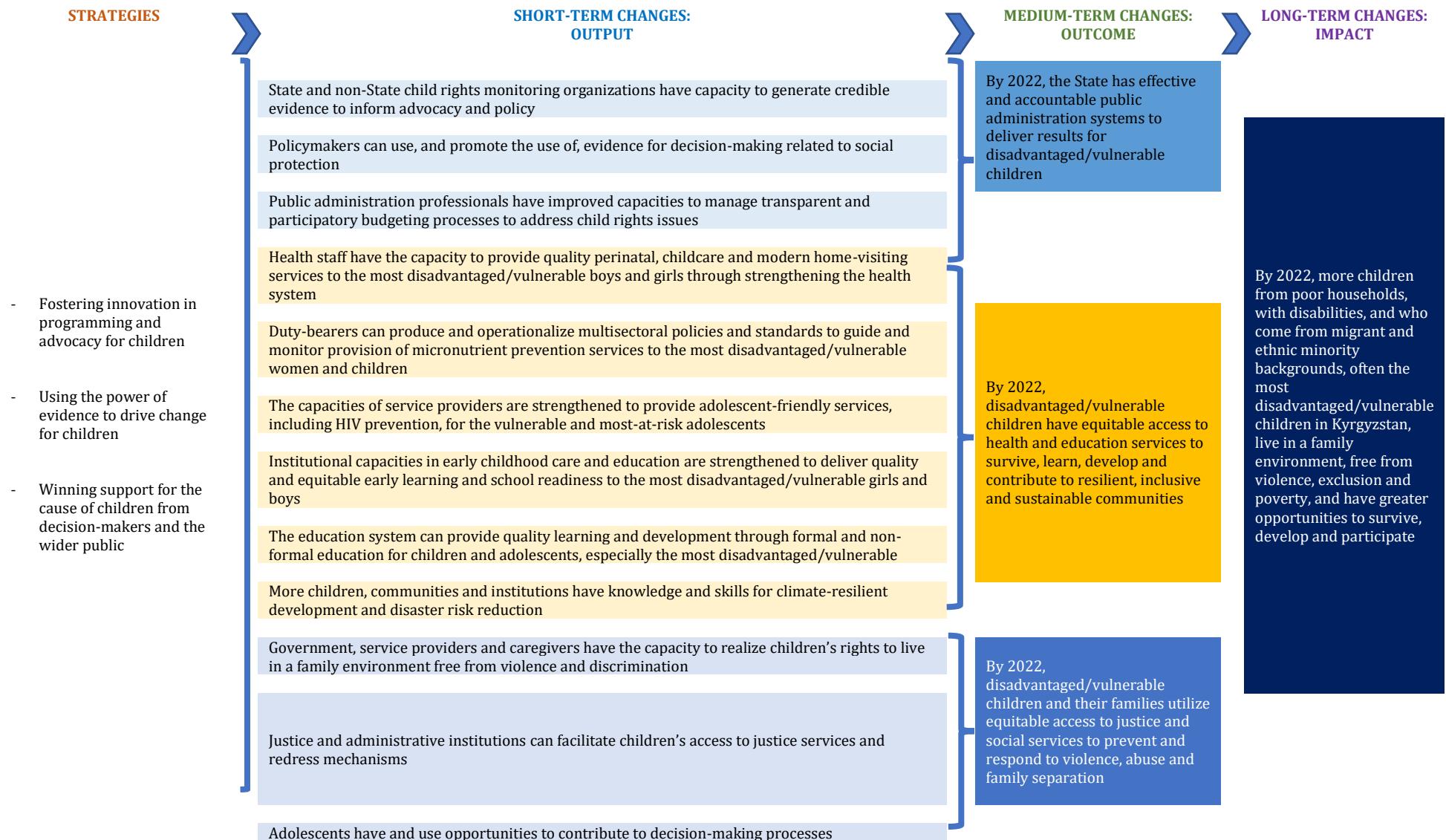
³⁰ www.iphronline.org/kyrgyzstan-ensure-that-new-legislation-does-not-impede-ngo-activity.html

While Outcomes 1 and 2 include activities that target social norms, Outcome 3 includes specific interventions to overcome the negative social norms and practices that affect development and protection of children and their access to justice. It includes support for adolescents' participation in society and their dialogue with decision makers as one approach promoted to identify and address children's needs and vulnerabilities.

Figure 1 illustrates the key elements of the CP Theory of Change. Annex 3 includes a presentation of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan CO stakeholders, main partners and donors in the implementation of the CP.

The ToC refers to disadvantaged children following the text of the CP. The questions for this evaluation refer to vulnerable children. For this evaluation the two terms are interchangeable.

Figure 1. Theory of Change of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Country Programme



ASSUMPTIONS	Political will and skills to support SDG localization The Government takes evidence-based decisions The Government allocates adequate financial and administrative resources The Government prioritizes the child rights agenda The Government can scale up and institutionalize developed models The local authorities are willing to listen to the voices of the young people Stakeholders are interested and committed There is low resistance to change in social norms Youth are confident and express their voices Parents/caregivers are confident to practice positive parenting norms	Risks and bottlenecks	COVID-19 overall social and economic impact Insufficient allocation of budgetary and human resources Lack of holistic approach to child development and protection Low level of information and awareness among stakeholders and target groups Lack of human resources and low level of their professional development The mechanisms of cross-sector coordination and cooperation are underdeveloped, especially at local level Absence of evidence-based policy development Weak implementation and follow up of child-related legislation Harmful social norms and practices
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1.3. Objective, purpose, and scope of the evaluation

The objective of the Multi-Country Programme Evaluation (MCPE) is to conduct a formative multi-country evaluation that serves two purposes: accountability and learning. The MCPE assesses the relevance, coherence and impact achieved throughout implementation of the Country Programmes in the four countries (Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine) to identify good practices, and draw lessons and forward-looking recommendations that can inform the 2023-2027 CP planning processes that have either commenced or will commence shortly in all four countries.

In line with its Terms of Reference, the purpose of the MCPE is threefold:

- to strengthen accountability of UNICEF to national stakeholders by evaluating UNICEF's contribution to the results for children at scale, especially for the most vulnerable in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine
- to support the development of the next UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) in each country by understanding and evaluating the implementation of the change strategies through which the CP delivery has bettered understand the added value of UNICEF in each country context
- to draw lessons from the previous CPD implementation to make the best use of UNICEF's change strategies in each country covered by the evaluation and in the region, while considering current circumstances.

To produce the information and data that enable the assessment of progress on these three purposes, the evaluation assesses:

- the linkages between international, regional, national and institutional strategies to bring about overall improvement in the status of children, with a view to clarifying the roles and responsibilities of national stakeholders and how UNICEF interventions can add value and contribute to policy development for systemic improvements
- the extent to which interventions focus on and deliver results for the most vulnerable categories of children in each of the four countries;
- the performance monitoring systems in place at national and UNICEF level, the quality of indicators, and the capacity of those indicators to measure and communicate results, including the measurement of horizontal issues (gender, participation, equity, most vulnerable).

In the framework of the MCPE, this report focuses on the UNICEF's CP in Kyrgyzstan. Evidence collected from interventions implemented in the country between 2018 and June 2021 (under the current CPD) and, to a more limited extent, earlier years, led to this strategy. Specific activities to ease the negative consequences of the current pandemic crisis on children are considered to the extent that they are part of the results chains in the areas selected.

The scope of this Country Programme Evaluation is, therefore, as follows.³¹

- Temporal scope: 2018 to June 2021, covering the current CP (2018-2022) to date. However, when relevant to the observed impact, the temporal scope of the evaluation extended to the previous years and previous CPD.
- Geographic scope: All areas in Kyrgyzstan where UNICEF works, including initiatives that have started as pilots and that are being implemented with the intention of expanding to national scale.
- Portfolio scope: All portfolio components, including cross-cutting issues such as gender, and inter-sectoral support involving gender and communication.

³¹ According to the Terms of Reference (ToR).

- Organizational scope: The CO and wider provision of technical support and oversight from UNICEF's Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) and, when relevant, UNICEF headquarters.
- Excluded from the scope of the evaluation: The evaluation does not provide a detailed assessment of all CP components. However, a more in-depth impact assessment will provide lessons learned and UNICEF practices and strategies in achieving impact for children at scale.

This evaluation report includes an evaluation brief that summarizes the most important findings, conclusions and recommendations.

The primary users of this Country Programme Evaluation are the UNICEF CO and ECARO. Secondary users of the evaluation are the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, other UN agencies and development partners present in Kyrgyzstan. Annex 3 includes a presentation of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan CO stakeholders, main partners and donors in the implementation of the CP. The evaluation report aims to build on the agreements made between all these parties and to assist the prioritization and establishment of strategies for the future as they move together into the next planning and programme cycle.

2. Methodology

2.1. Evaluation framework: criteria and questions

The MCPE focuses on the CPD and its ToC. The Evaluation Matrix was developed during the Inception Phase, as the core analytical framework against which data would be gathered and analysed (Annex 5). All evaluation questions were assigned to a specific evaluation criterion: relevance, coherence and impact. For each evaluation question, related indicators/descriptors, sources of information and data collection methods were specified in the matrix. The indicators and methods were based on the preliminary documentary review conducted during the Inception Phase of the evaluation.

The evaluation questions in the evaluation matrix are provided in the ToR and indicated to be final and not subject to change. Although the ToR provided each CO with the opportunity to add up to two more questions, no additional evaluation questions were proposed by the COs during the Inception Phase.

The evaluation matrix is built on an overall approach that links evaluation criteria and level. On the one hand, analyses and findings on 'Relevance' and 'Coherence' (realized for the entire CP) are to be considered under 'Impact' as UNICEF's interventions cannot have an impact if they are not relevant. On the other, UNICEF's impact (its contribution to an observed change) might also be determined by other interventions that are implemented by, e.g., other donors, with UNICEF adding value in this context.

The evaluation of impact influences the entire CP. However, a more in-depth impact assessment three selected areas: early childhood development (ECD) and early childhood education (ECE); adolescents' engagement and participation; and social protection to provide conclusions; and lessons learned on UNICEF practices and strategies in achieving impact for children at scale. The assessment of these three areas will contribute to findings and conclusions as examples (case studies) of the achievement of results at scale (or falling short). The three areas have relate to the initial analysis of the evaluation team and in consultation with the CO. From one perspective, the evaluation questions relate to how UNICEF contributed to change for children at scale can be answered using specific theory-based impact evaluation methods, as described below. But these methods best apply to selected cases, rather than to complex and heterogenous programmes. However, the areas selected represent results achieved by UNICEF, with various levels of change for children at scale generated by UNICEF that are worthy of analysis.

The evaluation utilized a formative approach to the evaluation to look back and assess the relevance, coherence and impact achieved throughout implementation of the CP, to identify good practices, and draw lessons and forward-looking recommendations to inform the 2023-2027 CP planning process,

which commenced in the last quarter of 2021. The evaluation team adopted a **utilization-focused approach**, as the evaluation is meant to inform the next UNICEF Kyrgyzstan programmatic cycle.³²

The evaluation involved three phases: (1) inception; (2) data collection; and (3) analysis and reporting. The methodology used a mixed methods approach involving qualitative as well as quantitative data collection methods. Information from different lines of inquiry was triangulated to improve the reliability of and to validate the findings.

2.2. Data collection and analysis methods

The team engaged with UNICEF ECARO, UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, government authorities, public institutions, civil society partners and other development agencies to ensure that the evaluation responds to the needs and priorities of the users.

The evaluation used the following methods of data collection: (a) document review (Annex 8); (b) key stakeholder interviews; and (c) a survey of UNICEF CO staff for the social network analysis for the assessment of the coherence of the CP and UNICEF partnerships.

Semi-structured interviews were the main tool used with national partners, reflecting the upstream nature of the programme and the status of the respondents. A variety of stakeholders provided the primary data, including government officials, UNICEF staff, civil society organizations and development partners (see the list of interviewed stakeholders in Annex 6). In total, 30 individual interviews occurred remotely because of COVID-19 restrictions. International interviewers and national consultants, working in pairs or individually, conducted the interviews. Checklists guided the interviews, to support the consistency of data collection across the team and varied stakeholders. However, questions for each interview were tailored as appropriate to make the best use of the position and knowledge of the interviewee. In line with the ethical considerations presented below, the evaluation team ensured the confidentiality of the interviewees, without connecting the evidence and opinions expressed during meetings to the identity of the stakeholder. The positive and open approach of most respondents was quite striking and much appreciated.

The selection of the key informants followed a dedicated sampling strategy that was agreed with the ECARO and CO at the end of the Inception Phase. The aim of the sampling strategy was to cover the Country Programme in general and the three selected impact areas mentioned above in particular, and to include several types of key informants (UNICEF staff, representatives of the government, representatives of other UN agencies and development agencies, representatives of academia, services providers and implementing partners) in the list of interviewees for each area. Following the design of the CP and the focus of its activities, the priority of planned results at national level emerged, so the project was designed to spend more time with stakeholders at the national level.

In line with the Terms of References (ToR) of the evaluation, children and adolescents have not been interviewed or consulted directly in another way. The evaluation team decided instead to rely on sectoral evaluations and studies (the list of evaluations and studies used for this report is included in Annex 8) that have presented the perspectives of these groups more thoroughly than would have been possible during this evaluation. The evaluation team instead met representatives of intermediary groups that work closely with vulnerable children.

Three participatory online workshops were organized with CO staff. These aimed to: (1) familiarize the evaluation team with the CP and identify and select the impact areas to be assessed more in-depth; (2) present the inception report, discuss key issues to be addressed by the evaluation and plan data collection in cooperation with the CO; and (3) present and validate the findings and discuss preliminary recommendations.

The analysis methods are mentioned in the evaluation matrix. A **theory-based approach** was applied for the evaluation, based on the explicit sectoral ToCs developed by the UNICEF CO (and reconstructed by the evaluation team) for the CP and the three selected impact areas. A brief presentation of the

³² Patton, Michael Quinn, *Utilization-focused evaluation, 4th edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008.

methodology for Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis methodologies used for the selected areas can be found in Annex 2. Another essential analysis method was the Realist Evaluation. According to Westhorp (2014) realist approaches “assume that nothing works everywhere or for everyone, and that context really does make a difference to programme outcomes”.³³ A Realist Evaluation focuses, therefore, on how, why and in what contexts an intervention leads to a particular outcome.

Finally, **stakeholder analysis**³⁴ and **social network analysis** were other important evaluation methods utilized to inform the evaluation of the coherence, added value and cooperation with stakeholders of the UNICEF Kyrgyzstan CO to enhance the results pursued. The stakeholders analysis was undertaken in the inception phase of the evaluation and before data collection and allowed the identification of the most important stakeholders for UNICEF CO. The Social Network Analysis was used to for visualizing and evaluating the strength of the partnership network of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan CO, measuring the frequency of communication, stability of collaboration and influence of partners on UNICEF work.

In addition, systems-based evaluation principles were used throughout the evaluation, as UNICEF's interventions are not evaluated in a vacuum, but within a complex context that must be considered. Among the used principles are: holism and non-summativity – considering that the stakeholders network of UNICEF and the group of activities and strategies implemented at the same time as capable to generate synergic results that represent more than the sum of parts (of results generated by each stakeholder and/or activity); participation of stakeholders; equifinality and multifinality approaches – considering that the same results can be obtained with multiple strategies and the fact that one strategy can generate different results in different contexts.³⁵

Conclusions have been formulated that consider the findings under different evaluation criteria and their interdependence. Lessons learned are formulated based on the experience of the UNICEF Kyrgyzstan CO, considering the most important challenges and the experiences of responding to these challenges that could be transferred to other situations and countries. The recommendations were developed by the evaluation team, based on in-country consultations on the early draft findings, and the later analysis of the data, findings and conclusions. The specific wording of the recommendations was developed in consultation with the CO, which provided feedback, comments and questions throughout the report drafting process. Two meetings were organized with the staff of the CO to validate and discuss recommendations in detail. A focus group for findings, conclusions and recommendations validation was organized after the first presentation of the Country Programme Evaluation report, with the participation of the CO team.

2.3. Limitations

The main challenge facing the evaluation arose from the spread of UNICEF's objectives and its strategies in Kyrgyzstan during a period of socio-economic and political instability. Overall, the changes that UNICEF seeks to make are mostly long-term and countrywide and the 3.5-year timeframe (the period covered by the evaluation for the Country Programme 2018-2022) is not long enough to allow for impact for children at scale.

In addition, the evaluated period overlapped with the COVID-19 pandemic (since March 2020) and a change of political regime (in 2020-2021). In this context, the sustainability of UNICEF impact, as assessed in this report, may be uncertain as the evaluation team is not able to confidently or clearly predict the extent to which the strategies of upstream policy work will benefit children in the country.

³³ Westhorp, Gill, “Realist impact evaluation: an introduction,” ODI, London, 2014 (<https://odi.org/en/publications/realist-impact-evaluation-an-introduction/>).

³⁴ Social network analysis (SNA) is a field of data analytics that uses networks and graph theory to understand social structures. To build SNA graphs, two key components are required: actors and relationships. In network analysis, actors are referred to as nodes (the dots on the graph) and relationships as edges (the lines on the graph).

³⁵ Backlund, A. (2002) The Concept of Complexity in Organisations and Information Systems. *Kybernetes*, 31(1). Also see: Ostlund Martin, Paivi Jokela, Peter Karlsudd, 2012, “Theory, Method and Tools for Evaluation Using a Systems-based Approach”.

It is also difficult to assess whether the benefits already achieved will last, given the social and economic crisis generated by the pandemic, which adds another layer of complexity.

In most areas, UNICEF promoted the further alignment of government policies with international best practices and standards. This alignment – and indeed the policies themselves – depends on high-level decisions and it was not always possible for the evaluation team to meet state officials at this level to determine their perceptions of UNICEF's contribution.

Assessing UNICEF's contribution to results at outcome or output level was another difficult area. The programme has devoted considerable attention to the question of causality, and the evaluation included the identification of who or what is responsible for changes at various levels of policymaking or for the implementation of new policies. These considerations were summarized in the ToC adopted for each main sector in the UNICEF programme; they also helped UNICEF staff assess the possible pathways to successful implementation of quality services or child rights. However, as UNICEF is not the only stakeholder influencing the government, it is difficult to identify UNICEF's precise contribution. The analysis, therefore, focuses on UNICEF contribution. Apportioning the amount of influence of each main player was not easy, but the evaluation attempted to do this, as will be seen in the examples of UNICEF's work provided in this report.

The evaluation team faced limitations during the design and evaluation phase of the CP.

- The documentation of the ToC was not systematic – an issue that was addressed by the development, testing and validation of an indicative ToC to serve as framework for evaluation. However, in the case of Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis, not all the desired evidence was available. For example, UNICEF claims to contribute to the institutionalization of ECE through the creation of a separate department for early education within the Ministry of Education. However, there is no evidence available to connect UNICEF advocacy with the creation of this department. Another example relates to decisions that improved the social protection system of cash benefits in 2020. Although there is a clear similarity between UNICEF recommendations and the decisions made by the Government, there is no unambiguous evidence on how the recommendations influenced the official decisions.
- As the data collection phase took place in July and August 2021, during the summer holiday season, five of the key informants were not available or reachable at the time of evaluation. However, a sufficiently high number of interviews were conducted to allow evaluators to respond to the evaluation questions with enough confidence.

2.4. Ethical issues and consideration of child rights, equity and gender

The evaluation team adhered to United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) ethical guidelines and code of conduct. This means that the evaluation team upheld the appropriate obligations of evaluators, including maintaining the independence, impartiality, credibility and accountability of the individual team members and the evaluation process.

The evaluation team was not subject to any conflicts of interest and confirmed that they were able to conduct the evaluation without any undue interference. Throughout data collection, analysis and reporting, evaluators aimed to ensure the integrity of the evaluation by respecting the ethical standards of UNICEF, as presented in the 'UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis' (April 2015). Special attention was paid to the issues of harms and benefits, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, payment and compensation, and conflicts of interest.

The main ethical issue that emerged during evaluation planning was the need for anonymity and confidentiality for the government officials interviewed. The evaluation team ensured the consent of all key informants to be interviewed and team members who conducted interviews gave assurances that the comments made during the interviews would be anonymous. As a result, none of the statements mentioned in this report are attributable to individuals or government departments. However, no formal letter of consent on the collected data was needed as no children were involved directly in the evaluation.

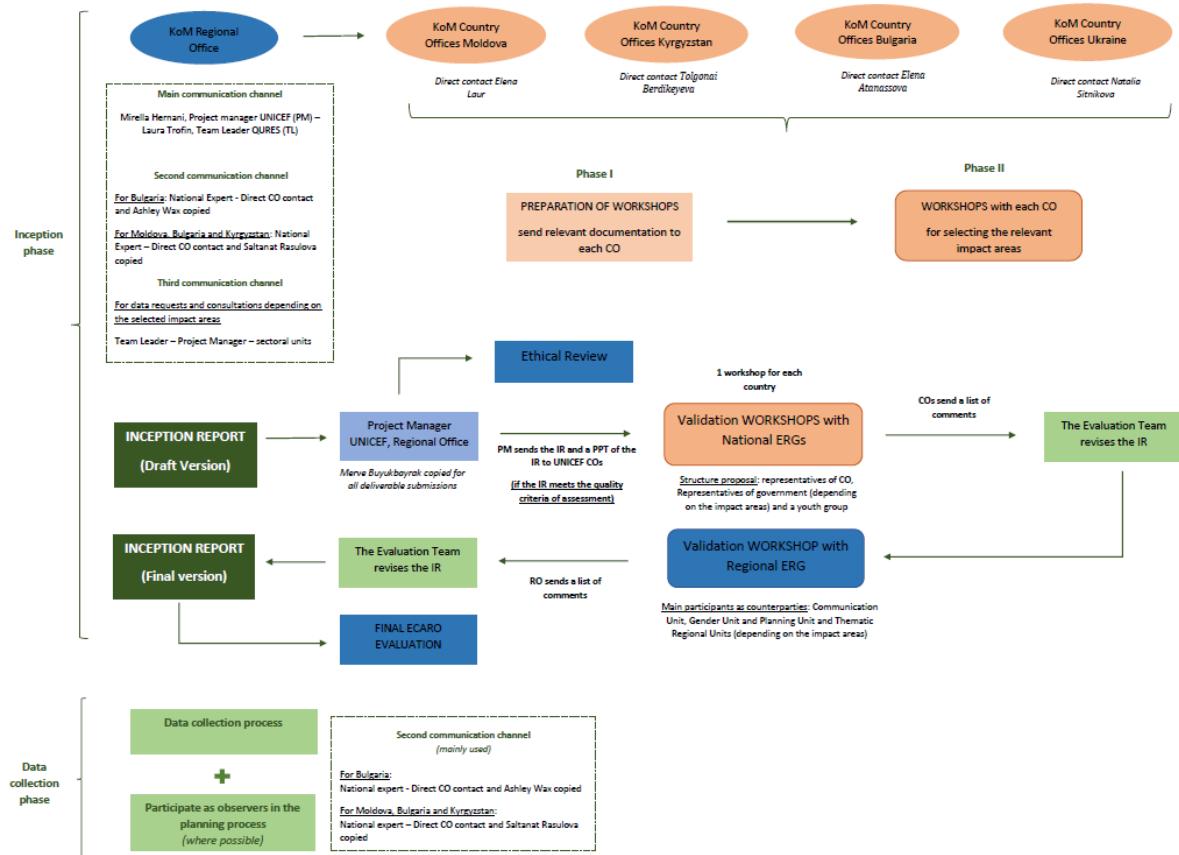
As mentioned, the selection of key informants was based on the stakeholders analysis and recommendations for the CO, but special attention was given to ensuring a balance of interviewed key informants by gender. Out of the 30 interviewees, 17 were females and 13 males.

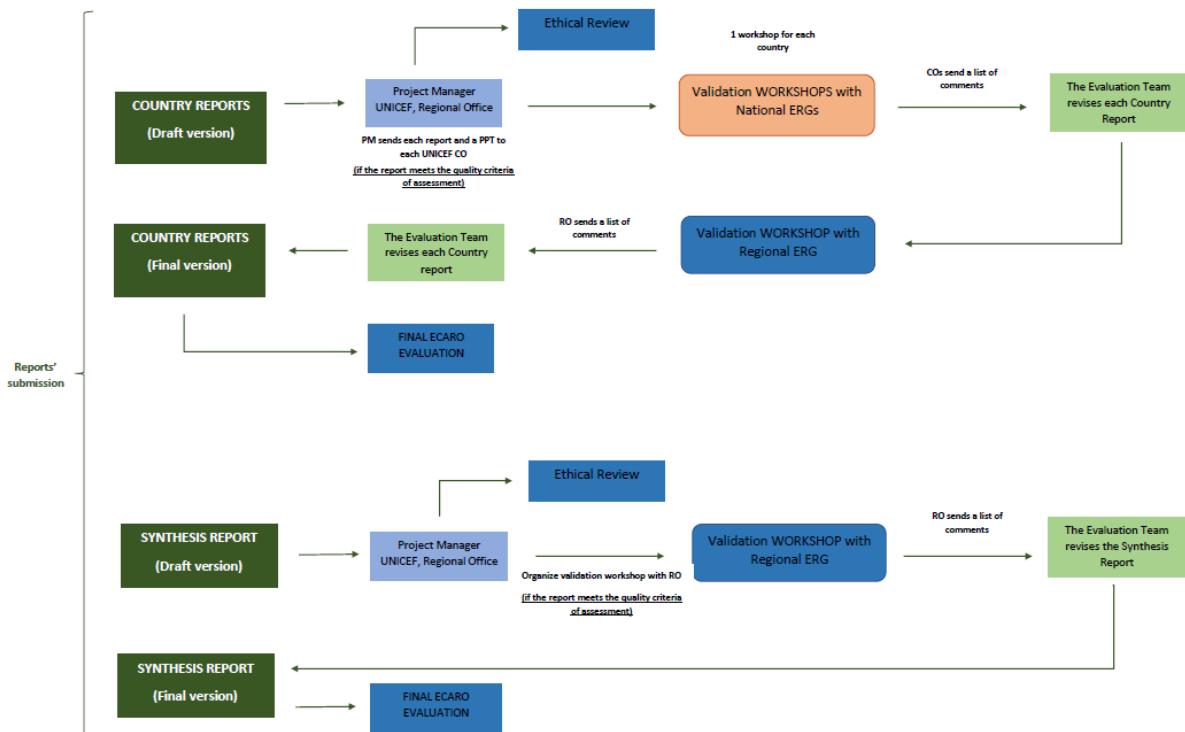
2.5. Management of the evaluation

The evaluation team maintained close contact with the CO representatives and staff, as well as UNICEF evaluation managers and UNICEF regional advisors in ECARO. The interviews with ECARO advisors were a major help in enabling the evaluation team to develop its analysis.

The team presented its findings to an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) consisting of representatives from the Government, UN agencies, donors, public agencies and CSOs. The meeting was well attended and provided an opportunity for all parties to comment on the current UNICEF programme and to raise issues to be addressed in the future.

Figure 2. The procedural flow of the Multi-Country Programme Evaluation





3. Main evaluation findings

3.1. Relevance

3.1.1. To what extent has UNICEF responded to the (changing) needs of the most vulnerable throughout the programme implementation?

UNICEF responded very well to the changing needs of the most vulnerable children, throughout the programme implementation. The relevance of the UNICEF CP is supported by extensive research and the effective use of data. The updated information about the situation of all children in Kyrgyzstan gives UNICEF the capacity to consider and address the challenges facing those who are the most vulnerable, and to plan and implement activities for them. UNICEF contributed to the development of State statistics to generate annual data, aiming to ensure continued relevance of its programme and of policies for children. While most programme indicators are not focused on vulnerable children and systematic monitoring did not happen, during evaluation we have not identified groups of vulnerable children that are not considered in the programme implementation.

UNICEF builds its programme on extensive evidence and lessons learned from the implementation of previous interventions, as well as from needs assessments and studies conducted within the scope of the current CP. All stakeholders consulted through interviews during the data collection phase stated that the CP and its implementation strategies are adequate in terms of the changing needs of vulnerable children, adolescents, and their families.

The 2016 SitAn also informed the evaluation, alongside a range of other evidence.³⁶ The 2016 SitAn was the main document that informed the current CPD and reviewed the remaining challenges for fulfilling the rights of all children in the Kyrgyz Republic.³⁷ The recommendations of the previous CP (2012-2017) evaluation were also integrated into the 2018-2022 CPD.³⁸

Based on the CP priorities and the context analysis, UNICEF aimed to reach all children of all ages in Kyrgyzstan, both in the planning and the implementation phases of the programme. However, UNICEF's focus on vulnerable children means that it prioritizes closing the equity gaps among children under every Outcome, but especially under Outcomes 2 and 3. These vulnerable children include children with disabilities, girls, children at risk of violence (including child marriage) and the children of migrant parents.³⁹ In addition, the CP focused on adolescents and youth and their proactive engagement in community dialogue, skills and competence building and their employability, as well as their peacebuilding potential in the border areas with large minority groups. These interventions have been aligned with the needs identified by SitAn 2016 and remain aligned with the needs of its target groups as identified by SitAn 2021.

UNICEF has also been supporting the authorities at the national and local levels to meet the needs of children and families by developing models and best practices that could be scaled up in the future. These model projects (including the programme for early identification and services for children with disabilities and developmental delays) target the most vulnerable children and are adapted to their specific needs. It is important that proposed solutions for the development of services for children, such

³⁶ These include: Multi Indicator Cluster Survey 2018; Situation Analysis of Teachers in Kyrgyzstan: Salary, Teaching Hours and Quality of Instruction 2014; 2016 Rep. of Kyrgyzstan: Communication for Development: An Evaluation of UNICEF's Capacity and Action - Case study report for Kyrgyzstan; Evaluation of UNICEF Country Programme (2012-2016) and Strategic Positioning 2016; Evaluation of the Multilingual Education Component of the Unity in Diversity Project in Kyrgyzstan 2016; Evaluation of the School without Violence Programme 2015, Gender Programme Review 2016

³⁷ The remaining challenges were reduction of poverty, reduction of maternal mortality and undernutrition, prevention of violence against children and school dropouts, deinstitutionalization of children, prevention of HIV in most vulnerable groups, poor quality of social services and empowerment of adolescents. These areas need renewed attention to achieve further progress for children.

³⁸ e.g., peacebuilding in multi-ethnic communities, border areas, prevention of violent extremism, and linking municipal-level work to national-level change.

³⁹ The programme priorities identified in the CPD: childcare and children of migrants; children's access to justice; violence against children including child marriage; Out of School Children and ECD; adolescent health and HIV/AIDS; child poverty; children with disabilities; child mortality; malnutrition/stunting; DRR/climate change and lack of drinking water and sanitation; and child participation and empowerment.

as services for early childhood development and education, consider the limited resources available at local level in small towns and villages and are designed to encourage the use of community resources to address the needs of children in rural areas.

There was an overall shift in the CP (2018-2022) from the service delivery that was more present in the previous CP to technical assistance, with UNICEF acting as an advisory body to the Government in the areas of healthcare, child protection, social protection, education, and justice for children. This shift was possible because of the impact of the previous CP in such areas and the commitment of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to develop services for children, within the context of the national implementation of the United Nation Child Rights Convention (CRC), despite political instability.

Most indicators within the CP do not focus on the most vulnerable children. For example, activities are designed to support the development of quality inclusive education at school and preschool level, but the indicators reflect the general coverage of schools and pre-school facilities (kindergartens and community based early education centres). Reports on inclusivity are not disaggregated to capture the differences between boys and girls, or children from urban and rural areas. This is a deficiency of the CP monitoring system, but the evaluation did not find that this was an impediment to address the identified needs of the most vulnerable children⁴⁰.

UNICEF has, however, developed and promoted tools for the multidimensional measurement of poverty for the better identification of the needs of vulnerable children in annual statistics and to enable the measurement of the impact of both national policies and its own activities.

As noted, UNICEF reports and other studies, as well as the interviews with UNICEF, UN agencies representatives in Kyrgyzstan and other partners, suggests that the CP design and implementation informed by analysis of the needs of vulnerable boys, girls and youth, including the geographical distribution of vulnerabilities, with the CO commissioning studies showing regional differences and the differences between urban and rural areas. These studies and contextual analyses were used during the design and the implementation phase of the CP.⁴¹ One study, for example, generated evidence about young people affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and was conducted by UNICEF in partnership with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in 2020. The study revealed the negative impact of the pandemic on income, employment, social protection, education and health, as well as on the psychological well-being of urban and rural youth and adolescents. The study found that 60 per cent of young people felt anxiety about the pandemic but were more concerned about the well-being of their relatives and friends, rather than for themselves. The study also identified the most vulnerable groups affected by the pandemic: young people living with HIV/AIDS, with limited health opportunities, and the children of migrants.⁴² The findings informed the UN's COVID-19 response initiatives and UNICEF activities in 2021.

The CP, therefore, also remained relevant to the newly identified needs of children, such as the negative impact of COVID-19 pandemic on their well-being. UNICEF conducted a study on "COVID-19 impact assessment on poverty and Potential implications of the COVID-19 crisis on social assistance for children"), which assessed the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on children and families and contributed to the broader assessment led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), "COVID-19 in the Kyrgyz Republic: Socioeconomic and Vulnerability Impact Assessment and Policy Response August" (2020).⁴³ contributed to UNICEF also conducted the "Situation Analysis on Adolescent and Youth Suicides and Attempted Suicides in

⁴⁰ See other finings on relevance and impact.

⁴¹ For example, studies and evaluations conducted by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan: "Research on attitude towards children with disabilities in the Kyrgyz Republic", UNICEF 2019; "Early childhood development contributions to social cohesion and Integration", UNICEF 2020; "Reducing prejudice among teachers, parents and children through ECD", UNICEF 2017; "Summative evaluation of implementation of the State Programme on Justice for Children in Kyrgyzstan 2014-2018", UNICEF 2019; Summative Evaluation of Peacebuilding Project "Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan", 2020.

⁴² Nuraiym Syrgak Kyzy, Cholpon Nurgalieva, Elnura Kazakbaeva, *Report on the Result of a Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Youth in Kyrgyzstan*, UNICEF and UNFPA, 2020.

⁴³ This assessment was the result of close cooperation between the United Nations Development System, under the technical leadership of UNDP, and ADB to support the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic's efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kyrgyzstan" (2020) to alert decision-makers to the importance of suicide prevention and the "Situation Analysis on Children and Adolescents with Disabilities" (2021) to support the implementation of policy measures in line with the newly ratified UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. UNICEF Kyrgyzstan also released its Humanitarian Situation Report (January-June 2021) on 13 August 2021 on the current situation and needs of children in the country and its regions, which was updated to reflect UNICEF's response and funding requirements in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its efforts to provide humanitarian support wherever needed, both in 2020 and 2021.⁴⁴

The implementation of the CP (2018-2022) also considered the needs of Kyrgyzstani children affected by the conflicts in the Middle East and living in vulnerable conditions in Iraq and Syria. The CO provided technical and financial support for repatriation and contributed, assuming a leading role among international organizations, to the re-integration of 79 Kyrgyzstani children in Kyrgyz society, ensuring adherence to child right principles. According to interviews for the evaluation, UNICEF was instrumental in identifying and responding to their needs, mobilizing support from other UN Agencies and the European Union (EU), providing children with support and advocating to the Government to ensure an approached based on child rights to the situation of children affected by the conflicts in the Middle East.

3.1.2. To what extent has UNICEF consistently integrated equity and gender equality in all aspects of programming and implementation, including policy and advocacy?

UNICEF integrated equity and gender equality into all aspects of programming and implementation, including policy and advocacy. As noted, the focus has been on the needs of the most vulnerable children, aiming to narrow equity gaps between children. Gender equality is integrated into programme planning and implementation in every component. Dedicated gender sensitive approaches are implemented in the fields of health, education, adolescent development and participation. Addressing gender-based violence (GBV), including child marriage, is a priority for UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan. However, specific monitoring indicators for the core objective of adolescent girls' empowerment, engagement and participation are missing in programme design.

The CP (2018-2022) has focused strongly on the principles of equity, gender and human rights. A human rights-based approach has been applied to achieve sustainable progress across all programme results, with an emphasis on participation and non-discrimination. The equity principle implies understanding and addressing the root causes of inequality, so that every child has an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential without discrimination. The CP has focused on realizing UNICEF's equity and gender equality agenda across the country, complementing the efforts of the Government to provide equitable access to healthcare, education, social services and justice for disadvantaged children. This is visible in the increased capacity of service providers to meet the needs of children because of UNICEF support. For example, hard-to-reach regions have received UNICEF support for the storage of vaccines and the organization of immunization campaigns. In the field of justice, lawyers have been trained to work with children and to consider child rights and are now better prepared to address the needs of children in contact or in conflict with the law.

The UNICEF CO is strongly committed to the integration of gender equality into its programmes and institutionally, including communication and data collection, planning and the implementation of gender-responsive activities, in line with the needs revealed by the research and data available. The CO conducted a gender review of the current CP with support from ECARO and HQ during the evaluation period. As outlined in this gender review report, UNICEF integrated the gender dimension under Outcomes 2 and 3. Under Outcome 2, the key areas were: the delivery of quality maternal, adolescent health and child health services, including HIV services, neonatal and postnatal care, maternal and child nutrition and gender-responsive home visiting services. Under Outcomes 2 and 3, the aim was to strengthen the gender and equity dimension of access to education through gender-responsive teaching systems, including gender-responsive curriculum, teacher training, gender-responsive EMIS, the Girls and Science project (STEM4Girls) and life skills for girls. Under outcome 3, the key areas for the

⁴⁴(<https://reliefweb.int/report/kyrgyzstan/kyrgyzstan-humanitarian-situation-report-no-1>)

integration of the gender dimension were Peacebuilding and Social Cohesion and Youth- and Child-Friendly Local Governance (YCFLG) and corresponding communications and C4D; addressing GBV including child marriage and bride kidnapping prevention; training of frontline workers: access to justice and amendments to legislation; and positive parenting programme. There was also corresponding communication for development (C4D) attention to gender equality,⁴⁵ with the gender dimension present in all communication messages and materials and communication campaigns to address gender and vulnerability issues such as child marriage and the rights of children with disabilities.

UNICEF supported the development of the national action plan to prevent child marriage, which was endorsed in September 2020 to consolidate and strengthen joint efforts in this area, actively working with UN Women. As part of the Spotlight Initiative, UNICEF is monitoring judicial practice on child marriage cases and developing a C4D roadmap to work in six pilot communities aiming to change social norms in relation to this practice.⁴⁶ UNICEF also supported the development of the National Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030 and National Plan of Action 2021-2023 (approval for both documents is pending as of January 2022) and contributed to an alternative report submitted to the CEDAW Committee⁴⁷ on violations of women's rights in 2019, working closely with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and other UN agencies.⁴⁸

The CO mainstreamed gender into its COVID-19 response programming. The elements included capacity building for Ministry of Labour and Social Development staff on addressing GBV in emergencies, support for the adoption of breastfeeding and complementary feeding recommendations in the context of COVID-19, rapid assessment to measure the impact of COVID-19 on women.⁴⁹ In addition, the STEM4Girls project was swift to adapt all capacity building events to an online format during COVID-19 lockdown, with peer-trainers (around 290 girls) conducting online learning sessions on gender equality, gender stereotypes, GBV, child and forced marriages and sexual harassment, and the opportunities for a career in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), as well as communication and leadership skills.⁵⁰

As pointed out in the Gender Review Report (2020), however, the current CPD lacks clear direction and specific monitoring indicators for the core objective of adolescent girls' empowerment, engagement and participation. There is, therefore, scope to elevate and prioritize this aspect through the better use of monitoring data, and the consolidation of ongoing programmes.⁵¹

3.1.3. To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to changes in national needs and the rights of the beneficiaries (especially the most vulnerable), as well as changes in national priorities during programme implementation?

The implementation of UNICEF's CP contributed to the national strategies that aim to address the needs of vulnerable children in Kyrgyzstan. During programme implementation, UNICEF was an active participant in the development of new strategic policy documents to improve the situation of all children in the country, including those who are the most vulnerable. Using the power of evidence about their situation and advocating for evidence-based policies, UNICEF contributed to relevant national priorities for children rights and well-being. In this way, UNICEF ensured its relevance to changes in both the needs and rights of beneficiaries (especially the most vulnerable) and changes in national priorities.⁵²

⁴⁵Gender Review Report: Kyrgyzstan, Geneva, UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) 2020.

⁴⁶UNICEF Country Office Annual Report 2020.

⁴⁷Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

⁴⁸www.osce.org/programme-office-in-bishkek/440021

⁴⁹Real-Time Assessment of UNICEF's Ongoing Response to COVID-19 in Europe and Central Asia: Phase 1 Round 2 Analytical Report, UNICEF, May 2021.

⁵⁰UNICEF COAR 2020.

⁵¹Gender Review Report: Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF ECARO 2020.

⁵²The answer to the first two evaluation questions assessed UNICEF response to changing needs of children, especially the most vulnerable children, in Kyrgyzstan. The answer to this third question focuses on UNICEF's response to changing priorities in national policies, in connection to the above-mentioned changes in needs.

The systematic and comparative assessment of the CP and national strategies show coherence between UNICEF's country strategies and Kyrgyzstan's national priorities in the areas addressed in the CP (child rights, equity in access to services, quality education, early childhood development and education, social inclusion, protection of rights, conflict prevention, disaster risk reduction (DRR) and access to justice). Building on the previous cycle of the CP implementation of support to the Government, UNICEF aims to improve existing systems for the promotion and protection of child rights. UNICEF is contributing to the strengthening of institutions, supporting the capacities of national stakeholders and mechanisms for the implementation of adopted policies and legislation, and providing further technical support to the drafting of new laws and amendments of existing legislation.

The fact that UNICEF CP responded to Kyrgyzstan's priorities at the national level was confirmed by the authorities interviewed during the evaluation. The interventions of the UNICEF CP are highly valued by national stakeholders as significant contributions to progress on the national priorities reflected in the key national policies and strategies, in particular:

- the National Strategy on Gender (2015–2020)
- the Education Development Strategy (2012–2020)
- the Youth Development Policy (2017–2020)
- the Food Security and Nutrition Strategy (2018–2022)
- the State Programme on Family Support and Child Protection (2017–2027)
- the State Programme on Justice for Children (2014–2018)
- the National Strategy for Comprehensive Safety and Security (2016–2030)⁵³
- the National Programme of Reforming Healthcare 'Den Sooluk' (2012–2018).⁵⁴

The list is not exhaustive⁵⁵ as there are other laws and policies related to healthcare, juvenile justice, education, and social protection that laid the foundation for UNICEF's activities.

UNICEF developed the CP in close consultation with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, development partners and CSOs. This enhanced the ownership of the results that were generated, which was confirmed by the key informants consulted during the evaluation for each CP outcome. The government representatives are positive about UNICEF's support and presence and appreciate UNICEF's potential to attract and share international best practices, knowledge and innovation, and to deliver technical support.

The UNICEF CO takes an active role in supporting the amendment of existing strategic plans and legislation (based on generated evidence from UNICEF reports, studies commissioned by the Government with UNICEF support and the interviews with Government and ministry representatives) to enhance their response to the emerging and changing needs of vulnerable children. In recent years, for example, UNICEF has advocated for and provided technical assistance on the development of the updated version of the Child Code of the Kyrgyz Republic which was adopted by the Parliament on 29 July 2021⁵⁶). The revised version of the Code aims to strengthen the child protection system, ensure the rights of children to social protection, reinforce the role of parents and families in caring for children, and secure more effective guarantees of state protection for migrant children through a stronger legal framework for all children who are vulnerable. Welcoming the adoption of the updated version of the Code, UNICEF's Kyrgyzstan CO noted that: "the new Child Code is the first legal document to ban corporal punishment of children in all settings; strengthens case management for vulnerable children and

⁵³ As indicated in the UNICEF (2017) Country Programme Document for Kyrgyzstan.

⁵⁴ The successor of this programme is the Public Healthcare Programme 'A healthy person - prosperous country' (2019-2030).

⁵⁵ Other national strategies to which the CP is aligned are: the State Programme on Rural Development; the Strategy of Complex Security for Population and Territory of the Kyrgyz Republic in Emergency and Crisis Situations (2016-2030); the Government Programme on Transition to Sustainable Development (2013-2017); State Programme on improving the Perinatal Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic (2008-2017); the State Programme on Safe Schools and Preschool (2015-2024); State Programme on Overcoming of HIV infection (2017-2021); National programme on the state language and language policy (2014-2020), 2020); National Plan on the SDGs Adaptation; and National Report on the Human Rights Situation within the Universal Periodic Review (2015).

⁵⁶ (<http://kenesh.kg/ru/news/show/11799/profilnyiy-komitet-odobril-proekt-kodeksa-o-detyah-vo-vtorom-i-tretyem-chteniyah>)

families and puts in place social services at the local level as key provisions for a solid child protection system".

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan has used every opportunity to embed sustainable and strategic changes in the relevant legislation for the benefit of all children and families in the country. It provided direct support for the development of the National Development Strategy 2018–2040, which is closely aligned with the SDGs. Specific chapters of the strategy are dedicated to human capital development, health, nutrition, education, poverty reduction and child protection, with a specific focus on the most deprived and those left behind. An interdepartmental expert group was established in 2021 to develop a programme of medium-term priorities for the country's development up to 2026.⁵⁷

3.1.4. To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to the shifts caused by crises or major socio-economic and political changes?

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan implemented an integrated approach to prioritizing the well-being of children. As a result, UNICEF maintained its relevance in the context of rapid changes in needs and continued to work to generate impact for all children.

COVID-19 has spread across Central Asia since March 2020 and Kyrgyzstan confirmed its first cases on 18 March that year.⁵⁸ A state of emergency was declared for the entire country on 22 March 2020, with strict lockdown in Bishkek, Osh and other parts of the country that faced the highest infection rates. Non-essential services, mass gatherings, and entertainment were prohibited, schools delivered classes online.

Nevertheless, COVID-19 cases began to increase sharply in June 2020. The healthcare system was unable to respond efficiently: the country faced a severe lack of hospital beds, healthcare workers, personal protective equipment (PPE), medicines, oxygen concentrators, and ventilators. As a result of the lack of PPE, health workers were severely affected, accounting for 26 per cent of all COVID-19 cases.⁵⁹

The scope and diversity of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan's COVID-19 response activities reflect an integrated approach to prioritizing the well-being of children during the pandemic with the delivery of interventions in healthcare, education and social protection. UNICEF has mobilized over US\$7 million to date and has contributed to the Government's COVID-19 response by providing essential supplies to medical personnel working on the frontlines and supporting the overall socio-economic response measures for children and their families.

The UNICEF CO has demonstrated a robust ability to provide analysis and discussion of the risks in relation to COVID-19 in a coherent manner to ensure a range of appropriate actions. Given the lack of government data, the CO emphasized data collection. A number of studies and assessments were conducted and shared in 2020 and 2021: "Assessment of COVID-19 Experience and Perception by Population of Kyrgyzstan" (baseline research drawing on a phone survey)⁶⁰; "Report on the Result of a Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Youth in Kyrgyzstan"⁶¹; an assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and families through a rapid follow-up MICS survey (2020); "Potential implications of the COVID-19 crisis on social assistance for children in the Kyrgyz Republic".⁶² There were also assessments of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) in both schools and health facilities (over 5,000 schools and preschools and 152 healthcare facilities), an assessment of the impact of COVID infection prevention and control in family health centres and their ability to respond to COVID-19 and

⁵⁷ (<http://en.kabar.kg/news/kyrgyzstan-to-change-national-development-strategy-2018-2040-due-to-constitutional-reform/>)

⁵⁸ On 18 March 2020, health officials in Kyrgyzstan confirmed that three individuals tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) after returning from an Umrah pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia.

⁵⁹ *Real-Time Assessment of UNICEF's Ongoing Response to COVID-19 in Europe and Central Asia: Phase 1 Round 2 Analytical Report*, UNICEF, May 2021

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⁶¹ Nuraiym Syrgak Kyzy, Cholpon Nurgalieva, Elnura Kazakbaeva, 'Report on the Result of a Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Youth in Kyrgyzstan', UNICEF 2020

⁶² Timár, Eszter, and Franziska Gassmann *Potential implications of the COVID-19 crisis on social assistance for children in the Kyrgyz Republic*, UNICEF 2020.

continue with routine healthcare services, and a rapid assessment of the capacity of the health system for the continuity of maternal and child health services.⁶³

UNICEF supported the procurement of COVID-19 medication for healthcare facilities, reaching approximately 10,000 people (January-June 2021 report). In 2020, COVID-19 supplies worth over US\$1.85 million were procured for the health sector.⁶⁴ In addition, as part of the overall response plan to COVID-19, UNICEF contributed to government efforts by supporting the national communication campaign 'Sakta' (Protect) to raise awareness about COVID-19 and prevent its further spread. UNICEF provided technical support to the Ministry of Health and Social Development to develop a Communication Plan on Vaccination against COVID-19 (Demand Plan) which was endorsed in February 2021.

UNICEF also provided technical assistance to develop clinical guidelines for the management of COVID-19 among new-borns, children and adolescents. The pandemic accelerated telemedicine reform and implementation, and UNICEF supported home-visiting services for new-borns by using smartphone-based technologies (WhatsApp). Related regulations were adopted to allow the inclusion of telemedicine in primary health care.

In education, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) to reach more than 1.4 million preschool and school-aged children with remote learning in 2020. UNICEF supported the development of an online platform to enable educational support workers to identify and support vulnerable children during lockdown to address their psychosocial needs and an online portal doe all video lessons prepared by development partners. As reported by UNICEF, 376 educational support workers were trained, along with 18 specialists, who guided educational support workers from district education departments to support children at risk. Approximately 11,616 children aged 7-14 (6,963 girls and 4,653 boys) were provided with phone counselling by these trained educational support workers.

In social protection, the Humanitarian Cash Transfer (HCT) initiative was piloted with the Red Crescent Society of Kyrgyzstan in disadvantaged remote rural villages in Jalal-Abad, Batken and Naryn provinces, prone to natural disasters and affected by COVID-19, to demonstrate how the Government of Kyrgyzstan can expand the ability of the social protection system to respond to shocks. In total, 160 families with children received 4,000 KGS (approx. US\$47) per child, in line with the minimum subsistence level for one child set by the National Statistics Committee.

The UNICEF CO implemented cross-sectoral cooperation approaches in response to the COVID-19 crisis. However, the relevance and effectiveness of all cooperation initiatives have been limited by ineffective response coordination by the government, as well as limited government coordination of international partners' response efforts to the COVID-19 crisis.⁶⁵

In this context, UNICEF played a vital role in coordination with development partners and UN agencies in the country. UNICEF chaired the education and social protection working groups within the Development Partners' Coordination Council in Kyrgyzstan and remained an active partner in the health working group. UNICEF also played a leading role in Education, Protection, Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) sectors within the Disaster Response Coordination Unit⁶⁶ (DRCU working between 2008-2020), the humanitarian platform chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator. In addition, UNICEF led the supply and procurement sub-group of the Health Sector Group and chaired the UN Crisis Communication Group, coordinating work on Risk Communication and Community Engagement with a larger group of partners.⁶⁷

⁶³ *Real-Time Assessment of UNICEF's Ongoing Response to COVID-19 in Europe and Central Asia: Phase 1 Round 2 Analytical Report*, UNICEF, May 2021.

⁶⁴ UNICEF Country Office Annual Report (COAR) 2020.

⁶⁵ *Real-Time Assessment of UNICEF's Ongoing Response to COVID-19 in Europe and Central Asia: Phase 1 Round 2 Analytical Report*, UNICEF, May 2021.

⁶⁶ The DRCU is no longer active at the country level. The Republican 'Schartab' convened by the Vice-Chairperson of the Cabinet of Ministers meets daily and provides updates to media partners and development partners.

⁶⁷ UNICEF COAR 2020.

As indicated in the Country Office Annual Report (COAR) 2020, 86 per cent of children living in residential institutions returned to their families during lockdown. This could be seen as a unique opportunity for UNICEF to advance de-institutionalization reform Kyrgyzstan. UNICEF assessed the situation of children who had returned home, which demonstrated that families are willing to care for their children at home if adequate community-based family support is provided. The findings informed ongoing advocacy efforts for childcare system reform and family support to prevent re-institutionalization.⁶⁸

3.2. Coherence

3.2.1. To what extent has UNICEF's Country Programme kept true to its mandate and aligned with UNICEF's global and regional strategies as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDCF) and the SDGs in any given country?

UNICEF's programme interventions in Kyrgyzstan are in direct alignment with UNICEF's regional and global priorities, including the UNICEF Strategic Plan (2018-2021), the Global SDG indicators, UNICEF's Gender Action Plan and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

All stakeholders interviewed identify a direct link between UNICEF work and global priorities and goals, according to their interest fields. Strategically, the CP was designed to align with the SDGs' principle of "leaving no one behind" and has remained coherent with evolving global priorities in relation to the rights of children and adolescents. The CP contributes to 10 out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 1 (No Poverty); 3 (Good Health and Well-being); 4 (Quality Education); 5 (Gender Equality); 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation); 10 (Reduced Inequalities); 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities); 13 (Climate Action); 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions); and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

The CP contributes to all four outcomes of the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the Kyrgyz Republic 2018–2022:

- Outcome I: Sustainable and inclusive economic growth, industrial, rural and agricultural development, food security and nutrition
- Outcome II: Good Governance, rule of law, human rights and gender equality
- Outcome III: Environment, climate change, and disaster risk management
- Outcome IV: Social sector development (social protection, health and education).

The CP 2018-2022 has also been aligned to, and has contributed to, the achievement of UNICEF's global and regional agenda, i.e., to all five goal areas of the Strategic Plan (SP) 2018-2021.⁶⁹ The CP also implemented sector-specific initiatives that contributed to priority plans, including the Peace Building Priority Plan 2017-2020 through cross-border and civil engagement projects.

UNICEF is also supporting the Government in the monitoring and implementation of global priorities and goals included in the national policies. UNICEF supported the MICS, providing data for 31 of the 80 global indicators currently available in the country. UNICEF also enhanced the availability of data on SDG indicators through its support for the statistical compendium "Monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in the Kyrgyz Republic" which presents progress for all the available SDG indicators.⁷⁰

The Voluntary National Review report to the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development was developed in 2019-2020. This was a good opportunity to "relate to children and further advocate

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 Goal Areas: Goal Area 1 - Every child survives and thrives; Goal Area 2 - Every child learns; Goal Area 3 - Every child protected from violence and exploitation; Goal Area 4 - Every child lives in a safe and clean environment; Goal Area 5 - Every child has an equitable chance in life.

⁷⁰ <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/reports/monitoring-sustainable-development-goal-indicators-kyrgyz-republic-2014-2018>

for advancing the child rights agenda”⁷¹ and emphasized the need for improved data, particularly on vulnerable children.

3.2.2. To what extent did UNICEF manage to build effective and sustainable partnerships in working towards addressing the predefined bottlenecks, advocating for evidence for equity and contributing to the results at scale?

UNICEF maintained a strong partnership with the Government of Kyrgyzstan throughout a period of significant political, constitutional, and institutional changes – a partnership that represents a precondition for UNICEF relevance and impact. UNICEF collaborates with local authorities and CSOs on the implementation of projects and the delivery of services at community level. The results of local-level projects are used in advocacy to promote national scale-up, in partnership with UN agencies, other development partners, academia and the civil society. Overall, UNICEF’s partnership network forms a strong community, with UNICEF facilitating dialogue among different partners and stakeholders across different sectors. UNICEF has been described by stakeholders who were part of the evaluation process as always being open to cooperation, always responsive to emerging needs, and as proactive in seeking opportunities for collaboration.

The UNICEF CO works with a range of different partners to drive change for children and their families in Kyrgyzstan. The primary benefits of collaboration with partners are two-fold: to reach target groups and decision-makers and to share and receive key information. This cooperation is well organized and appreciated by all partners and, as presented in the sections of this evaluation dedicated to the impact, partnership with many stakeholders represents a strategy that has allowed UNICEF to produce satisfactory results and impact for children in the country. The UNICEF CO has implemented the CP in close partnerships with the relevant ministries, State agencies and other State bodies at national and sub-national levels, in collaboration with other UN agencies, independent bodies, CSOs and the private sector (e.g., in relation to procurement, media).

The strong partnership of the CO with the Government of Kyrgyzstan has been maintained throughout the implementation of the current CP, despite significant political and institutional changes in the country. UNICEF works at central level with the Cabinet of Ministers⁷² (the successor to the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic since 2021) and at the lower level with the local self-government bodies through implemented projects and initiatives. The reviewed documentation and interviews conducted with ministry representatives provide compelling evidence of this cooperation.

According to the data gathered through a survey of UNICEF CO staff, the main institutions with whom the CO collaborates are governmental bodies, NGOs and national public agencies/institutes/centres. As Figure 3 shows, the respondents noted that the partnerships between UNICEF and governmental bodies account for the largest single share of such connections (40 per cent), followed by collaborations with national public agencies/institutes/centres (29 per cent). Institutions of higher education are also important partners for the CO (10 per cent), as well as UN agencies and other international organizations (8 per cent).⁷³

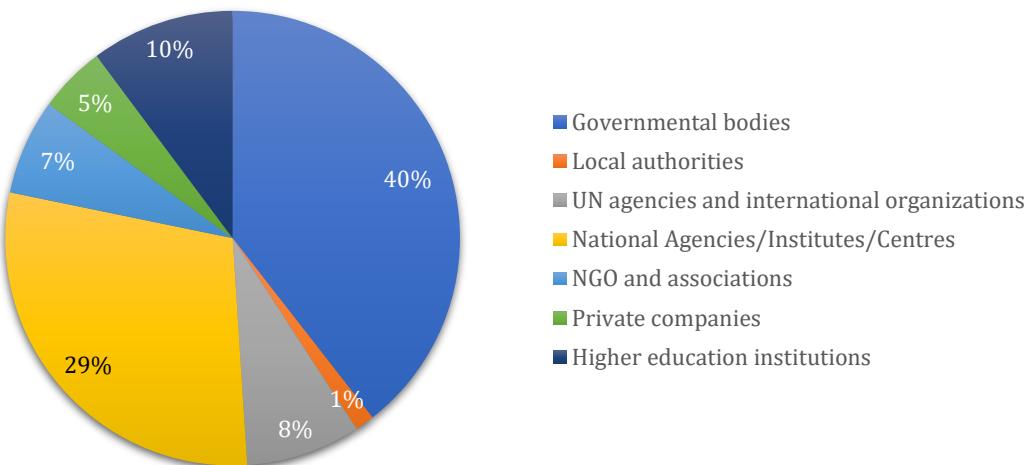
This broad range of partners covers all CP outcomes, as well as all UNDAF outcomes. While partnerships with local authorities appear to account for a small share, according to UNICEF CO staff (with only two respondents mentioning that they collaborate with local authorities), the interviews augmented this picture and emphasized the importance of cooperation at local level, especially under Outcomes 2 and 3 of the CP.

⁷¹ UNICEF COAR 2020.

⁷² In accordance with the new Constitution coming into force, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic is considered to have resigned. The Cabinet of Ministers was formed in May 2021.

⁷³ Percentages are calculated based on the answers from CO staff regarding the most important partners they work with, reported to the total number of mentioned partners.

Figure 3. Type of institutions/organizations indicated as important partners by Kyrgyzstan Country Office respondents



Source: Data collected through a survey conducted at the level of UNICEF CO Kyrgyzstan

The collected data find that the UNICEF CO staff had established the most connections with the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Health and Social Development. Further, the respondents also mentioned their cooperation with the Republican Centre for Health Promotion and the Centre of Immuno-prophylaxis and the Kyrgyz Academy of Education. Regarding the frequency of communication, the data show that the most frequent contacts have been established with academic institutions. In the case of the few CO staff members who work on activities with local authorities, there are frequent and important meetings and exchanges of information.

The stakeholder analysis shows, therefore, that the most important stakeholders for the UNICEF CO in Kyrgyzstan are the public institutions: either those close to the centre of government (Ministries) or oriented through service provisions (e.g., agencies). They have a significant influence on the work of UNICEF, as shown by the Social Network Analysis, and a high interest in benefiting from UNICEF's input. Among these public institutions, the stakeholders with the greatest influence and interest are found in the areas of health and education.

There is a good balance in the partnerships with public institutions. For example, UNICEF advocates to the ministries and adapts its messages to changes in both the national needs of children and national policy priorities. It also can shape these priorities by providing data, research results and technical assistance. Technical and material assistance is also provided to public service providers (agencies, etc.) and UNICEF's contribution to institutional strengthening is consolidating the relationship between the CO and each institution. In most cases, UNICEF works with other UN Agencies and development partners to promote institutional development and policies for human and child rights and children's access to services.

Stakeholders in the areas of child protection, justice and finance have less influence on or interest in UNICEF activities. UNICEF is, however, highly interested in developing partnerships with these stakeholders and cooperation has sometimes generated superior results. For example, cooperation in the field of justice generated increased capacity to address the needs of children in contact and in conflict with the law through the training of lawyers. Similarly, cooperation around finance has contributed to increased competences for budgeting related to early education.

The Ministry of Health and Social Development has had the greatest influence on UNICEF activities in Kyrgyzstan. This influence relates to its relevance for UNICEF's mission and its coverage of two areas that represent essential elements of UNICEF's CP.⁷⁴ The Ministry of Education and Science also has a considerable influence on UNICEF's activities in Kyrgyzstan. Cooperation with these Ministries ensures the alignment of UNICEF's work to national policy priorities, as observed in the section on relevance.

⁷⁴ The institution has the highest betweenness centrality coefficient (0.37). Betweenness centrality quantifies the number of times a node acts as a bridge along the shortest path between two other nodes. In this case the institutions prove to be important in generating UNICEF and other stakeholders capacity to communicate and work together, acting as a connection point.

The strengthening of key government agencies is the UNICEF CO's main and ongoing approach to partnership across all three CP Outcomes. For example, UNICEF has supported the Ministry of Education and Science on the provision of technical assistance in drafting the Program for the Development of Education in the Kyrgyz Republic for 2021-2040 and the Plan of Actions 2021 – 2023 (approved by the Decree of the Government of KR on 4 May 2021, No 200); on the development of new National ECD Standards, approved by the Prime Minister in June 2020⁷⁵; the development of electronic management systems; the piloting of multilingual and multicultural education in the regions, community-based kindergartens and municipal library-based Child Development Centres; the development of a school-based disaster risk reduction methodology; the development of the Anti-Crisis Plan for the Education Sector in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and so on.

Cooperation with the responsible authorities in the health sector generated results. For example, the Food Security and Nutrition Programme for 2019-2023⁷⁶ was approved with technical support from UNICEF that involved authorities from both the health and agriculture sectors, and UNICEF also contributed to the draft Law on Telemedicine Services (pending approval). In addition, the UNICEF CO has enhanced the quality of maternal and child health services and the capacity of health care workers in various areas, including the response to COVID-19 through the review and update of mass procurement of protective equipment (PPE), clinical management equipment, diagnostics, infection prevention and control supplies and essential medicines.

Support from UNICEF and other development partners for the Ministry of Justice has delivered the following results: the institutionalization of child-friendly and free legal aid; the development of the new State Programme on Justice for Children 2020-2030 with UNICEF's technical assistance; and the drafting of a comprehensive set of amendments to the Children's Code, the Criminal Procedure Code and other legislative documents.

UNICEF works extensively with the Ministry of Emergency Situations to ease the impact of natural and human-made disasters and crisis situations on children and enhance the impact of humanitarian assistance. Kyrgyzstan's Disaster Risk Analysis methodology was developed with technical assistance from UNICEF, a nationwide safety assessment of schools and preschool education facilities was conducted, and humanitarian supplies were provided during emergencies, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

UN agencies and other international organizations and development partners, as well as CSOs are also important, interested and influential partners, but their contribution to the programme implementation is smaller than that of the partnership with Kyrgyzstan's public institutions. However, development partners, including country development programmes (particularly the programmes of the Governments of Japan, UK, US and of the European Union) are important donors for UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan.

UNICEF collaborates very well with other UN agencies and institutional partners in the country to implement projects in various areas (e.g., child protection, youth participation and civic engagement, adolescent health and child marriage, peacebuilding and conflict prevention) and to conduct advocacy and communication campaigns. Examples of close alignment within the UN include cooperation with UNDP, UN Women and UNFPA on the implementation of peacebuilding, youth empowerment and gender initiatives in the remote border regions and/or areas prone to conflicts.⁷⁷ The CO collaborates with international partners, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), World Bank and OSCE to conduct research and to advocate with the Government. This includes, for example collaboration with the World Bank on evidence generation (including evidence related to the COVID-19 pandemic), supply procurement, the development of strategic documents⁷⁸ and strengthening the capacity of the National Statistics Committee (NSC). UNICEF has also cooperated closely with World Bank on strategic

⁷⁵ Decree of the Government dated June 29, 2020 No. 363 On approval of the State educational standard of the Kyrgyz Republic "Preschool education and childcare", the previous standard was approved in 2012 (no longer valid).

⁷⁶ Approved by the Government on 27 June 2019 (Decree № 320).

⁷⁷ For example: the projects 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's Youth Cohesion and Interaction towards Uzbekistan' 2018-2020, and 'Communities Resilient to Violent Ideologies' 2018-2021.

⁷⁸ UNICEF partnered with the World Bank to review and finalize the Education Sector Strategy 2021-2040.

documents in the field of education and with OSCE and other UN agencies on the girls' and women's rights through strategic planning and monitoring of the implementation of these strategic plans.

Kyrgyzstan has a vibrant civil society, with CSOs that are eligible for partnership with UNICEF. As a result, UNICEF collaborates with a variety of local CSOs on a range of topics. This collaboration has been seen as critically important by these stakeholders at the grassroots level. In total, UNICEF Kyrgyzstan has worked with at least 29 CSOs as implementing partners during the CP 2018-2022 period (including collaborations during the pandemic).⁷⁹ All work with NGO partners is aligned with the key guiding principles for UNICEF partnerships with CSOs and other actors.⁸⁰ UNICEF implements advocacy activities in cooperation with a number of CSOs, but the number and diversity of approaches could be improved, according to some of the collected opinions. The interviews and consulted documents show, for example, that UNICEF is rarely supporting advocacy by other players to multiply their efforts and child protection. Support for advocacy of CSOs could be beneficial for UNICEF and for vulnerable children in Kyrgyzstan, as it can support the multiplication of effects of the work of each organisation.

In all, UNICEF has worked with 38 partners during its 2018-2022 CP, with 35 of these being local organizations and only three of them international organizations. These implementing partners have contributed to all outputs of the CP, supported by a budget of US\$6 million – a reflection of UNICEF's focus on its civil society partnerships. However, extending the collaboration with CSOs beyond the current circle of implementing partners could strengthen UNICEF's capacity to reach vulnerable children and achieve results for them, especially in the context of the country's changing political, institutional and social context.

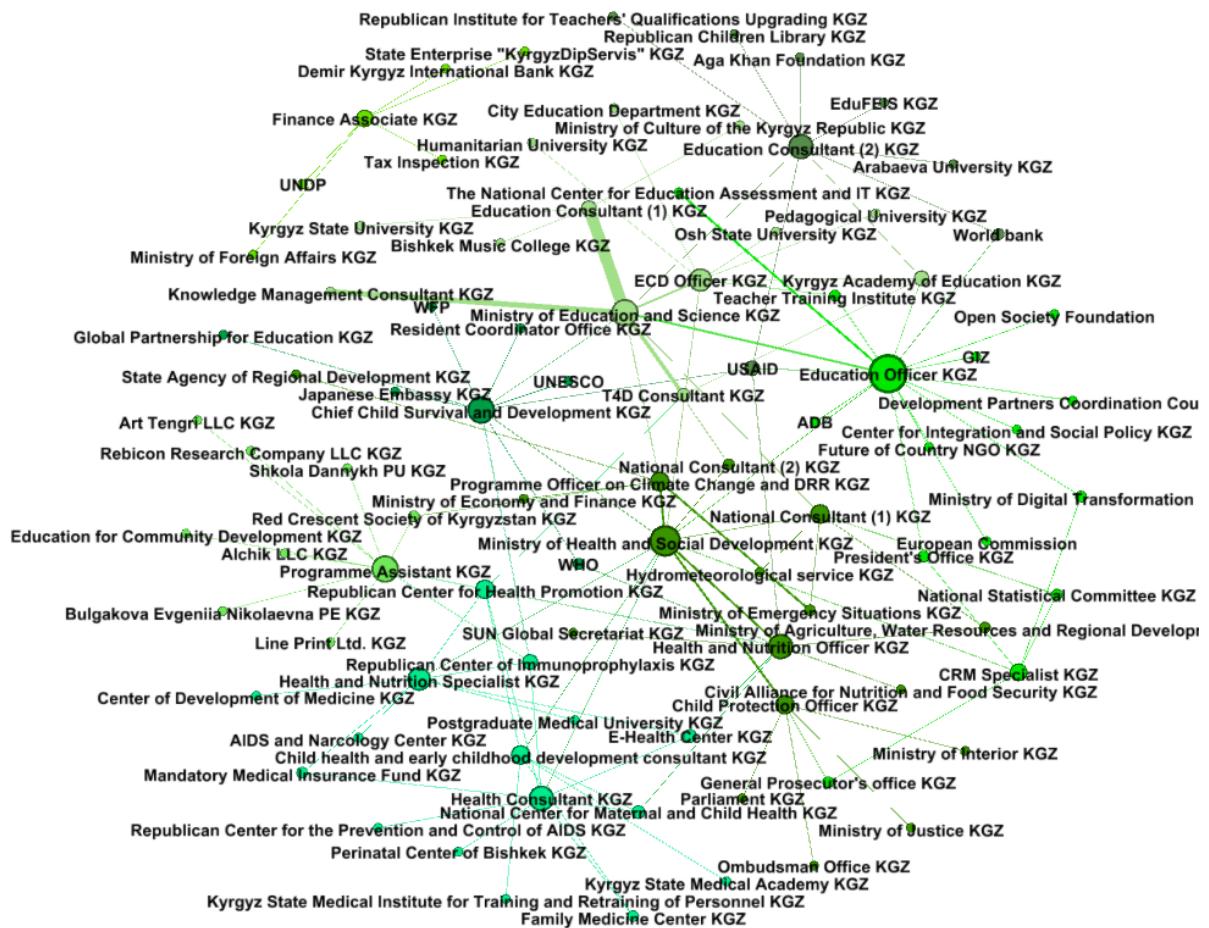
The evaluation notes that more could have been done to create systems to address the multidimensional needs of children by connecting social protection, healthcare, education, justice/law enforcement, civil society and other sectors in strengthening the response to the emerging needs of children. Although the UNDAF should provide the framework for the strategic and systemic cooperation of UN agencies, in practice we found that UNDAF implementation is subject to work divisions and that cooperation and partnerships are project-based rather than programme-based. Therefore, a more strategic approach to partnerships is needed, particularly with other UN agencies.

Regarding the characteristics of the overall partnership network developed by the UNICEF CO, the data analysis shows the existence of a strong community, with various connections between actors in different clusters formed around the CO's departments or its specialists and experts. In other words, experts in one area can easily access partners in another area and the partnership network of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan facilitates cross-sectoral work.

⁷⁹ UNICEF COAR 2020

⁸⁰ (https://sites.unicef.org/about/partnerships/index_60074.html).

Figure 4. Social Network of UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan



Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan

3.2.3. What are the comparative advantages of UNICEF in relation to other actors in the country, including development partners, the private sector and the non-government sector, and to what extent were they necessary and sufficient for contributing to the results at scale to be achieved?

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan used its comparative advantages related to (a) its normative and well-recognized role to uphold the rights of all children, (b) its technical competencies and capacity to provide all partners with relevant data, (c) its capacity to convene partners, (d) its leadership in communication, community engagement and advocacy for children rights, and (e) its dedication and adaptability to changing needs. These advantages are vital for UNICEF's work to achieve its envisaged short-, medium- and long-term results for children in the country. However, as described in the section of this report dedicated to impact, these advantages are not always sufficient to generate impact.

Many comparative advantages of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan have been identified during the field work. The stakeholders could clearly distinguish the added value and advantages of UNICEF compared to other actors in the sphere of child rights. Stakeholders recognize the reputation, mandate and normative role of UNICEF in upholding the rights of all children. The government, CSO and development partners that were consulted recognize UNICEF's distinct strengths, including its convening power, advocacy capability, and its presence at the local level through implemented initiatives and pilots. UNICEF is seen as a reputable partner with solid technical expertise that provides leadership and coordination, with interventions undertaken jointly with government officials and partners at diverse levels.

Government representatives perceived UNICEF to be the most dependable partner in terms of technical capacity and delivering assistance, evidence generation, and ability to adapt to the unexpected needs of

its partners. As a result of its clear mandate and its precise target group, UNICEF is the first source to appeal on behalf of children when there is a need for this.

One comparative advantage of UNICEF is the technical assistance provided extensively by the CO across all spheres of the CP to the relevant ministries and working groups at various levels. Whenever possible, UNICEF mobilizes local experts, benefiting the Government and expanding its pool of expertise. However, international experts are contracted when needed. National-level strategic documents have been developed because of this approach to cooperation with the technical support of UNICEF. These include: the updated version of the Child's Code; the Food Security and Nutrition Programme for 2019-2023; the new Education Sector Strategy 2021-2040; and the new State Programme on Justice for Children 2020-2030.

CSOs and implementing partners consider UNICEF to be a strategic partner. As noted, UNICEF works with CSOs at the local and national level, adopting a strategy based on the modelling and testing of innovative solutions (e.g., the model of Child Development Centres within existing municipal libraries, youth and child-friendly local governance, and the UPSHIFT approach in peacebuilding and civic engagement). Relevant Ministries have capitalised on these model initiatives, which support progress on policy implementation in the areas such as healthcare, child protection, ECD, and youth empowerment. Models were scaled to national policy in 2020 and in 2021 in new adopted legislation and strategies (e.g., in the case of early childhood education).

As confirmed by the partners interviewed for this evaluation, UNICEF has a clear comparative advantage over other key players in terms of its expertise, technical resourcefulness, and its ability to adapt to changing environments (e.g., the implementation of measures in response to COVID-19). Partners stressed that UNICEF is less bureaucratic than other UN bodies or institutions/donors or tries to ease the burden of administrative and financial procedures to interact effectively with its partners.

Other UN agencies and institutional partners also recognize the comparative advantage of UNICEF's mandate to uphold the rights of children. They also emphasize the importance of UNICEF's reputation in the country, supporting its communication and its community engagement capacity. In practice these comparative advantages are visible in the initiatives implemented by UNICEF in partnership with other UN agencies, where UNICEF leads communication and community engagement activities.

Interviewees, including partners at national level and CSO representatives, have complimented the CO for its technical competence, dedication, flexibility and responsiveness to the emerging needs of partners.⁸¹

Given the complex national situation in Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF's comparative advantages are seen as essential for results for children in this country. Interviews and previous evaluations of UNICEF activities show how its comparative advantages have been used in different contexts to generate the expected results and this evaluation report presents only a selection of examples. The evaluation of coherence and impact shows that these comparative advantages can be sufficient to generate impact, and the CO has often used them well. In other areas, however, external factors, as well as the need for long-term interventions are limiting their impact, as shown in the section on impact.

3.2.4. How has UNICEF's approach to strategic partnerships changed over time?

There have been no significant changes to strategic partnerships during the implementation of the CP 2018-2022. While the number of UNICEF's implementing partners in Kyrgyzstan has increased since 2018, the type of partners and UNICEF's relationships with them have not changed. We find that UNICEF is highly effective in mobilizing diverse partners for its advocacy. However, UNICEF does not seem to use every opportunity to support and amplify the advocacy of other players that have the same goals.

The evaluation did not gather any documented evidence about major changes or amendments to the partnership approach during the implementation of the CP 2018-2022. UNICEF strengthened its work

⁸¹ As an example of its responsiveness, UNICEF supported the Government of Kyrgyzstan in a humanitarian mission to repatriate 79 Kyrgyzstani children from Iraq in 2021.

with local authorities, especially in the framework of the Youth and Child Friendly Local Government Initiative, but this approach to partnership was planned since 2017. While UNICEF's institutional partners changed because of changes within those institutions, UNICEF's partnership approach remained relevant because it was already working with a broad range of partners that also adapted their approaches to the changing needs of children and the COVID-19 crisis.

As noted in the previous section, UNICEF works closely with a broad range of stakeholders, there is ongoing quality communication, and the UNICEF CO is seen as being open to the discussion of partnership challenges and responsive to any concerns raised. However, there have been changes in terms of the continuity of the UNICEF CO's work with implementing partners from civil society. Out of 63 implementing partners in the period 2014-2021, 17 implementing partners had contractual relationships with UNICEF in both the previous and current CP, while 20 implementing partners did not have contracts with UNICEF prior to the CP 2018-2020. Almost half of these (nine in all) were first contracted as implementing partners in 2020 and 2021. These diverse organizations contribute to five outputs of the CP: two related to the COVID-19 response, and the others related to the strengthening of the health system, communication for development, and peacebuilding and social cohesion. However, as noted in the previous section, extending the collaboration with CSOs beyond the immediate circle of implementing partners could further strengthen UNICEF's capacity to reach vulnerable children and achieve results for them.

The evaluation team also observed that UNICEF appears to have concentrated its advocacy on the de-institutionalization process, focusing on advocacy for the new Child Code. There have been other players in this area in recent years, including EU-funded projects⁸², that have piloted the transformation of long-term childcare institutions and developed cross-sectoral and community-based family support services.

UNICEF has focused primarily on service development for the prevention of institutionalization. There is still a shortage of qualified social service workforce at community level – a challenge that may be addressed by the new Child Code, which aims to develop this workforce. Meanwhile, it is the opinion of the evaluators that UNICEF could, in general, make more use of opportunities to support advocacy by other players to multiply their efforts and child protection is just one example of an area where this could be beneficial for UNICEF and for vulnerable children in Kyrgyzstan.

3.3. Impact

3.3.1. Did UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribute to the results at-scale? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan has contributed to results at-scale for children, achieving many of its expected results under all planned Outcomes of the CP. The key strategies to generate impact have been evidence-based advocacy supported by partners, technical assistance provided to ministries and other central institutions, and the successful scale-up of some initiatives implemented initially at community level (for example, in the field of early childhood education). The mechanisms that have contributed to UNICEF's success confirm some assumptions of the ToC. However, bottlenecks and emerging risks have imposed limits on UNICEF's impact. Most of these have been anticipated and activities to cope with them have been implemented, but these activities have been only partly effective.

The Situational Analysis (SitAn) to support the development of the future Country Programme was conducted in 2021. This impact assessment is informed by the findings and conclusions of the SitAn and other available data and information.

⁸² Two projects have been implemented with the support of EU funds: technical support to the government and the support for reintegration of children returning from Middle East conflict areas.

3.3.1.1. Evaluation of UNICEF impact under each Outcome of the Country Programme

Positive changes regarding the development of Child Rights Based Mechanisms for Decision-Making (Outcome 1)

Satisfactory results have been achieved in the way public institutions in Kyrgyzstan collect and access data about children, particularly those who are the most vulnerable, affected by multidimensional poverty. As a result of joint advocacy with development partners and technical assistance efforts from UN agencies, SDG indicators are included in the monitoring of the National Development Program 2018-2022, "Unity, Trust, Creation", and the monitoring plans of key state programmes and strategies. The monitoring of SDG indicators is conducted by the Government, with technical assistance from UNICEF, which has supported the NSC on the compilation of a statistical compendium on "Monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals Indicators in the Kyrgyz Republic".⁸³ The Kyrgyzstan Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) was carried out in 2018 and published in 2019 by the National Statistical Committee of Kyrgyz Republic as part of the Global MICS Programme. Technical support was provided by UNICEF with government funding and financial support of UNICEF, USAID and UNFPA.⁸⁴ MICS is a major national households survey that helps measure many of the SDG targets and gives up-dated and comparable data on children's situation and well-being. Due to its methodology the study allows comparisons between countries and policy planning based on international standards. As reported by UNICEF, the introduction of the National Multidimensional Poverty Measurement in 2019, because of UNICEF technical assistance and advocacy, has made it possible to gather better data and evidence on children to support the development of specific policies. The routine measurement of monetary child poverty is now complemented by an assessment of deprivations in health, education, living conditions, social inclusion, and protection.⁸⁵ UNICEF has supported key government officials in the equity-based analysis of several data sources on maternal and child health, nutrition, and immunization, using the Equitable Impact Sensitive Tool (EQUIST).⁸⁶

As mentioned above, since 2020 UNICEF supported the Government and other stakeholders in the country in their response to COVID-19 pandemic by providing data on the immediate effects of the pandemic on children and their families. A number of studies and assessments were conducted and shared in 2020 and 2021: "Assessment of COVID-19 Experience and Perception by Population of Kyrgyzstan" (baseline research drawing on a phone survey)⁸⁷; "Report on the Result of a Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Youth in Kyrgyzstan"⁸⁸; an assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and families through a rapid follow-up MICS survey (2020); "Potential implications of the COVID-19 crisis on social assistance for children in the Kyrgyz Republic".⁸⁹

In response to the country's challenging track record on gender, a new National Gender Equality Strategy 2021-2030 was developed. UNICEF supported the Government in the strategic planning process, together with agencies and development partners.

A programme to train national and local relevant staff on better budgeting for children (especially for ECD/ECE) is being implemented. There is a large body of evidence from UNICEF, UNDP, World Bank (presented in their reports) and other development partners on the need to improve public financing, yet the response from the government is not yet sufficient to kick-off the reforms that are required.⁹⁰

On the other hand, the collected evidence, including, the case study conducted on UNICEF's impact on social protection, as well as interviews and the workshops with the CO representatives and staff show that social work is not effective enough in the country, social workers are not present enough, trained

⁸³ Monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goal Indicators in the Kyrgyz Republic, National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek, 2020.

⁸⁴ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2018 (www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/reports/multiple-indicator-cluster-survey-mics-situation-children-and-women-kyrgyzstan).

⁸⁵ UNICEF COAR 2020

⁸⁶ Ibid.

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⁸⁸ Nuraiym Syrgak Kyzy, Cholpon Nurgalieva, Elnura Kazakbaeva, 'Report on the Result of a Survey on the Impact of COVID-19 on Youth in Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF 2020

⁸⁹ Timár, Eszter, and Franziska Gassmann Potential implications of the COVID-19 crisis on social assistance for children in the Kyrgyz Republic, UNICEF 2020.

⁹⁰ The assessment of UNICEF impact and contribution on Adolescent development and participation (ADAP) is the subject of a separate section presented below and in detail in Annex 2.

and recognised as a central actor for social inclusion and child protection, although all stakeholders interviewed supported them in this role. Moreover, they have a limited role in providing social protection when needed.

In the area of social protection, UNICEF advocated for the improvement of the system, considering the needs of children living in poverty. The case study below shows limited progress in 2019-2021, despite the advocacy efforts of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan since 2017 to improve both the coverage and amount of poverty-targeted social benefits for children, and to promote universal (or close to universal) social assistance/social aid support for all children.

It seems that the country's concentration on constant economic development and growth in the country (prior to the COVID-19 pandemic), as underlined by the World Bank⁹¹, distracted decision-makers and international financial institutions from the needs of the most vulnerable families and children. Even before the pandemic, poor children and their families did not receive the same attention from the government as people with disabilities, pensioners and merit-based recipients of subsidies, all of whom were well represented by interest and lobby groups in the government, Parliament and civil society. Our general finding is, however, that strategic engagement with the World Bank on social benefits during the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the impact observed in 2020 and could lead to future progress.

Case study on extended social benefits for children in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

The assessment of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan's contribution to social protection is based on the theory of change (ToC) re-constructed by the evaluation team in consultation with the UNICEF CO. A theory-based impact evaluation requires the evaluator to identify the impact to be studied and to assess the processes and/or contributions and/or mechanisms that generate the impact. In the case of social protection, we identified a 7 per cent increase in the coverage of the Social Assistance Programme (SAP) for children in 2020, with an additional 25,329 children enrolled in the programme.

The evidence collected for this evaluation shows that a minor reform of social benefits in Kyrgyzstan was implemented in 2020. This finding is based on UNICEF reports, the World Bank reports and on interviews with World Bank representatives and other stakeholders, including representatives of the Government. The same sources show that the social benefits reform has been difficult because of two main challenges.

- Institutional and leadership instability and a lack of consistent political will, which means that decisions have been made that are not evidence-based or that are now obsolete because of the change of decision makers
- Disagreement among development partners and international financial institutions. UNICEF has advocated for (near to) universal social protection benefits for children and families. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, however, have warned about the lack of fiscal sustainability of the social policy proposals, while UN Women has advocated for different social protection measures that will also promote women's employment to advance gender equality.

The National Development Strategy (NDS) 2018-2040, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, acknowledges the need for a more inclusive social protection system. In 2019, the country's development partners agreed that "the current demographic window [in Kyrgyzstan] can be seen as an opportunity to invest in the youngest generation's human capital development and boost their long-term productivity. In such a context, social protection is a key strategic tool in further decreasing poverty and securing the Kyrgyz Republic on a path of inclusive socio-economic development."⁹²

⁹¹ World Bank, World Development Indicators Database, 2018 (<https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>).

⁹² UNICEF 2020, *Position paper on targeting options for social assistance programme for poor families with children*, <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/media/6666/file/Position%20paper%20on%20targeting%20options%20for%20social%20assistance%20programme%20.pdf>

Evidence shows that the Government of Kyrgyzstan agreed to reform the social benefit coverage in 2020, to a limited extent,⁹³ as a result of joint advocacy efforts by these development partners, together with the influence of other countries in the region.⁹⁴ When formulating options for the reform of social benefits, decision-makers could have been informed by the institutionalization of a multidimensional measurement of poverty, taking into account monetary and material deprivation and the lack of (or limited access to) services.⁹⁵

In 2021, all existing data showed that the COVID-19 pandemic could double Kyrgyzstan's poverty rate and generate a profound social and economic crisis. According to the World Bank-UNICEF study conducted in May 2020, the socio-economic impact of the pandemic could affect children disproportionately, increasing the number of children living in poverty by between 160,000 and 570,000. This study informed advocacy for improved social protection coverage for children. The paper commissioned by UNICEF on the implications of this increase in poverty on social assistance for children showed that the means-test used at present is not appropriate for the response to poverty generated by the COVID-19 crisis, because the "asset filters do not respond to transient poverty: households who have lost their source of income may still have assets they purchased before the crisis."⁹⁶ Four policy options have been presented to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development: Option 1, which maintains the status quo; Option 2, which eliminates the means-test; and two options that promote different thresholds for eligibility for the social protection benefit – with the means-test (Option 3) and without the means-test (Option 4).

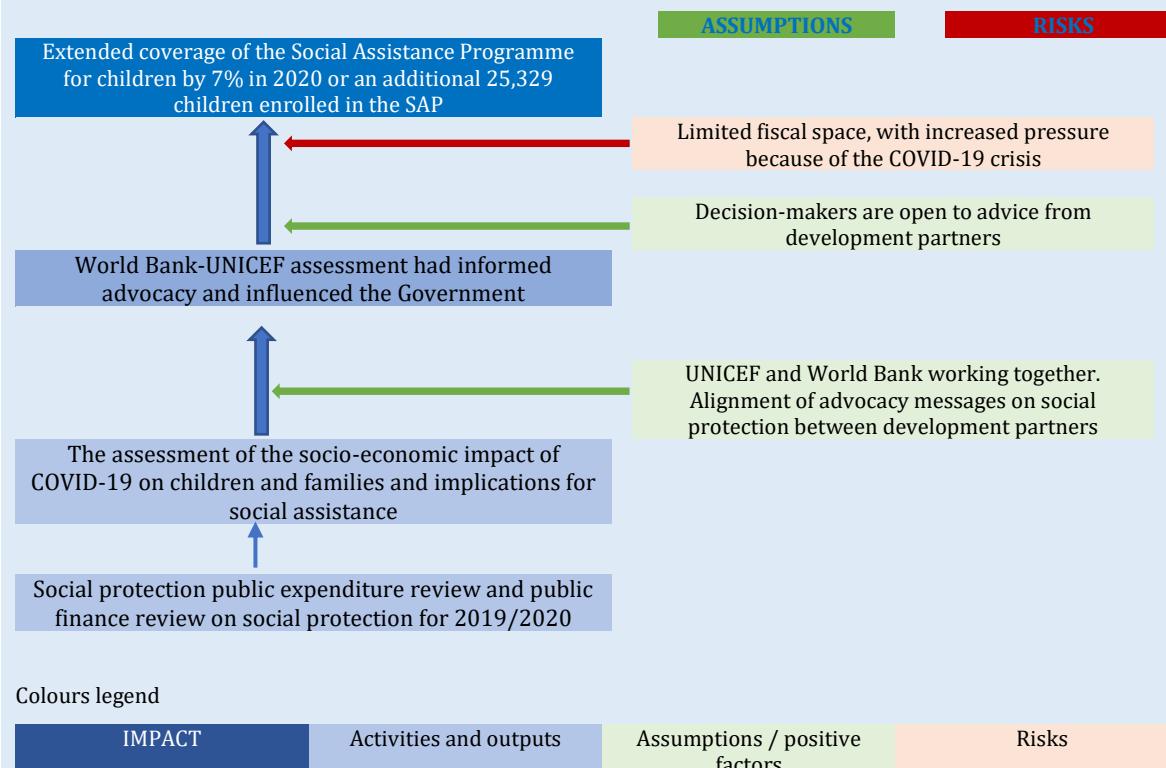
⁹³ The planned reform initially included: introducing a universal birth grant and adjusting the means-test that determines eligibility to strengthen the performance of the social assistance system according to the *Position paper on targeting options for social assistance programme for poor families with children*, 2020 (paper produced with UNICEF support).

⁹⁴ One key informant interviewed mentioned that the example of the Russian Federation represented a key factor in determining the decision of some decision-makers.

⁹⁵ As reported by UNICEF, better data and evidence on children have been achieved in two steps: (a) the institutionalization of National Multidimensional Poverty Measurement in 2019, because of UNICEF technical assistance and advocacy and (b) the introduction by the National Statistics Committee (NSC), with UNICEF's support, of the Multidimensional Child Poverty Index (child well-being index). Routine measurement of monetary child poverty is now complemented by an assessment of deprivations in health, education, living conditions, social inclusion, and protection.

⁹⁶ Timár and Gassmann, *Potential implications of the COVID-19 crisis on social assistance for children in the Kyrgyz Republic*, 2020.

Figure 5. Revised Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan's contribution to extended coverage of social benefits



The study represents circumstantial yet convincing evidence that the change of approach of international financial institutions (the World Bank and International Monetary Fund) on social protection and their partial alignment with UNICEF's advocacy agenda allowed for good advocacy results in the complex context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Labour and Social Development, for example, eliminated one of the eligibility filters for child benefits, which contributed to the 7 per cent increase in coverage in 2020. UNICEF can be cautiously confident that the recommendations it provided, and the advocacy conducted with the World Bank around child poverty issue, determined this change in the approach.

There is no direct evidence on the precise impact of the contribution made by UNICEF and the World Bank. One alternative explanation would be that the decision to change the eligibility filters for child benefits was made by the Ministry, independently of any influence from development partners. However, there is a marked coalescence across the recommendations made by UNICEF, the decision taken and the visible impact that was generated – a 7 per cent increase in the extended coverage of the Social Assistance Programme for children in 2020.

This was a good first step and demonstrates that cooperation between development partners can increase the chances of impact. However, the magnitude of the problem of child poverty in Kyrgyzstan still demands a much bolder approach to the expansion of social protection

Positive changes regarding access to services for child's survival, learning and development (Outcome 2)

UNICEF reported considerable impact related to improved access to services for children because of UNICEF's work under Outcome 2. UNICEF reports are supported by the national studies, including the Voluntary report on SDG and the Multidimensional Poverty Index. One of the most important results for children at scale has been increased commitment children with disabilities due to the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2019. This was a remarkable achievement: the result of joint advocacy efforts by civil society and UN

agencies.⁹⁷ For the implementation of the convention, UNICEF works actively with the Government to transform the current medical model of disability to a social model that aims to integrate children with disabilities into society by means of adapted community care.

The country is now obliged to provide people with disabilities with an accessible environment and infrastructure to involve them in daily life and grant them all rights and freedoms. UNICEF has been working closely with the Government to support the implementation of an immediate action plan as part of the interdisciplinary working group. The group is now developing a draft Plan of Priority Measures for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for 2021-2023 for approval. In addition, the “Accessible Country” Program 2021-2040 has been developed to create an accessible living environment for persons with disabilities (pending approval).⁹⁸

Maternal, child and adolescents' health and nutrition (Outputs 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3)

Kyrgyzstan has halved child mortality, which fell from 39 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 19 deaths per 1,000 in 2018. It has also reduced the neonatal mortality rate, from 19 deaths per 1,000 in 2006 to 13 per 1,000 in 2018. However, more rapid progress is needed as these rates are among the highest in the Europe and Central Asia region and this progress can only be achieved by increasing both the quality of and equitable access to services. In this regard, UNICEF reports improvement in clinical standards and protocols around maternal health, focusing on perinatal care (neonatal care and post-natal visits through home visit revised protocol, child and adolescent health, as well as major capacity building activities for medical staff in hospitals covering several thousand doctors and nurses.⁹⁹

Although vaccination rates are high in Kyrgyzstan overall, they fell in 2020 compared to previous years as a result the COVID-19 pandemic and related restrictions on mobility.¹⁰⁰ In this context, UNICEF supported the Republican Centre for Immunization (RCI) to complete the second phase of the Cold Chain Equipment Optimization Platform (CCEOP): the installation of specialized refrigerators. These installations increased the percentage of vaccination points with the necessary specialized equipment from 49 per cent to 85 per cent, ensuring safe vaccination services, especially in remote areas. The government, development partners and CSOs converge in supporting immunization to maintain a satisfactory level of vaccination rates in Kyrgyzstan, to counteract fake news and to ensure access to vaccination for all children.¹⁰¹

The Government in 2019 approved The Food Security and Nutrition Programme 2019-2023, developed with UNICEF support. The Programme outlines policies and measures to improve the nutritional status of the population (including anaemia reduction) in a way that is consistent with international trends. Many medical staff and parents have been trained and/or informed about Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) and breastfeeding (with UNICEF support), with several hundred doctors and over 300,000 mothers reached. Malnutrition rates in Kyrgyzstan decreased for stunting and wasting within biological norms between 2006 and 2018, but further progress is needed to achieve the SDG targets.¹⁰²

⁹⁷ On 14 March 2019, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Sooronbai Zheenbekov, ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The document became effective on 24 March 2019. (<http://cbd.minjust.gov.kg/act/view/ru-ru/111885?cl=ru-ru>).

⁹⁸ Based on information in open sources (2019), Kyrgyzstan has allocated US\$95.5 million for implementation of the Convention (<https://cabar.asia/ru/kak-kyrgyzstan-budet-realizovvat-konventsivu-oon-o-pravah-invalidov>).

⁹⁹ In 2020, UNICEF also supported the transfer of in-person home-visiting services to a smartphone application (WhatsApp) helping to maintain and increase postnatal care visits for new-borns. The introduction of telemedicine elements into routine health services at the level of primary health care further contributed to cost-effective and innovative solutions that maintained essential service delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹⁰⁰ (www.stat.kg/en/publications/sbornik-zhenshiny-i-muzhchinyy-kyrgyzskoj-respubliky/)

¹⁰¹ In 2020, UNICEF reports the expansion of social mobilization on immunization. Within the campaigns conducted by UNICEF and the Republican Centre for Immunization (RCI): 7,937 under-vaccinated children under six years old were identified and volunteers conducted sessions with their parents. As a result, 852 children were vaccinated, representing 39 per cent of the children whose parents were reached and 11 per cent of all under-vaccinated children; the online platform for Village Health Committees (VHC) was scaled up and reached 139,000 people with messages on immunization and COVID-19; knowledge about the National Immunization Calendar increased from 58 per cent to 68 per cent among internet users due to social media activities on Instagram that reached more than 100,000 viewers; The RCI web-portal, including a hotline application, continues to provide timely immunization information, reaching approximately 4,500 visitors every month.

¹⁰² MICS 2018.

Access to ECD/ECE quality and equitable services and to quality and inclusive education (Outputs 2.4 and 2.5)

The "Education Development Programme for 2021-2040" (EDS) and its first Action Plan for 2021-2023 were adopted on 4 May 2021. According to all documents and interviews, the MoES received support from the World Bank, UNICEF and CSOs in the development of the programme.

Overall, the country reports remarkably elevated levels of access to education, with almost universal attendance in primary education (98.7 per cent). Data show that students complete compulsory education and that over 86 per cent continue beyond lower secondary education, but less than half of those move on to tertiary education.¹⁰³ Kyrgyzstan also reports high rates of literacy.¹⁰⁴

In addition, ECE remains one of the government priorities according to the strategic documents and there is satisfactory progress on the development of Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries to provide ECD services, as well as education. UNICEF is contributing to capacity building at national and local level for the implementation of CDCs and promoting other ECD policies, mostly targeting children health to allow them to develop (and participate to education): the early identification of and interventions for of children with disabilities, and home-visiting for families with young children.

There are, however, continued concerns about equitable and inclusive access to education and the quality of education. Multilingual and multicultural education, as well as inclusive education for children with special educational needs (SEN) and children with disabilities continue to be limited to pilot-level initiatives in several schools and pre-schools, based on the partnership between the MoES and development partners (UNICEF, USAID¹⁰⁵ and World Bank). While the education strategic documents adopted in 2021 include the development of inclusive and quality education, their implementation depends on institutional capacity at local level and there has been negligible impact for individual children yet.

According to MICS, 59.8 per cent of primary school students did not gain the minimal acceptable reading and comprehension skills in 2018.¹⁰⁶ While this represents an improvement in comparison with 2014, when 65 per cent of children in grade four were not reading at their grade level¹⁰⁷, the issue of quality education remains unaddressed. There is still a 13 percentage points difference between the children in rural and urban areas and there are significant regional differences: while 74 per cent of children demonstrate foundational reading skills in Bishkek, this falls to only 39 per cent in Naryn. Data is, however, available at age and school level and for children with learning difficulties and could be utilized to guide future policy developments.¹⁰⁸

The MoES, with UNICEF support, has collaborated to improve the education management system (EMIS) since 2020 to support better access to education and quality of education and is under continuous development. All schools and pre-school have entered data for the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years (with help from UNICEF volunteers who supported school and pre-school managers and EMIS focal points to validate existing data and complete any missing data). The new EMIS is now able to track inclusion and participation in quality education for all children (including those with disabilities and living in difficult circumstances). In addition, each individual record in the EMIS has a unique identification number (PIN) from the Civil Registry Office central database. This makes it possible to link the EMIS to other health and social development databases to monitor, refer and seek cross-sectoral solutions to the barriers that some children may face. In cooperation with the NSC, all statistical

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ The national literacy rate in 2018 was reported to be 99.59 per cent, a 0.34pp increase from 2009¹⁰⁴ and 100 per cent for the adult population over 15 years old according to: Macrotrends Kyrgyz Republic Literacy Trends 1999-2020 (www.macrotrends.net/countries/KGZ/kyrgyz-republic/literacy-rate). See also *Analysis of the effectiveness of the education system in the Kyrgyz Republic*, NSC/World Bank/DFID (2020) Bishkek, (www.stat.kg/media/files/e09102a5-3e9e-4819-b572-288a67e861f4.docx).

¹⁰⁵ USAID was a donor for UNICEF for the main pilot project on inclusive education.

¹⁰⁶ MICS 2018.

¹⁰⁷ United States Agency for International Development (USAID), *Education in the Kyrgyz Republic*, (www.usaid.gov/kyrgyz-republic/education).

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

reporting forms integrate into the EMIS, and the MoES was able to produce education sector statistics reports in 2021.¹⁰⁹

Efforts in 2020, with support from development partners, ensured continued access to education during the COVID-19 pandemic so that many children could continue their learning at home. However, the lack of access to IT and lack of digital skills have deepened existing inequities.

The following case study underlines UNICEF's contribution to the development of ECD/ECE, as well as the limitations of its impact.

Case study on UNICEF's contribution to impact in early childhood development (ECD) and education (ECE)

The contribution of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan to early childhood development (ECD) and education (ECE) is an area selected for in-depth assessment in a case study. The aim is to determine the extent of UNICEF's contribution and outline the results of that contribution in a straightforward way. For the methodology and a detailed Process Tracing analysis, see Annex 2.

The analysis includes the evaluation of UNICEF's contribution to ECD/ECE approaches and tools: community-based kindergartens and Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries; the development of a trans-sectoral intervention methodology, including the parenting package and the piloting of early identification of and interventions for children with disabilities, to the modelling of home visiting. The Process Tracing analysis also examined UNICEF's contribution to remote pre-school lessons and preparations for the safe reopening of kindergartens; the revision of the ECD/ECE standards, the development of ECD/ECE capacity (including technical assistance and trainings to mainstream ECD into education sector plans and budgets) and improved financing. The medium- and long-term changes expected by UNICEF and assessed are linked to (a) a better understanding of the importance of ECD among decision-makers, (b) the continued prioritization of ECE to achieve the Government's target of 80 per cent coverage by 2022 (given that the present coverage of ECE is 40 per cent), (c) the improved coverage of ECD/ECE services in 2021 compared to 2014 and improved child well-being, reflected in the steady decline of infant and under-five mortality rates.

The analysis allows us to be confident about UNICEF's contribution to impact for children at scale regarding improved access to ECD/ECE services. UNICEF provided national authorities with:

- guidelines and methodologies for inclusive ECD and ECE in community-based kindergartens and CDCs within existing municipal libraries
- ECE standards that have been approved by the Government
- remote pre-school lessons and the preparation for the safe reopening of kindergartens
- assessments and documentation of the model projects for the early identification of children with disabilities and the development of a trans-sectoral intervention methodology, including the scale up the model projects on the parenting package.

The standards and guidelines are implemented in pre-school facilities across the country (community-based kindergartens and CDCs) and are beneficial for all children in terms of the daily work of pre-school teachers. The remote pre-school lessons and the procedures for the safe reopening of kindergartens have been provided to all children in 2020. Data on the model projects are discussed at Ministry level with a view to their scale up. This evidence of UNICEF's impact for children at scale and its contribution to better ECE is recognized by stakeholders.

There is also sufficient evidence to be confident that access to ECE remains a priority for the Government, aiming to reach the 80 per cent coverage target by 2022. Specific actions and institutional responsibilities are planned in several official documents and assumed by the relevant institutions, but ECD/ECE funding needs to be improved.

In addition, while coverage of ECD/ECE services improved in 2019 compared to 2014, the coverage for the most vulnerable children is still limited. Community-based kindergartens and CDCs are

¹⁰⁹ UNICEF COAR 2020.

planned as essential tools to integrate children from rural areas, those from poor households and children with disabilities into early education, but their opening in the most vulnerable areas is still ongoing, and no impact was yet visible at the time of this evaluation.

The evaluation team did not have enough evidence to confirm that UNICEF's contributions directly improved policies of the Government of Kyrgyzstan on cross-sectoral planning for ECD. However, we can be cautiously confident that public officials increased their capacity for ECD/ECE financing and budgeting planning, but this does not translate into confidence about the practical improvement in financing that will ensure achievement of the 80 per cent ECE attendance target in 2022.

The systemic results of UNICEF contribution to financing the ECD and ECE are good and plans for the development of better budgeting have been established in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. However, these plans could be negatively impacted by a lack of institutional and human resource capacity, conflicting government priorities and shrinking fiscal space in the context of the socio-economic crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The statistics on the infant and under-five mortality rates shows improved access and quality to health services for new-borns and young children. There is convincing evidence in Government reports and stakeholders' declaration that UNICEF contributed to the improved healthcare standards that spurred this progress. However, there is still no convincing evidence of governmental commitment to develop cross-sectoral early childhood services as a strategy to maintain and accelerate the trend of declining infant and child mortality rates.

This relates to the fact that ECD is not a policy sector and remains scattered across other sectors, with little progress at policy/government level in ensuring coordination and trans-disciplinary work. The institutionalization of ECE within the MoES – which has organized a separate department for ECE (the Preschool Department) – is an important indicator of governmental support for this area but does not indicate the cross-sectoral policy approach needed for ECD.

Although existing evidence mentioned allow a cautiously optimistic assessment of ECD/ECE policy development and UNICEF's contribution to this policy progress, the most important bottlenecks identified still need to be addressed:

- lack of training and overall capacity of local staff in educational institutions (and of local social workers) to address the needs of young children in a comprehensive/holistic way
- lack of motivation (including wages) and other capacity elements (communication and teamwork competences) for transdisciplinary teams that need to work together
- lack of strong and clear cross-sectoral coordination mechanisms at government and local level, including the lack of joint sector reviews that could represent a good co-management tool.

In addition, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on reduced access to services and increased poverty affects the development of ECD / ECE because it affects the available budgets for service developments and increases the major risk factor associated with lack of access to ECD/ECE: namely poverty.

Climate-resilient development and disaster risk reduction (Output 2.6)

The Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) and the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MES) jointly developed a roadmap on the national scale-up of disaster risk reduction (DRR) in educational institutions. The initial model was proposed by UNICEF in partnership with the Red Crescent Society.

UNICEF supported the development of two guidelines by MoES and MES were supported in 2017 – the school-based DRR guideline for school administrations and the disaster risk assessment and analysis (DRA) guideline for municipalities. These guidelines were transformed into 11 video lessons in 2020. This helped to raise awareness and knowledge on climate and environment risk and support communication at national level. DRR in schools programme has been scaled up nationwide with UNICEF's support and generous funding from the Government of Japan.

Positive changes regarding child protection and child access to justice (Outcome 3)

Although slow, progress can be observed on combating violence against children and the prevention of child marriage. The adoption of the revised Child Code in July 2021 by Parliament represents a major step forward. This differs from the previous version in banning the corporal punishment of children in all settings –the first legal document in Kyrgyzstan to do so – and will be enacted once signed by the President.

The revised Code is essential, given that data from 2020 show that violence against children and women remains widespread. According to the 2021 SitAn, “domestic violence rates have been increasing steadily. In 2012-2015 the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported 2,500-3,500 cases annually, while in 2020, over 9,000 cases were registered”.¹¹⁰ MICS 2018 found that 47.5 per cent of children in Kyrgyzstan are exposed to physical punishment and 5.4 per cent of children are exposed to severe physical punishment. In addition, 70 per cent of children have experienced psychological aggression. Another alarming finding is that a quarter of adolescents (25 per cent) in Kyrgyzstan believe that a husband is justified in beating his wife under some circumstances.¹¹¹

Child marriage remains a major challenge and continues to be tolerated by a relatively substantial proportion of the population.¹¹² In this context, there is an ongoing commitment by both government and civil society to the prevention of child marriage and a national action plan to prevent child marriage was endorsed in September 2020 to consolidate and strengthen joint efforts in this area. UNICEF is also monitoring judicial practice on child marriage cases and supports the work of CSOs on this issue in pilot communities. A mobile application for the prevention of violence against girls and child marriage was developed (with UNICEF support) to generate social change, as well as a better response from authorities. This application reached over 150,000 downloads by the end of 2020.

During the 2020 lockdown, 86 per cent of children living in residential institutions returned to their families – an opportunity to assess their situation. Data collected by UNICEF show that most parents and caregivers wanted to keep their children in their families.¹¹³ The data was compiled by interviews that show that institutional resistance to change may be the most important bottleneck to be addressed in advocacy to advance reforms on childcare and de-institutionalization.

In 2021, the revised Child Code introduced special provisions on the rights to child protection for children left without parental care, with stronger guardianship provisions in the legal framework to protect children of migrants and other vulnerable children. The new legal framework also aims to strengthen case management for vulnerable children and families and establish units of social workers to offer social services at the local level. UNICEF’s advocacy strategies have contributed to this important progress. There is also a window of opportunity to enhance the quality and effectiveness of preventive and response services.

Two normative acts were issued and approved in the field of justice for children: the “Procedure for interaction between state bodies on juvenile probation” and the “Procedure for the application of juvenile probation and registration of juvenile clients.” UNICEF has advocated for this new legal framework and supports it through the training of lawyers to work on children’s cases and the creation of a roster of lawyers who specialize in child-friendly justice at the Ministry of Justice. Over 60 per cent of lawyers offering public free legal aid have now been trained on child-friendly legal justice. Legally and theoretically, legal aid is now accessible to all children in contact with the justice system, but there is insufficient evidence to assess whether all children have access, in practice, to specialized and child-friendly legal aid.

Adolescent development and participation (Output 3.3)

¹¹⁰ Deputy Minister of Internal affairs at the Parliamentary hearings (<https://rus.azattyk.org/a/31060795.html>), cited in the Situation Analysis (SitAn) 2021.

¹¹¹ SitAn 2021. MICS 2018 underlines that one third of women aged 15-49 believe that a husband has the right to beat his wife. The percentage of family violence acceptance among adolescents (aged 15-19) is 35 per cent in rural areas and 22 per cent in urban areas.

¹¹² According to MICS 2018, 12.9% of women of 20-24 y.o. married before 18 and there is no progress compared to the statistics from 2012.

¹¹³ Data from the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Labour and Social Development, 2020, cited by UNICEF COAR 2020

UNICEF is one of few organizations active in Kyrgyzstan that prioritizes the development and participation of young people. The STEM4Girls initiative, for example, targets young girls to enhance their competencies and enable them to participate more actively in social and economic life. The Adolescents Development and Participation programme (ADAP), including UPSHIFT, and a range of initiatives such as the promotion of child- and youth-friendly cities, is being implemented to empower and engage young people, and to facilitate their participation in decision-making.

Particularly superior results are observed in the municipalities where UNICEF has implemented its ADAP programme. However, national statistics are not yet available to show impact at country level for most young people.¹¹⁴ The following case study explores UNICEF's contribution to youth participation at local level through the implementation of the Youth and Child Friendly Local Governance (YCFLG) initiative.

Case study on UNICEF contribution to adolescents and youth engagement and participation

UNICEF has been implementing the Youth and Child Friendly Local Governance (YCFLG) initiative in Kyrgyzstan as part of its peacebuilding programming. The initiative has also been promoted at national level in partnership with the government youth agency (State Agency for Youth, Physical Culture and Sports under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic). In total, 47 municipalities have participated in YCFLG activities to date. In 2019-2020, 18 cities participated in a national competition of youth- and child-friendly cities.

This case study uses Contribution Analysis as its main methodological framework to assess how UNICEF contributed to one important medium-term result: government promotion of youth engagement initiatives at local level; and to short-term results related to enhanced youth participation at local level.

The analysis of the collected evidence¹¹⁵ shows that UNICEF piloted YCFLG successfully, with two main objectives:

- 1) To encourage young people to participate in local governance (including young people empowerment and engagement) and
- 2) To raise the awareness and skills of duty bearers and (to a lesser extent) caregivers (parents) and their capacity to listen to child and adolescents' voices and to include them in their decision-making processes.

Additional objectives related to peacebuilding and social cohesion have been added to the implementation of the initiative in Kyrgyzstan's border regions as part of the peacebuilding programming.

The intervention included **two types of activities**.

- 1) Participatory activities included participatory research by adolescents and young people to identify their needs and priorities and consultations with them. Other participatory activities included the organization of youth councils that provided ideas and feedback for local planning, based on consultation with their peers
- 2) Activities for duty bearers, together and separate from the activities with young people, included hearings of young people to inform decision-making at local level in line with their needs and expectations.

In some areas, youth engagement activities have been implemented jointly by UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP, with the dedicated evaluation observing a very good quality of cooperation.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ UNICEF's work that targets young people is complex and covers different areas, as presented in Annex 2.

¹¹⁵ Evidence in this case includes evaluations and reviews of projects implemented within the framework of Adolescents Participation and Empowerment Programme, UNICEF annual reports and interviews conducted with UNICEF specialists, implementing partners and representatives of the Government.

¹¹⁶ "Evaluation of UNICEF / UNFPA / UNDP project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' (2019-2020)", 2021.

As most outreach to young people to encourage their participation in activities was organized in schools, support from teachers proved to be a key factor in the results achieved, as well as the support and openness from local authorities and community leaders throughout the activities and the absence of direct opposition from parents. Equally, however, results were hindered in some areas by a lack of support from teachers, local authorities and community leaders or the direct opposition of parents.

These activities generated, according to the reviews and evaluation conducted by UNICEF:

- 1) a satisfactory level of engagement and satisfaction from young people and
- 2) youth and child responsive plans in several municipalities.

At local level, activities have been implemented to empower young people and encourage their engagement. These include the Leadership and Innovation Academy, Janyration Chakyrygy Creative contest, cross-border events among youth. These have been considered effective, although they have not always been very well coordinated and connected.

Data collected from participants in these initiatives confirm that boys and young men felt empowered. However, the data on the impact of girls' participation is not consistent, with some evidence showing that they too felt empowered and had more opportunities to participate, while other evidence shows lack of empowerment.¹¹⁷

The percentage of Kyrgyz girls who participated in the programme: 'Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan' that felt excluded and powerless increased by 6 per cent after programme implementation compared to the baseline at the start of the programme.¹¹⁸ However, this finding is not consistent with any other piece of evidence and it is not possible, therefore, to identify any factor that could account for this result or whether there is an error in the measurement of the quoted statistics.

Although interventions for youth engagement and participation at local level aimed to include vulnerable adolescents and young people, the evidence from existing reports on projects implemented by UNICEF is not consistent in this regard. More have been involved in project activities in municipalities included in peacebuilding programmes, as per the programme design (placed purposefully in marginalized areas). They have included those from ethnic minorities who face language barriers, are otherwise from the community, or have been in conflict with the law. Reports indicate that adolescents and young people with disabilities have also been involved.

The youth who participated in the project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' described it as a revealing experience of initiation into adulthood and self-leadership. The most spectacular transformations were witnessed among those who were the most withdrawn at the outset, the most geographically isolated, and among young girls who discovered the roles they could take on.¹¹⁹ In contrast, however, there is no similar evidence on the involvement of children in vulnerable situations in all cities considered as 'growth points' that are included in the Child Friendly Cities initiative.

According to interviewed stakeholders, UNICEF representatives and anecdotal evidence, where the involvement of vulnerable adolescent and young people took place, this was supported by the involvement of mentors in peer-to-peer activities. There is, however, a need for further research on the contribution of such mentors to overall impact.

The impact at the level of local authorities is limited to plans adopted with the participation of young people. There is no consistent evidence about the implementation of the activities planned or, therefore, on the long-term commitment of the local authorities – which suggests a need to strengthen monitoring in this area.

In contrast, the interventions for youth engagement and participation at local level were appreciated at national level and there was government buy-in, including participation in the organization of the national 'Child and Youth Friendly Cities' competition. This competition concluded in April 2021 with

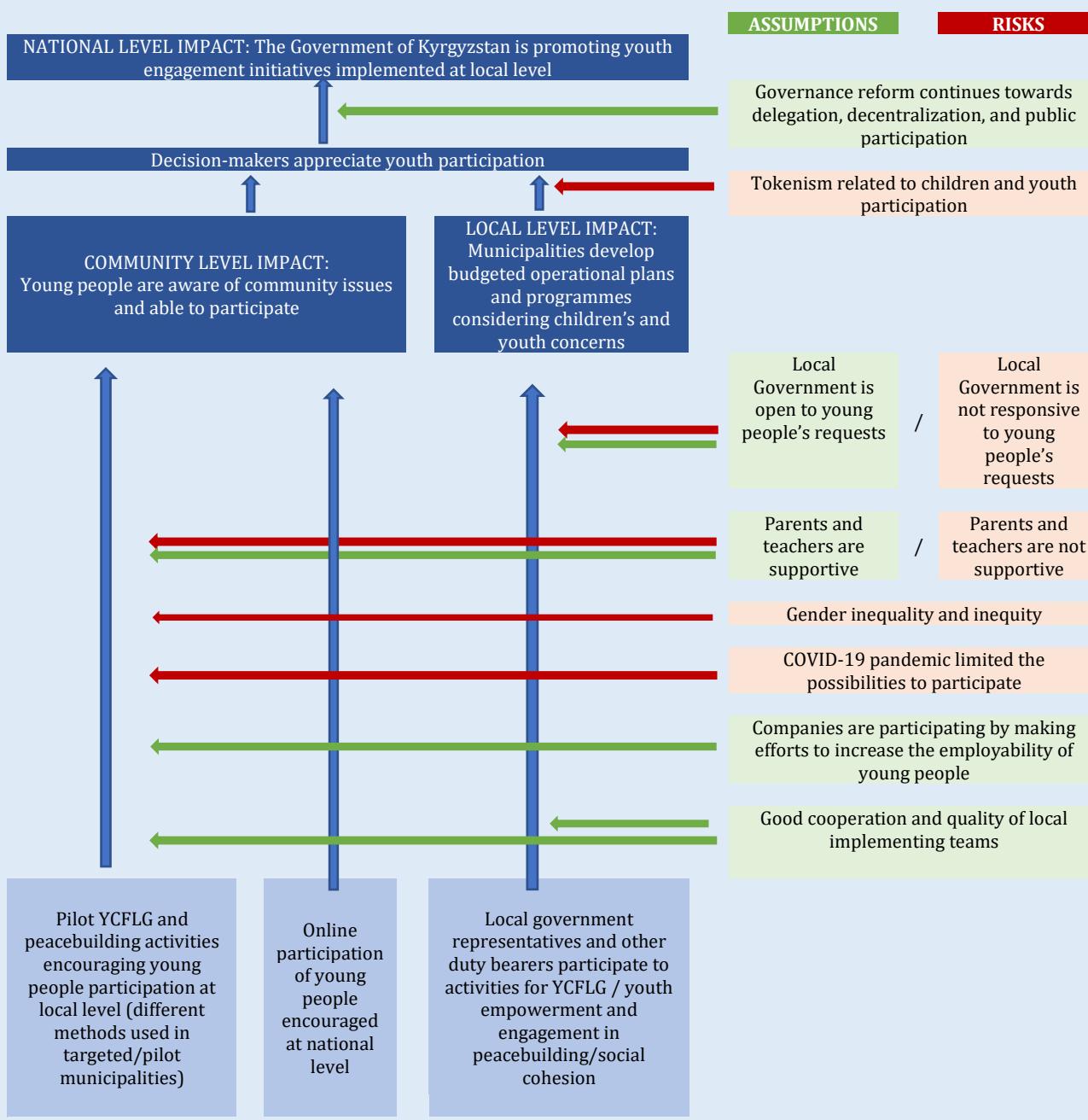
¹¹⁷ End of Programme Review Report for the programme: Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (2016-2020), 2021.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Evaluation of UNICEF / UNFPA / UNDP project.

the awarding of certificates to three winning cities and seven others that were certified as youth and child-friendly, demonstrating the commitment of the President to this initiative.

Figure 6. Revised Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan's contribution to government support for youth engagement initiatives implemented at local level



Colours legend

IMPACT	Activities and outputs	Assumptions / positive factors	Risks
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UNICEF is directing advocacy efforts and technical support to drive the institutionalization of youth- and child-friendly planning and budgeting at local level. The objective is to ensure the mandatory collection of age and sex-disaggregated data on the needs and demands of children and young people. The national endorsement of the 'Child and Youth Friendly Cities' initiative may be a crucial step for the collection of data about child and youth needs.

There is, however, no guaranteed sustainability for local activities to address these needs or for the continuation of empowerment and engagement activities that will allow young people to participate.

But the fact that the experts identified 26 indicators for youth and child friendly cities to support the ‘Child and Youth Friendly Cities’ competition is a sign that sustainability can be ensured if monitoring is continued.

One specific area of UNICEF’s work during the CP (2019-2022) was the repatriation and integration of children from conflict zones, affected by the conflict in the Middle East and who had previously been in areas controlled by the so-called ‘Islamic State’. UNICEF advocated to the Government for procedures to realize their rights in relation to their repatriation to Kyrgyzstan and supported a comprehensive cross-sectoral action plan for their integration into families and local communities. Development partners interviewed acknowledged UNICEF’s instrumental contribution and its success in mainstreaming child and human rights to the integration process.

No unexpected impact of UNICEF was identified by the evaluation based on interviews and documents analysed.

3.3.1.2. Summary findings on UNICEF’s contributions to the observed changes

As shown in the assessment of the impact above, UNICEF Kyrgyzstan made important contributions to the results observed and presented, which represent positive changes in policies and institutional capacity and for the lives of children in Kyrgyzstan.

A comprehensive account of UNICEF contribution to the reported impact is presented in Annex 1 and specific detailed examples are analysed as part of the Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis case studies for three areas (as summarized in the previous sections and presented in more detail in Annex 2): (1) early childhood development and education, (2) adolescents’ development and participation and (3) social protection.

For all outputs envisaged by the Country Programme, UNICEF implemented activities that generated an impact for institutional change through five approaches (strategies):

- advocacy for policy development and change regarding national strategies and the legal framework, providing evidence and research results¹²⁰ to support advocacy messages and linking model projects to policy development
- technical assistance to key institutions for child rights and services: the National Statistics Committee, the Ministry of Education and Science, healthcare providers, the Ministry of Justice, etc.
- support for the training of duty bearers in the fields of education, health, law-enforcement and the judiciary, including training for decision-makers and policymakers in local government and training for better public funding (in early childhood development and education)
- engagement with civil society partners, active at both national and local level, for advocacy
- engagement with development partners, particularly (but not exclusively), through the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC).

A more visible impact of UNICEF is in its country response to COVID-19. At local level, in selected municipalities where model and pilot projects have been implemented, interviewed stakeholders expect to see a more significant impact in the fields of early childhood development and education, youth development and participation and interventions for children with disabilities. They also expect to see impact in terms of general improvements in the local government approach to early childhood development and youth and finance for these areas as a result of the Better Early Learning and

¹²⁰ For example, in 2020 only: UNICEF continued to support the Government to build a solid evidence base for policy making to improve the situation of children and women and fulfil its international commitments. Two situation analyses of children with disabilities and the well-being of adolescents and youth were undertaken to inform advocacy with national counterparts, as well as UNICEF’s future programme. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the scope of evidence generation was expanded to include an assessment of its socio-economic impact to inform advocacy and a timely policy response. This was done through both a child poverty assessment based on economic data and projections and a household survey.

Development at Scale Initiative (BELDS) training for better education financing at local level, and the Youth and Child Friendly Local Government Initiative, implemented in synergy with UPSHIFT, as tools to ensure both the involvement and empowerment of authorities and other duty bearers, as well as adolescents and young people.

UNICEF's contribution to behavioural changes among duty bearers and caregivers (parents) is appreciated by the interviewed stakeholders. In the case of duty bearers, UNICEF's contribution to behavioural changes was the result of its organization of trainings and events (seminars, workshops, round tables, and conferences). Advocacy and communication for behaviour change had a synergic impact with the capacity building activities, already mentioned. However, interviews also show that changes in attitudes and behaviour are not yet sustainable, given the political instability in Kyrgyzstan and the sometimes-conflicting messages shared across the country by its leadership and mass media. Continued communication activities are, therefore, essential.

Stakeholders appreciated UNICEF's contribution to the response to COVID-19 as instrumental and undoubtedly impactful, including: the endowment of key institutions responding to the pandemic with essential products and technical assistance (Ministry of Education, healthcare providers, schools, etc.), as well as support to the Government on communication about how to keep safe during and after the lockdown.

3.3.1.3. Conditions and factors supporting the impact of UNICEF's Country Programme

A summary of the strategies used by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan (presented in Annex 1) shows that the CO enjoyed multiple conditions and factors that supported the impact of its CP (2018-2022): support from authorities for cooperation; the quality of that cooperation; UNICEF's brand and its fundraising capacity; and its use of complementary approaches. However, the data collected for this evaluation show mostly bottlenecks that hindered the programme's effectiveness and impact, as explored in more detail in the next section of this report.

Figure 7. Summary of mechanisms enabling UNICEF's contribution to change for children at scale

CHANGE STRATEGY	MECHANISMS enabling UNICEF's contribution to change for children at scale	CHANGE GENERATED
Using the power of evidence to drive change for children	Commitment of the country to human rights Authorities support for cooperation	Policy change
Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children	Advocacy of UN and other development partners Development Partners Coordination Council	Institutional change
Leveraging the power of business and markets for children	Fundraising capacity	
Fostering innovation in programming and advocacy for children	Work with partners with experience at local/community level	
Modelling/piloting projects	Local government support Innovation	Better access to services Participation of young people Institutional change Behaviour and attitudes change
Winning support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public	Support from community leaders UNICEF brand ICT and gamification Use of science about social norms	Behaviour and attitudes change

The most important mechanisms supporting UNICEF impact are as follows.

- Support from Kyrgyzstan's authorities for cooperation, based on external factors that are specific to the country and its Government:
 - o the country's long-term commitment to human rights and the SDGs
 - o its agreement with the UN and the constant advocacy from different development partners for the monitoring all commitments.
- The quality of cooperation and partnerships, based on **internal factors** (specific to the UNICEF CO):
 - o UNICEF's leadership role in the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC) as co-chair of the education and social protection partners' groups, which has enabled particularly good advocacy results in the field of education

- UNICEF's emphasis on building effective partnerships with central authorities and on support for long term, consistent and persistent interventions in each area of its work, despite changes in the structure and composition of the government
- UNICEF's emphasis on building effective partnerships with local governments to implement model/pilot projects
- UNICEF's emphasis on ensuring sustainable partnerships with implementing partners with a good knowledge of the local environment and good expertise in their field.
- UNICEF's brand, which supports cooperation with local authorities and organizations.
- UNICEF's fundraising capacity, which proved to be important in the response to COVID-19 and in other instances when direct service delivery has been needed to support the most marginalized and vulnerable children and/or to build effective model/pilot projects that are subsequently used in advocacy.
- The use of complementary approaches, with successful results that build on UNICEF's brand and its existing partnerships, particularly:
 - the support from local and religious community leaders
 - the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and gamification, which proved effective in urban settings and in UNICEF's work with young people, but also with parents and other duty bearers in 2020
 - grounding the C4D strategies and roadmaps in scientific research data about social norms and how they change.

The following assumptions, presented in the ToC support mechanisms for UNICEF impact:

- political will and skills support SDG localisation
- local authorities are willing to listen to the voices of young people
- stakeholders are interested and committed.

The case study on UNICEF's impact on youth development and participation also shows that young people are confident and express their views, confirming another assumption.

We also see, however, that some assumptions identified in the ToC have not materialized, according to the assessment of UNICEF's impact in Kyrgyzstan:

- the Government takes evidence-based decisions
- the Government allocates adequate financial and administrative resources
- the Government prioritizes the child rights agenda
- the Government can scale up and institutionalize developed models.

Although the Government received UNICEF's support for evidence-based decisions and the better allocation of financial and administrative resources, as well as recommendations to prioritize the child rights agenda and scale up and institutionalize developed models, there is no consistent evidence that these assumptions are valid across all areas of UNICEF's work. There is evidence that these assumptions are present in early childhood education. But we lack evidence on the presence of the necessary political will for evidence-based decision making, child-centred resource allocation, the prioritization of the child rights agenda and the scaling-up of UNICEF modeling initiatives in relation to services for children with disabilities or social protection for all children through universal coverage.

There is no evidence on the confidence of parents/caregivers in practicing positive parenting norms. Equally, there is no evidence to confirm the assumption of low resistance to change in social norms in Kyrgyz society. As shown in the next section of this report, existing social norms and their resistance to change are among the most important bottlenecks that hinder UNICEF's impact.

3.3.2. Did UNICEF identify and reassess bottlenecks throughout programme implementation?

The impact of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan is hindered by important bottlenecks related to the country's political and institutional instability and continuous turnover within the authorities with which UNICEF works; limited capacity for service provision for the realization of child rights at central and local level; limited policy coordination and cross-sectoral and inter-institutional

cooperation; limited disaggregated data and use of data to inform decisions about children; limited fiscal space and financial resources; and social norms that are not in line with human-rights values. Most bottlenecks are systemic and relate to the entire public administration or society (not only to child rights protection and services). As a result, UNICEF activities to counter them or cope with them can be only partially successful.

The CP documents include bottlenecks and risks, with special reference to the Strategic Note from 2017.

The risk mitigation measures planned in the CP documents are vague:

- anchoring programme results in the multiyear national development framework
- investing in building the capabilities of officials in public administration, particularly in results-based management
- generating public demand for results by disseminating evidence of successful models through traditional and social media to prove their potential benefits for children
- donor engagement and participation in joint resource mobilization within the UN system.

Interviews allowed the evaluation team to identify the six most important bottlenecks and risks that affected CP implementation, in practice:

- (1) political and institutional instability, including changes in the structure and the main responsibilities of ministries
- (2) limited capacity for service provision for the realization of child rights at central and local level
- (3) limited policy coordination and cross-sectoral or inter-institutional cooperation
- (4) limited (disaggregated) data and limited use of data for decision making concerning children
- (5) limited fiscal space and financial resources, a limited public budget dedicated to services for children
- (6) social norms that conflict with human-rights values (concerning the position of children in society and family, violence against children, and the age of marriage).

There are also two associated risks that have affected UNICEF's work. First, the risks related to losing the achievements already made (including the capacity developed) because of the high turnover of political leadership and civil servants and specialists involved in providing services for children. Second: the risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown. Taken together, these eight risks are outlined in Table 1, below, which positions them alongside those anticipated in the CP ToC.

Table 2. Bottlenecks and risks identified by the evaluation and those anticipated in the Theory of Change

Bottlenecks and risks identified by the evaluation	Bottlenecks and risks anticipated in the Theory of Change
- Political and institutional instability, including changes in the structure and the main responsibilities of ministries	-
- Limited capacity for service provision for the realization of child rights at central and local level	Weak implementation and follow-up of child-related legislation
- Limited policy coordination and cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation	Lack of holistic approaches to child development and protection Under-developed mechanisms for cross-sectoral coordination and cooperation, especially at local level
- Limited (disaggregated) data and use of data for decision making concerning children	Low level of information and awareness among stakeholders and target groups Absence of evidence-based policy development
- Limited fiscal space and financial resources, especially the limited public budget dedicated to services for children	Insufficient allocation of budgetary and human resources
- Social norms that conflict with human-rights values (concerning the position of children in society and family, violence against children, the age of marriage)	Harmful social norms and practices

Bottlenecks and risks identified by the evaluation	Bottlenecks and risks anticipated in the Theory of Change
- The risks related to losing the achievements already made (including the capacity developed) because of the high turnover of political leadership and civil servants and specialists involved in providing services for children	-
- Risks related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdown	The overall social and economic impact of COVID-19 (<i>risk added to the ToC in 2020 when additional outputs were also added to the CPD</i>)

The bottlenecks identified during programme implementation are in line with those anticipated in the ToC, although the magnitude of political changes taking place in 2020-2021 could not be foreseen. However, response mechanisms that were used by the CO when dealing with political turnover have been put in place to ensure the continuation of cooperation with the new regime.

UNICEF responded to (1) political instability and the transition to the new Constitution using three complementary approaches:

- persevering with its advocacy work, as new leadership in the government and ministries entailed countless meetings and other activities to inform new decision-makers about UNICEF's approach and projects and to gain their support
- leveraging cooperation with other UN agencies and development partners
- using data and success stories (including UNICEF's track record of success) to ensure the continuation of support.

These strategies proved to be successful, as the President of the Kyrgyz Republic supported the nationwide competition 'Child and Youth Friendly Cities,' UNICEF is participating in the working group on the inventory of the Legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Child Code (with provisions supported by UNICEF) was adopted by Parliament in July 2021.

However, all development partners and some UNICEF staff interviewed underlined difficulties in continuing the advocacy in 2021, reporting a period accommodation necessary with the new regime under the 2021 Constitution. Together with the need to reassess priorities in response to the needs generated by the COVID-19 crisis, the political transition may be a factor that slows the pace of reforms.

There is also a strong connection between the bottlenecks related to the limited capacity for service provision and the risks related to the high turnover of human resources, particularly in terms of the beneficiaries of capacity building activities. Several stakeholders stated that any capacity building activity 'is doomed to be the work of Sisyphus' because better competences increase the motivation for the emigration of professionals working with children, as they increase their chances of successful integration into another labour market.

In this case there was no clear UNICEF strategy to deal with the respective bottlenecks and risks. However, the following activities have been partly successful:

- providing trainings of trainers and working with a pool of trainers at national level to roll-out and replicate trainings where needed (as in the case of the initiative promoting better financing for early childhood education)
- providing a well-designed curriculum and training materials that allow for the replication of training when needed (as in the case of the curricula for lawyers to improve legal aid for children in contact with the law)
- using online training tools and methods to ensure that training is available for unfamiliar staff whenever needed to the same level of quality as initially delivered (e.g., the trainings implemented in the framework of the projects for adolescents' development and participation, and in the field of justice for children).

For the bottlenecks related to (3) the limited cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation, (4) the limited existence and use of data and (5) the limited fiscal space and financial resources for the realisation of child rights, there are three types of activities identified implemented by UNICEF in close

coordination with government authorities (the ministries) and the National Statistics Committee. Among these activities there are dedicated projects and remarkable achievements (as noted earlier in this report) concerning improvements to the national statistical system, recommendations from model projects on coordination, and budgetary analyses and recommendations on financing and better allocations of the existing budgets, together with significant efforts to engage international donors and mobilize resources.

To address (6) social norms, C4D continues to be a priority for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan. The CO implements activities for community engagement and media campaigns, uses peer-to-peer communication and social media to promote its message to people across diverse groups. Three approaches have been appreciated by stakeholders and represent good practices identified by the evaluation team in addressing the bottlenecks related to social norms:

- In the case of duty bearer, C4D is undertaken in cooperation with a large number of trainings and events (seminars, workshops, round tables, and conferences) organized by UNICEF. In this respect advocacy and communication for behaviour change have had a synergic impact.
- In the case of adolescents and young people, communication using social media and gamification is used (based on the number of engaged adolescents and young people).
- In the case of rural communities, UNICEF and implementing partners collaborate with community and religious leaders, particularly on the promotion of messages against child marriage and bride kidnaping.

Interviewed stakeholders pointed out that C4D activities need to continue to generate sustainable results. The SitAn 2021 findings emphasise that social norms remain an important bottleneck that needs to be addressed in Kyrgyzstan.

UNICEF's response to the COVID-19 pandemic is limited to a short-term response to date. However, the activities implemented by UNICEF have been consistent with a strategy to support the country (the society and its government) to cope with the crisis in a very harsh socio-economic context, with anticipated rises in poverty, unemployment and school drop-out.

The strategies and activities that have been implemented regarding bottlenecks and risk management proved to be in line with the mitigation measures planned in the CP documents, although the initial planning was vague and unclear.

3.3.3. Did different groups, including children and the most marginalized, benefit in different ways from the Country Programme?

Data and information collected for this evaluation show that the UNICEF CP in Kyrgyzstan and its implementation accounted for differences between children and the needs of the most marginalized to a large extent. However, some vulnerable children benefited less from the work of UNICEF. Table 2 below presents a summary of the vulnerable and marginalized children who benefit from the CP and those who do not.

It is also important to underline that vulnerable and marginalized children have only been covered by projects that have limited geographical coverage. These projects are important as pilots to support advocacy at national level on the introduction of solutions and to gauge whether the tested measures prove effective and impactful. However, they are not directly generating change at national scale.

Table 3. The most marginalized and vulnerable children benefiting from UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Country Programme implementation

Outcome and outputs	Disadvantaged children who benefit	Benefit scale	The mechanisms that enable the impact for these children	Disadvantaged children who do not benefit	The mechanisms that hinder the impact for these children
OUTCOME 1. CHILD RIGHTS-BASED MONITORING SYSTEMS AND DECISION-MAKING					
By 2022, the state will have effective and accountable public administration systems to deliver results for disadvantaged children					
Output 1.1. EVIDENCE GENERATION TO INFORM POLICY ADVOCACY State institutions have capacity to generate and utilize evidence for child rights monitoring, advocacy and policy formulation	Children from poor households (in monetary and multidimensional poverty) All vulnerable children	All children can benefit	UNICEF supported the NSC to strengthen the evidence base on child rights with the introduction of routine measurement of multidimensional child poverty. UNICEF technical support in cash assistance consisted of analysing the current child grant scheme and in generating new evidence regarding new options for child benefits that would cover all children. UNICEF takes into account that targeted poverty alleviation activities have the adverse effect of excluding a large number of children, especially the most marginalized that are 'invisible' to public institutions and other stakeholders UNICEF has provided support for budgeting improvements in education and concerning other services for children. Information generated can support decision-making to better target the most vulnerable children.	n/a	Although the work on disaggregated data covers all children, there is no clear mechanism in place to ensure that data will be used for decision making. Although advocacy is consistent and persistent, leadership and civil service turnover has a negative impact on the result-generating mechanism.
Output 1.2. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE FOR CHILDREN Social sector ministries and parliament have improved capacity to manage and oversight public finance for children					
OUTCOME 2. ACCESS TO SURVIVAL, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES					
By 2022, disadvantaged children will have equitable access to health and education services to survive, learn, develop and contribute to resilient, inclusive and sustainable communities					
Output 2.1. HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING Healthcare professionals have the capacity to provide quality perinatal, modern home-visiting services	n/a Children at risk of and with congenital malformations Impact expected for the most vulnerable	All children can benefit	The activities under the output aim to strengthen the healthcare system. Special attention is paid to neonatal health, with a direct impact on new-borns who have health problems. Improvements in the healthcare system will especially benefit the most vulnerable people who have limited access to services, due to the limited capacity of these services.		
Output 2.2. POLICIES AND STANDARDS FOR NUTRITION SERVICES Government can produce multisectoral policies and standards to guide and	Children affected by malnutrition		The activities under the output aim to improve nutrition for all children. Improvements are expected to benefit children affected by malnutrition and those from poor households.		

Outcome and outputs	Disadvantaged children who benefit	Benefit scale	The mechanisms that enable the impact for these children	Disadvantaged children who do not benefit	The mechanisms that hinder the impact for these children
monitor nutrition services for the most disadvantaged women and children					
Output 2.3. Service providers can provide adolescent friendly services, including HIV prevention for especially vulnerable adolescents (EVA) and most-at-risk adolescents (MARA)	Children / young people with HIV Young women Adolescents using drugs		To encourage HIV prevention and care, 100 adolescents living with HIV: received support through smartphone-based applications and the development of a collection of stories based on their real-life experience; adhered to antiretrovirals (ARVs); and were given information on HIV disclosure and healthy living. Regulations, clinical protocols, standards, plans and tools were developed or endorsed, post-natal care and the screening of adolescents to identify those using drugs.	MARA ¹²¹ and EVA ¹²² as larger groups	Although there are activities to provide adolescent-friendly services, including health services, there is no development of dedicated youth-friendly health services. ¹²³
Output 2.4. STRENGTHENING SYSTEMS FOR ECD/ECE ECD/ECE institutional capacities strengthened to deliver quality early development, learning and school readiness for all, especially the most disadvantaged girls and boys	Children with disabilities Girls Children from ethnic minorities Children living in remote rural areas	All children can benefit, but impact has been achieved only at the level of pilot schools (to date)	UNICEF directly promoted: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- pilot activities for inclusive education, and teacher trainings for the integration of children with disabilities in the education process- child development centres (CDCs) that are inclusive for children with disabilities- gender-responsive teaching systems, including a gender-responsive curriculum,- teacher training on gender mainstreaming,- a gender responsive EMIS- multilingual and multicultural teaching in pilot schools- the development of the Education Sector Strategy and Plan, with a focus on vulnerable children,- Financing strategies in increase coverage of ECD, including PPP	n/a	n/a
Output 2.5. EDUCATION SYSTEM STRENGTHENING Education system is capable to provide quality and inclusive learning and development to the most disadvantaged children and adolescents					
Output 2.6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCE	All children, with an important impact on	All children can benefit, but impact has been achieved	Actions piloted in selected schools have been scaled up using: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a jointly developed roadmap by the Ministry of Education (MoES) and the Ministry of Emergency	n/a	n/a

¹²¹ Most-at-risk adolescents (MARA): Injecting drug users who use nonsterile injecting equipment; males who have unprotected anal sex with males; sex workers

¹²² Especially vulnerable adolescents (EVA): Adolescent females and males who are/have: children/parents who inject drugs; friends/peers who inject drugs/have unsafe sex; living in institutional care, especially juvenile detention; living/working on the street; migrant populations; minority or socially excluded groups

¹²³ A model of youth friendly health services development is available in Moldova.

Outcome and outputs	Disadvantaged children who benefit	Benefit scale	The mechanisms that enable the impact for these children	Disadvantaged children who do not benefit	The mechanisms that hinder the impact for these children
	children living in risk areas	only at the level of pilot schools (the scaling up of the initiative is ongoing now)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Situations (MES) on the national scale-up of disaster risk reduction (DRR) in educational institutions - two guidelines originally developed by UNICEF in partnership with the MES and MoES in 2017 were transformed into 11 video lessons: the school based DRR guideline for school administrations and the disaster risk assessment and analysis (DRA) guideline for municipalities. 		

OUTCOME 3. PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION AND CONFLICT PREVENTION

By 2022, disadvantaged children and their families will utilize equitable access to justice and social services to prevent and respond to violence, discrimination and family separation

Output 3.1 FAMILY SUPPORT AND CHILD CARE Education system can provide quality and inclusive learning and development to the most disadvantaged children and adolescents	Child victims of violence	All children can benefit, but impact is more visible in targeted communities (in Bishkek where social media engagement on violence against children has the greatest impact, and in communities where the communication campaign on child marriage is implemented at full scale)	Persistent advocacy, with direct links to Kyrgyzstan's human- and child-rights commitments have been used to advocate for the revised Child Code. Plans and data for better interventions for vulnerable children are promoted by UNICEF as instruments for child protection. Among results achieved with evidence-based advocacy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the adoption of a national Plan against Child Marriage with UNICEF contribution. - the development of an electronic database and case management system for vulnerable children with UNICEF contribution. C4D proved to be (partly) successful:	Children in residential institutions	Advocacy for deinstitutionalization and preventing institutionalization using a case management system was not fully successful. Resistance to change within institutions is the most important bottleneck and needs to be addressed.
	Children with disabilities	Children affected by migration			
	Adolescent girls	Children repatriated from conflict areas			

Outcome and outputs	Disadvantaged children who benefit	Benefit scale	The mechanisms that enable the impact for these children	Disadvantaged children who do not benefit	The mechanisms that hinder the impact for these children
			<p>promote messages against child marriage and child kidnapping.</p> <p>UNICEF is directly targeting children repatriated from conflict areas in the Middle East and it is one of the few organisations targeting these children.</p>		
Output 3.2 ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN Justice and administrative bodies can facilitate children's access to justice services and redress mechanisms	Children in contact with the law Children in a probation programme	All children can benefit	<p>The activities around justice for children target vulnerable children because of their contact with the law (they are victims, witnesses or perpetrators of crime) and this situation itself represents a vulnerability.</p> <p>Capacity building and advocacy have been implemented to provide children with guaranteed and quality legal aid. These activities generated a roster of specialized lawyer cases involving for children.</p>	n/a	n/a
Output 3.3 ADOLESCENTS' PARTICIPATION Adolescents have and use opportunities to contribute to decision-making processes	Adolescents from ethnic minorities Young girls and females (partly) Adolescents with disabilities (partly) Adolescents from poor households (partly) Adolescents in contact and in conflict with the law (partly)	Only children in municipalities / communities where projects are implemented benefit	<p>Most activities under the Adolescents Development and Participation programme (ADAP) are implemented in border regions, in the context of peacebuilding projects, and therefore aim directly for social cohesion and targeting adolescents from ethnic minorities.</p> <p>The implementation of STEM4Girls targets adolescent girls, including vulnerable girls such as girls living in the new settlement of Bishkek or other such vulnerable area. STEM4Girls aims at enhancing their competences and enable their greater participation in social and economic life.</p> <p>Adolescents targeted by the ADAP projects are usually reached through schools, teachers and social workers (when existing). There is, therefore, an intentional effort to reach disadvantaged adolescents.</p> <p>A dedicated component of the programme: 'Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan' targeted young people in conflict with the law and an effort was made to integrate them into social cohesion activities with the others.</p>	Young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs) Homeless adolescents Young girls and females (partly)	<p>Young NEETs are not reached because the young people engaged are reached using existing institutional mechanisms, especially schools.</p> <p>Although young girls and women are reported as accounting for more than 60% of the participants in UPSHIFT initiatives, some data show that their participation has less impact on them. The 2020 gender review also underlines the dilution of adolescent girls' empowerment priorities.</p>

Source: UNICEF annual reports, reviews and evaluations of programmes and projects implemented by UNICEF CO in 2018-2020 (as presented in Annex 8)

3.3.4. Are UNICEF results likely to be maintained over time?

There is a general agreement among stakeholders that the results achieved by UNICEF's CP regarding the legal and strategic framework for children are sustainable. However, the realization of children's rights in practice and their access to services may be affected, in the next years, by the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, although there are not enough data to assess the precise impact of the crisis in the future.

The sustainability of UNICEF's impact in terms of improved policies for children is assessed as high. The Decree "on the inventory of the Legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic" (from 8 February 2021, No. 26), which was issued to optimize and improve the country's entire legislative framework, is not expected to undermine the sustainability of UNICEF's impact on legislation for children rights and services. UNICEF is present in the Expert Group¹²⁴ and the 2021 Constitution continues to underline the commitment of the Kyrgyz Republic to human rights and international conventions ratified.

However, there is a shared perception among some stakeholders interviewed that the shrinking space for civil society, coupled with the support of the country's leadership support for traditional values (even when these are not in line with human-rights values) presents a risk for sustainability.

Significant risks to sustainability are also generated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic and social impact for the most vulnerable. The extent of this risk for the future remains to be measured, but the consistent work of UNICEF in close cooperation with the national and local governments to respond to the COVID-19 crisis allows for cautious optimism related to the sustainability of the results achieved beyond 2021.

As noted elsewhere in this report, another sustainability risk relates to the high turnover and migration of civil service staff, which has been analysed as a factor that hinders programme results.

3.3.5. Which strategies or group of strategies were effective in producing results at scale?

The impact assessment and case studies show that the UNICEF CO utilized a wide range of strategies, as described in UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2022, and that all of them proved to be effective, especially when they were combined.

A summary of the strategies used by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan is presented in Annex 1. The change strategies used most frequently are as follows.

- The power of evidence is used to drive change for children by providing evaluation and research in policymaking and/or by advocating for improvements in the state statistical system so that more data about child well-being can be used for better adapted policy plans and measures. For example, a report by the World Bank and UNICEF on the predicted increase in child poverty informed advocacy and there is a credible claim that it contributed to influencing the Government to expand coverage of social protection scheme for children by 7 per cent in 2020.
- Innovation in programming and advocacy for children is fostered by promoting modelling or pilot projects, most often in partnership with local authorities, and local implementing partners. One important example is the intervention in the field of adolescents' development, empowerment, engagement and participation, which combines at least two innovative tools: the child-friendly city initiative and UPSHIFT for social innovation. Other examples can be seen in ECD/ECE, where UNICEF piloted multiple interventions for inclusive kindergartens, the development of Child Development Centres, the development of home visiting practice, and the development of transdisciplinary work for ECD/ECE.
- UNICEF has helped to win support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public through C4D and communication for behaviour change, but also through advocacy activities and trainings with a two-fold objective: developing competences/capacities; and

¹²⁴ The members of the interdepartmental expert group are representatives of the Parliament (Jogorku Kenesh) of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic, the General Prosecutor's Office of the Kyrgyz Republic, executive authorities and local self-government bodies, business structures, non-governmental organizations and independent experts.

influencing attitudes and behaviours among duty bearers, caregivers, but also among children and adolescents. C4D uses two strategic approaches to address different target groups:

- Gaining support from local and religious community leaders
 - Using ICTs and gamification – effective in urban settings and when working with young people, but also with parents and other duty bearers in 2020.
- The combined efforts of UN agencies, working together, proved to be successful in the implementation in the field of adolescents' development, empowerment, engagement and participation.
 - The development and leveraging of resources and partnerships for children proved to be an effective strategy, especially by influencing domestic planning, financing and the delivery of services for children, using, as a rule, three main tools:
 - building alliances with development partners/agencies, particularly within the DPCC
 - technical assistance to key institutions (and duty bearers), for example the NSC, the MoES and healthcare providers
 - the help of, and cooperation with, implementing partners.

The case studies on the impact areas conducted using Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis allow for a limited analysis of the effectiveness of strategies and combination of strategies used, as presented in the table below.

Table 4. Strategies used by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan in three selected areas of impact

Area of impact	Conclusion on UNICEF contribution to impact	Strategies used - in (chrono)logical order
Early childhood development (ECD) and early childhood education (ECE)	<p>We can be more confident than not that UNICEF contributed in a substantial manner to the development of Kyrgyzstan's policy on ECD and ECE. The analysis allows us to be confident about UNICEF impact of the coverage and quality of EDE because of the use of UNICEF recommended guidelines and methodologies for inclusive ECD/ECE in community-based kindergartens and Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries. UNICEF also contributed to increased pre-school coverage in 2020 by providing remote pre-school lessons and the preparation for the Safe Reopening of Kindergartens.</p> <p>UNICEF provided general recommendations generated by the model project on the early identification of children with disabilities and the development of a trans-sectoral intervention methodology (including the parenting package), therefore allowing for a possible enhanced impact in the future.</p> <p>There is also sufficient evidence to be confident that, because of the advocacy and technical assistance of UNICEF and other stakeholders, access to ECE remains a priority for the Government, which aims to reach the target of 80% coverage by 2022.</p> <p>There is not enough evidence at the disposal of the evaluation team to assess with confidence that UNICEF contributions directly improved the cross-sectoral policies needed in the field of ECD. However, we can be cautiously confident that public officials increased their capacity for financing and budgeting planning regarding ECD/ECE, but this is not enough to be confident about the practical improvement in financing that will ensure implementation of the governmental commitment concerning the ECE attendance target of 80% in 2022.</p> <p>There is no evidence on the institutionalization of the cross-sectoral policy approach needed for ECD.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children 2. Fostering innovation in programming and advocacy for children 3. Using the power of evidence to drive change for children
Adolescent and youth development, empowerment, engagement and participation	<p>UNICEF activities for adolescent and youth development and participation generated a satisfactory level of engagement and satisfaction from young people and youth, as well as plans that are responsive to their needs in various municipalities. Data collected from participants of these initiatives show that boys and young men felt empowered. However, the data are not consistent regarding the empowerment of girls. In general, young participants experienced UNICEF activities as contributing to their</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fostering innovation in programming and advocacy for children 2. Winning support for the cause of

	<p>initiation into adulthood and self-leadership. The most spectacular transformations were witnessed among the most withdrawn, the most geographically isolated, and among young girls who discovered the roles they could take on. The impact at the level of local authorities is limited to plans adopted with the participation of young people, but their evidence about their implementation was not provided to the evaluation team. Therefore, the long-term commitment of the local authorities is uncertain.</p>	<p>children from decision-makers and the wider public</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. United Nations working together 4. Leveraging the power of business and markets for children (to a limited extent)
Social protection	<p>There is only circumstantial (but convincing) evidence that the change of approach of international financial institutions (World Bank and IMF) regarding social protection and their partial alignment with UNICEF's advocacy agenda allowed for good advocacy results: the Ministry of Labour and Social Development eliminated one of the eligibility filters for child benefits and thereby contributed to a 7% increase in coverage in 2020 and UNICEF can be cautiously confident that the recommendations provided and the related advocacy, determined this change in approach.</p> <p>There is, however, no direct evidence on the contribution of UNICEF and the World Bank, and one alternative explanation would be that the Ministry's decision on changing the eligibility filters for child benefits was taken independently of development partners because of the additional social pressure generated by COVID-19. There is, however, a striking similarity between the decision taken, its visible impact, and the recommendations made by UNICEF.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children – by joining activities with WB 2. Using the power of evidence to drive change for children

The analysis is limited by the fact that the strategies and combination of strategies found in the case studies have similar level of effectiveness. However, two main lessons can be learned from the three cases, as follows.

- Innovative approaches, based on model/piloting projects, generate impact for children at local level, but will not be scaled-up without the implementation of additional strategies, and they have a limited impact until the moment they are taken up by the government. Evidence collected, for example, on programmes for children with disabilities or the home-visiting model show that there is open dialogue with the Government, but that scaling up after a project has had success in a limited geographical area is not immediate. Institutional and political instability and the bottlenecks related to institutional capacity at local level in all regions are important when planning the scaling-up of innovative approaches.
- Using the power of evidence to drive change for children does not seem to be enough but does have some impact on policy change when combined with a strategy to leverage resources and partnerships for children, including the mobilization of UN agencies for children. This is consistent with theories on policy change and advocacy.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Stachowiak, Sarah, *Pathways for Change: 10 Theories to Inform Advocacy and Policy Change Efforts*. Seattle: ORS Impact; Washington, DC: The Center for Evaluation Innovation, 2013.

4. Conclusions, lessons learned and forward-looking recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

The UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Country Programme (CP), 2018-2022, has been implemented, until 2021, under challenging conditions. These conditions have been shaped by the complex needs of children in Kyrgyzstan, the institutional and political instability that has affected the country, and the restrictions and socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This context remains both sensitive and unpredictable and UNICEF Kyrgyzstan needs to take that into consideration when planning.

UNICEF has the capacity to address the long-lasting and changing needs of children

The evaluation shows that UNICEF Kyrgyzstan has successfully addressed a range of important and pressing needs for children in the country, particularly those who are the most vulnerable. It has supported policy and institutional developments for the benefit of these children through a combination of advocacy and technical assistance.

Data analysis and research on the role in UNICEF work is essential for two key reasons. First, data analysis and research inform the UNICEF Country Office (CO) on the needs of children and the effectiveness of existing measures to address these needs, enabling the CO to make decisions (during programme planning and implementation) related to priorities and effective strategies. And second, evidence generation is the most valuable tool for advocacy in the dialogue between UNICEF and the Government of Kyrgyzstan. Evaluation reports are highly effective in guiding UNICEF towards the design and implementation of interventions that address the most vulnerable children, thereby focusing its work on their most pressing needs.

Evidence-based advocacy is complemented by other strategies to improve policy implementation and the realization of children's rights in Kyrgyzstan. The most important complementary strategy is the work with partners. The ability of UNICEF to leverage the advantages of different partners and to act as a convenor and consensus builder is essential for the impact for children at scale (at institutional level and at individual level). In addition, the impact of UNICEF's advocacy in Kyrgyzstan is linked not only to its own direct efforts, but also to the opening of windows of opportunities by governmental partners and/or others development partners.

Despite good identification of needs, however, there are groups of vulnerable and marginalized children that are less covered by UNICEF work: young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEETs), homeless children, most-at-risk and especially vulnerable adolescents. The lack of impact for these groups is linked to the lack or limited number of UNICEF activities that target them directly.

UNICEF contributes to gender equality and acts to change social norms that conflict with this and other child rights

A special note needs to be made concerning UNICEF relevance, effectiveness, and impact in addressing gender equality. Following the Global Gender Action Plan (GAP) Evaluation in 201 and other assessments, the current UNICEF Kyrgyzstan CP is taking a strategic approach to gender equality, integrating it into every aspect of the CP and its implementation.

The CO's Gender Strategy was developed and endorsed to contextualize the GAP within the CPD and identifies key gender inequality issues and strategic entry points for programming. Accountability mechanisms to advance gender programming have been integrated into performance plans and the Country Programme Document (CPD) also focuses on ensuring cross-sectoral work to improve gender integration. Better statistics that reflect gender across all aspects of interest for children rights and well-being have been promoted. This differs from the more sectoral perspective to gender equality that was previously in place.

Although systemic progress and the change in social norms is a long-term process, the findings of this evaluation allow us to conclude that the strategic approach to gender equality is increasing UNICEF's effectiveness and chances of impact.

Nevertheless, social norms and values contradictory to the human rights remain a key bottleneck identified by the evaluation. The continued practice of child marriage and kidnapping for forced marriage are important indicator of the significance of the bottlenecks related to social norms and values. Therefore, UNICEF's strategic and systemic approach to gender equality remains important and needs to be continued with perseverance over time.

UNICEF's comprehensive work with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has impact

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan has responded to the needs of the most vulnerable children and supported the Government of Kyrgyzstan in meeting these needs in two main ways. First, UNICEF has advocated for a strategic approach to all identified needs. Second, UNICEF has supported the government to strengthen the responsible institutions to implement effective strategies.

This support has included enhancing national capacity to collect, analyse and use data, providing training to key responsible stakeholders and working with state officials on budgeting for new services or the development of services provided by the strategic documents. UNICEF has also encouraged the institutionalization of key policy areas through the creation of dedicated departments within ministries, including the creation of the Early Childhood Education department within the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES).

The impact of UNICEF's work is particularly visible in the significant improvements for children at national scale, as seen in the national statistics, in areas where the strategic focus was implemented by UNICEF together with institutional strengthening activities, as in the case of mother and child health and early childhood education.

UNICEF work with partners is essential

UNICEF works effectively with a range of different partners to drive change for children and their families in Kyrgyzstan. It has made effective use of its comparative advantages related to its expertise, strategic focus and adaptability to build and sustain effective partnership for children rights and well-being.

Four main types of partnerships are sustained by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan: (a) its partnership with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, State agencies and other State bodies at national level; (b) its partnership with local government, especially for model projects; (c) its partnership with development partners and UN agencies on different common interest points; and (d) its partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs) for advocacy and as implementing partners. The Social Network Analysis shows the existence of a strong community, with various connections between actors in different clusters formed around the CO departments, and that the partners are supporting each other to generate results at scale.

The analysis at the level of each CP Outcome shows that the work with partners is instrumental in supporting the success of UNICEF activities. Impactful partnerships include bilateral cooperation with UN agencies and other international organizations and with implementation partners in Osh (in the case of programmes for adolescents' engagement and participation), as well as partnerships in the framework of the United Nations Development Framework (UNDAF) and the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC).

The evaluation, therefore, shows that UNICEF's work with partners is both important and valuable. However, except for the partnership with the Government, the work of the CO with partners is not included in the CPD as a strategic element. Considering the value of the partnership, this evaluation recommends that a strategic approach to partnerships is included in the next CPD, as an explicit element.

UNICEF has impact, but there are limitations and sustainability risks

In most areas where UNICEF Kyrgyzstan works, available evidence shows important progress in the realization of child rights in the country, despite the unfavourable contextual factors, including political and institutional instability, the COVID-19 pandemic, unfavourable social norms and the rise of a conservative approach to gender roles.

Most of the results included in the ToC have been achieved and have determined UNICEF impact, although not all the initial assumptions proved to be correct and additional bottlenecks and risks

appeared during CP implementation. Examples of impact at scale for children in the country, generated by national policies with UNICEF support, include:

- the adoption of the revised Child Code by Parliament in July 2021
- the institutionalization of national multidimensional poverty measurement
- the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2019 and the development of clear plans for its implementation in the country
- improvements in healthcare and nutrition for children, visible in the reduction of child, infant and neonatal mortality rates
- improvements in clinical standards, protocols and the capacity of medical staff in maternal, child and adolescent health in several healthcare facilities in the country
- improved vaccination capacity in the country, visible in the good situation of immunization of children
- the adoption of the Food Security and Nutrition Programme 2019-2023
- improved access to early childhood education and government commitment to accelerate progress
- the adoption of the 'Education Development Programme for 2021-2040' (EDS) and its first implementation Action Plan for 2021-2023, as well as an improved education management information system (EMIS), all of which contribute to improved education quality
- strengthened free legal aid for children
- improved adolescent participation and greater social cohesion among them in selected areas.

The impact is, however, limited by several bottlenecks and risks that remain salient and that hinder the results of UNICEF work, some of them sector specific. These include the limited capacity of healthcare services, conservative practice in the educational system (such as the promotion of traditional gender roles and learning methods that do not encourage students to express their opinions), and the complex system of residential institutions for children without parental care (organized under several Ministries).

UNICEF identified and reassessed bottlenecks throughout programme implementation and implemented strategies to cope with them. However, these strategies have been only partly effective, given the scale of the bottlenecks. The most important tactics in the implementation of these strategies are: continuous advocacy activities, adapted to respond to changes in decision-makers or institutional settings, and the design of capacity building activities, such as trainings, considering the bottlenecks related to political and institutional instability and the associated risks to sustainability. Dedicated CP outputs and activities allowed UNICEF to address bottlenecks related to the limited capacity for service provision for the realization of child rights and insufficient policy coordination.

Less impact is visible in areas where two significant bottlenecks have hindered the results of UNICEF's work: the continued presence of social norms and values that are contrary to human rights and limited inter-sectoral cooperation. There is, for example, only slow progress on the development of an early identification system for children with disabilities and of services for these children, because they are affected by these bottlenecks.

Significant risks to the sustainability of activities have been generated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting social and economic crises. In this context, reforms in the school system could be inefficient to counteract the impact of limited access to remote lessons in 2020 and learning losses. The pressure on the healthcare system showed systemic weaknesses and generated additional risks to maintaining the impact already achieved on neonatal, infant and under-5 mortality rates. In addition, estimates on rising poverty are alarming and generate a huge pressure on social and child protection systems that remain weak.

UNICEF responded well to the COVID-19 pandemic

To meet the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects, UNICEF Kyrgyzstan implemented an integrated approach to prioritize the well-being of children. As a result, UNICEF maintained its relevance in a context of rapidly changing needs and continued to work to generate impact for all children.

The response to COVID-19 included: the provision of essential supplies to medical personnel working at the frontlines; support for the procurement of COVID-19 medication for healthcare facilities and technical assistance for healthcare providers to ensure continued access to healthcare; support for the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) to reach all pre-school and school-aged children (more than 1.4 million) with remote learning in 2020 and to prepare for the safe reopening of schools; the provision of the Humanitarian Cash Transfer (HCT); and support for coordination with development partners and UN agencies in the country in the response to COVID-19.

As mentioned, however, the pandemic generated significant risks to sustainability, with an economic and social impact on the most vulnerable. The extent of this risk for the future remains to be measured, but the evidence and findings of the evaluation demonstrate the need for continuous and close cooperation between UNICEF and Kyrgyzstan national and local government authorities to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and address the needs of children in poverty and those affected by social exclusion. Children may be more exposed to the economic and social risks generated by the pandemic when they have disabilities, lack parental care due to institutionalisation or parental migration, or live in remote rural areas.

4.2. Lessons learned

The Country Programme (2018-2022) shows how, in times of rapid political, policy and institutional change, a balance needs to be found between proposing or responding to ambitious new agendas and giving stakeholders time to understand and commit to the agenda. In some cases, it is necessary to act quickly, as UNICEF did in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In other cases, it may be advisable to slow down to allow more time for stakeholder buy-in, as seen during the process of adopting the revised Child Code.

The experience of the CP demonstrates that it is essential to strengthen the capacity of both national and local government staff to ensure the implementation of reforms. Institutional change and capacity building is, however, known to be a long and challenging process.

Many lessons emerge from the current reforms that UNICEF Kyrgyzstan could share with other middle-income countries, particularly those in the region that are going through a period of transition. For example, in the areas of early childhood development and education (ECD and ECE), the experience of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan has been mixed. It illustrates the way in which change for children at scale can be generated through a comparison of the results in the sub-area of ECE with the other sub-areas. UNICEF worked with government and development partners to integrate ECE into the strategic priorities of the country and promote its institutionalization, and the MoES created a dedicated ECE department. Capacity building was based on work carried out with this specialized department, but also on trainings to improve budgeting at national and local level. Together with the strategic and institutional changes to strengthen the area overall, UNICEF successfully promoted the scaling up of the country's child development centres (CDCs). All these activities are contributions to the increased access to ECE for children across the country. In contrast, the strategic approach and institutional strengthening activities have not been as strong in the promotion of home visiting (another component of the early childhood development policy) and results are less visible in this area now. However, the legal framework was updated and, according to UNICEF representative, the country is now preparing to scale-up.

This experience confirms that it is essential to create a sharp vision of the way in which organizations or functions will be strengthened and how this will benefit staff, duty and rights holders alike, and to lay out the main stages in institutional strengthening. This will aid the monitoring of organizational change and the response to any problems that arise.

Innovative approaches, based on model/piloting projects and the use of innovative technologies, generated impact for children at local level. They will not, however, be scaled-up unless they are supported by additional implementation strategies. While these innovative approaches benefit those participating, their wider impact is limited until the moment they are taken up by the government. The CO's annual report for 2018, for example, notes some challenges for the programme providing micronutrient sprinkles (Gulazyk) in Kyrgyzstan during the previous CP. The programme was piloted and scaled up by UNICEF between 2012 and 2018, using three main channels: primary healthcare

providers, village health committee volunteers and the mass media. However, several challenges emerged in 2018, ranging from procurement issues to mistrust on the part of the Ministry of Health in the effectiveness of the micronutrient intake.¹²⁶

The key elements for the success for a programme that can be taken over by the government are:

- the development of government ownership
- planning at scale from the outset
- planning the scaling-up within the limits of government budgets, without significant reliance on external resources, from the outset
- continuous monitoring and evaluation of a programme before and after its scaling up to contribute to the continuous strengthening of evidence-informed platforms for the institutionalization of programmes at government level
- recognition of the importance of the partnership with government and of positioning UNICEF as a consensus builder in dialogue with government, development partners, expert communities and CSOs.

These lessons informed the approach of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan in the promotion of the policy package on early childhood education, and particularly the promotion of CDCs within existing municipal libraries. The strategy used by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan included the modelling of the centres, but also advocacy activities to promote the institutionalization of ECE at the level of the MoES and its integration into the strategic documents of the education system.

As noted, this integrated approach is not yet visible in the plans for the development of home visiting and the early identification of children with disabilities, but the CO team is aware of both the risks and the lessons learned in the experience of scaling-up initiatives.

The impact assessment conducted for this report shows that it is essential to use the power of evidence to drive change for children. This is, however, more likely to generate policy change when implemented alongside other strategies, particularly the strategy of leveraging partnerships for children, including the mobilization of UN agencies and international financial institutions. This is one of the most important lessons learned in the promotion of both the revised Child Code (eventually a success for UNICEF) and reforms for social protection. The development and maintenance of partnerships with UN agencies, developmental partners and CSOs requires a strategic approach, tailored for each advocacy target. Such approaches have been implemented successfully by the UNICEF Kyrgyzstan CO in some of the areas analysed in this evaluation and could provide inspiration for other areas and other countries.

The years 2020 and 2021 provided valuable lessons on the value of youth engagement in a young society. Young volunteers were invaluable in saving lives during the COVID-19 crisis by directly supporting medical teams in hospitals and bringing medical equipment and drugs to patients' homes. Young people have also been essential actors in the political events in Kyrgyzstan in 2020, eventually determining the change of regime. UNICEF programmes for youth engagement and participation generated interest from public authorities as well as young people, including the endorsement of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. All these developments demonstrated a strong demand from the country's youth to have a voice and a role in shaping the present and future of the country. To respond to this demand and to valorise the momentum, **UNICEF should support young people in building their own platforms to express their views and engage in decision making at local and national level.**

¹²⁶ The Ministry of Health asserted that Gulazyk was registered as a biologically active supplement and was not, therefore, considered to be part of the essential medicines list. The Ministry also noted its concerns regarding the conclusions of recent Cochrane reviews and WHO guidelines. This literature pointed to the low quality of existing research methodology on the effectiveness of micronutrients, with an elevated risk of deviation for various target groups during pregnancy and for the treatment of anaemia among mothers and children (a lesson learned, according to the UNICEF COAR 2018).

4.3. Recommendations

The recommendations apply to the overall strategy, thematic focus and balance of the programme and are designed to complement the recommendations of the 2021 Situation Analysis. The aim is to propose appropriate continuation and development based on the partnerships, teamwork and results of the 2018–2022 Country Programme – considering the challenges encountered. All recommendations are addressed to UNICEF CO in Kyrgyzstan and have been discussed with the CO team in two meetings in October and November 2021. The meetings also addressed the priority level of recommendations and details on implementation strategies to be included in the management response.

High priority recommendation

Recommendation 1. Continue to strengthen evidence-based, innovative and diverse approaches in Communication for Development and Behaviour Change (C4D and C4BC).

This recommendation considers and aims to address the harmful or negative social norms that hinder the promotion of child rights in all communities and families. Its implementation should include capacity building for partners to ensure a systematic approach that shifts away from stand-alone, donor-driven campaigns; evidence generation and social listening to inform C4D and C4BC strategies, interventions and messages; digital engagement, including the engagement of young people through social media and gamification; social mobilization and community engagement to contribute to knowledge building, as well as uptake of and demand for services; and changing harmful behaviours and social norms. Diverse communication approaches need use of social psychology on social norms to design effective messages and work in parallel with local community leaders to roll-out the messages in more traditional communities – particularly in relation to work on violence against children, child marriage, and services for children with disabilities. It is also essential to measure the impact of communication activities and adapt campaigns in response to data about their reception to ensure the implementation of this recommendation.

Recommendation 2. Develop clear advocacy strategies and sustainability/exit strategies for each model/pilot project and gain support from development partners and other UN agencies to enhance the impact of advocacy in promoting new policy measures.

The creation of local modelling and pilot projects remains an indispensable implementation strategy and UNICEF needs to undertake all steps within its power to achieve results planned in projects of this kind and ensure that they are used by government. Now, the evaluation shows that without clear advocacy and exit strategies, the good results achieved at local level cannot generate impact for children at scale. Evidence collected and lessons learned show conditions that need to be met from the moment of planning local pilot and model projects. These conditions include:

- planning at scale, including realist scale-up strategies as the core of each project implemented at local level
- considering budget limitations
- supporting the strengthening of institutional capacity at national level and governmental implementation of plans to strengthen institutional capacity at local level
- planning the monitoring and evaluation of new measures institutionalized by the government to support better linkages between service delivery and statistical information and, therefore, to support evidence-based decision making.

Recommendation 3. The leveraging of partnerships should be continued and extended, especially in the areas of child protection and social protection, where it should include social cash benefits, as well as the development of social services and social work. This recommendation aims to support access for the most vulnerable children to other key services (child protection, health, education, justice), considering that social work should be at the centre of a reformed social protection system more broadly. The progress made is not impressive but is contrasting with the stagnation of the social protection policy in the last years.

Experience in the field of social protection shows that alliances with development partners are instrumental for UNICEF impact. Social protection is often viewed as being based on cash transfers and as placing a strain on the national budget, and the limited impact in this area over time in this area could

be the result of a lack of agreement between UNICEF and international financial institutions (namely the International Monetary Fund and World Bank). However, UNICEF's partnership with the World Bank on the improvement of Kyrgyzstan's social protection system during the COVID-19 pandemic generated rapid results.

A comprehensive evaluation of the existing social protection system is needed to implement this recommendation. A useful first step would be to establish the needs for reform from the perspective of the role of social work and social services. There is also a need to better professionalize and expand the social worker cadre and develop an upgraded competency framework to align with global practice and national standards on emerging child needs. It is also essential to improve the public image and valorise social work for progress in this area.

Recommendation 4. Support the strengthening of cross-sectoral cooperation across different government institutions in areas where this is essential for the realization of child rights, including early childhood education, adolescent empowerment and engagement, addressing violence against children, services for children with disabilities, and action to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change on children.

In the field of early childhood education and development, for example, more achievements have been made on aspects of education, while less success is observable in the areas of early childhood development that require cross-sectoral cooperation, such as home visiting and the early identification of and services for children with disabilities and developmental delays. In this context, it is recommended that UNICEF use the lessons learned and good practices from the development of early childhood education for the promotion of other components of the early childhood development policy.

The planning of cross-sectoral approaches at national level contributes to cross-sectoral practice at local level, but the need to develop cross-sectoral practices at local level should also be considered. Although cooperation at local level can be easier, as it can build on personal connections, cooperation tools are needed to ensure cooperation irrespective of these connections to ensure a clear division of responsibilities, as well as the acceptance of any responsibilities that are shared.

Low priority recommendation

Recommendation 5. Continue and extend support for the participation of children and adolescents in decision making in relation to public institutions at national and local level.

The success of activities that support the participation of adolescents and young people in local-level decision making can influence public support for policy change and determine momentum for reforms for children.

To implement this recommendation UNICEF should continue its support for the Youth and Child Friendly Local Government (YCFLG) approach and advocate to government and development partners/donors for consistent support for youth organizations and youth consultative bodies. In other words, UNICEF should continue to support different avenues for the participation of adolescents and young people in the decisions that affect their lives. Special attention should be given to the participation of children and adolescents in schools as an avenue to strengthen the transferable skills they need for their future by practising participation in school-based platforms. Schools are great starting points because they reach most children, and the organization of participatory bodies and consultations within schools will offer this experience to many children.

Recommendation 6. Develop a strategic approach for partnership and cooperation with development partners, other UN agencies and CSOs. This should extend the scope of this partnership and cooperation to enhance the impact of advocacy and enlarge the circle of partners beyond traditional partners when conducting advocacy at national and local level.

Partnerships proved instrumental in ensuring the success of the other strategies employed. Indeed, the lessons learned from previous challenges show that partnerships can make or break UNICEF impact on policies for children. UNICEF can benefit even more from good cooperation with different partners if partnership is included as a strategic element in the new CPD.

A stakeholder analysis at outcome (or even output level) for all outcomes/outputs during planning for the future CPD needs to identify the most influential potential partners. The establishment of partnerships in the initial phases of advocacy processes is key for the timely success of these activities. Specific advocacy activities should be planned with like-minded partners following a strategic approach to the partnership itself.

In the case of output areas where a lack of partners or organizational opposition have been identified as hindering factors, special attention should be paid to building partnerships and finding common ground with organizations that share human-rights values. The aim is to find a compromise that allows the promotion of at least part of UNICEF's agenda.

Recommendation 7. Introduce new internal monitoring tools to trace more clearly the change pathways from UNICEF activities to results for children.

Documenting the path from research (via its conclusions and recommendations) through to government policy decisions, the implementation of actions at national and local level, and the assessment of the results for children will inform future evaluations and support better learning from experience. A better understanding of how policy change happens could be supported by improving the registration of institutional memory and the tracking of advocacy activities (events, meetings with decision and policy makers and partners, and the implementation of communication campaigns) in connection with policy decisions, declarations on policies or institutional changes. In addition, a consistent approach is needed to monitor the impact of trainings and other capacity building activities (mentorship, coaching), using pre and post testing and making the connections between these activities and observable institutional changes.

5. Annexes

Annex 1. Summary analysis of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan effectiveness and impact

The table below is based on the reports of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan CO.¹²⁷

Output indicators are registered according to the 2020 Country Office Annual Report – the latest available report, although there are changes of output indicators operated in March 2021. However, for newly formulated or introduced indicators there are no data and they are not appropriate for impact evaluation.

Outputs related to COVID-19 response are not included in the table, because all indicators in the monitoring framework are reflecting effectiveness, not impact – therefore are not under the scope of the evaluation. UNICEF Kyrgyzstan response to COVID-19 pandemic is analyse primarily under relevance.

Note on the assessment of UNICEF impact based on the outcome and output indicators in the Country Programme Document:

Although most indicators analysed are – according to UNICEF denomination – output indicators, they are not only measuring direct results of each activity conducted by UNICEF. They also potentially show short term changes with direct relevance for children at scale, either referring to the situation of children, changes in public perception, attitude or behaviour or systemic changes that enable institutions to fulfil better their role in providing services for children and protecting their rights.

Indicators in the table are marked on their relevance for the assessment of effectiveness or impact. And when impact can be measured, the type of impact is identified as: (1) better access to services/direct improvement of the situation of children; (2) behavioural and attitudes change; (3) institutional change (including institutional capacity raised); (4) change in policy (including strategies, plans, laws, legislation of other nature/level); (5) improvement of financing for children

Strategies identified in the table are a simplified presentation of UNICEF Strategies as in the schema below.

Strategy according to UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021	Table presentation (basic approach identified)	REPORTED ACHIEVEMENTS	CONTRIBUTION of UNICEF
Winning support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public	Communication	Result achieved	- Contribution identified
Using the power of evidence to drive change for children	Evidence based advocacy	Result generation on track, but the change not secured	- Indirect contribution identified
Fostering innovation in programming and advocacy for children	Modelling/piloting	Result parley achieved. Delays registered	
Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children	Resource mobilisation Partnership support	Result not achieved	
United Nations working together	UN partnership		
Leveraging the power of business and markets for children	Business partnership		

¹²⁷ Other sources used are mentioned in the table or notes.

Table 5. Summary analysis of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan effectiveness and impact

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
OUTCOME 1. CHILD RIGHTS-BASED MONITORING SYSTEMS AND DECISION-MAKING By 2022, the state has effective and accountable public administration system to deliver results for disadvantaged children	Number of children covered by social protection systems (25-02-L2-02)	impact - better access to services/direct improvement of the situation of children	14% (2016)	n/a (17% in 2022)	- A World Bank-UNICEF report on the predicted increase in child poverty informed advocacy and influenced the Government to expand coverage of social protection scheme for children by 7% in 2020 - To inform COVID-19 response, UNICEF helped assess the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on children and families, including a rapid MICS follow-up survey.	Evidence based advocacy Partnership support	Children from poor households All vulnerable children
	Proportion of population satisfied with their last experience with the public services		22% (2016)	n/a (40% in 2022)	<i>See all other indicators under Outcomes 1 and 2</i>		
Output 1.1. EVIDENCE GENERATION TO INFORM POLICY ADVOCACY <i>State institutions have capacity to generate and utilize evidence for child rights monitoring, advocacy and policy formulation</i>	Child-related SDG indicators are institutionalised	impact institutional change -	NO (2017)	Child-related SDG indicators considered by NSC, the National Development Program 2018-2022 and the Education Strategy	- Using available evidence, UNICEF joined forces with other UN agencies to support the Voluntary National Review of progress towards SDGs	Evidence based advocacy UN partnership	
	Intersectoral Management Information System (MIS) on children is developed and tested in selected districts		NO (2017)	MIS developed in 2019, but further development postponed in 2020, due to COVID-19	- UNICEF supported the system strengthening resulting in the launch of the new education management information system (EMIS) that is designed to relate to other sectors	Resource mobilisation	
Output 1.2. PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE FOR CHILDREN <i>Social sector ministries and parliament have improved capacity to manage and oversight public finance for children</i>	National government measurement of child poverty using multidimensional measures	impact institutional change -	NO (2017)	MPI methodology accepted by NSC for regular measurement	- UNICEF strengthened the evidence base on child rights with the introduction of routine measurement of multidimensional child poverty. - UNICEF technical support around cash assistance consisted in analysing the current child grant scheme and in generating new evidence regarding new options for child benefits that would cover all children aged 0-18 months	Evidence based advocacy Partnership support Resource mobilisation	
	Evidence generated on budgets and their linkages to child outcomes to		Not annually (2017)	Costed draft law available	- Budget evidence on Social Protection 2018 generated. Key findings and conclusions prepared in a reader-friendly sub-briefs.	Evidence based advocacy Partnership support	Children from poor households

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
	<p>improve budget allocations/expenditure for children</p> <p>Cash transfers: Existence of legislation on cash transfer programmes and/or family benefits</p>	<p>impact - institutional change</p>	<p>NO (2017)</p>	<p>Draft guidelines with audit performance tools are available (after the Chamber of Accounts audit)</p>	<p>Dissemination limited to several parliamentarians, representatives of the President Office and technical professionals of Ministry</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A World Bank-UNICEF report on the predicted increase in child poverty informed advocacy and influenced the Government to expand coverage of social protection scheme for children by 7% in 2020 - To advance public finance management engagement, UNICEF, jointly with UNDP, secured resources from the SDG Fund to support the development of the Integrated National Financing Framework for SDGs (INFF). Through this new programme, UNICEF will deepen its work on aligning planning and budgeting in the education sector, strive to unlock private financing to increase ECE coverage thought Private-Public Partnerships, and improve budget decision-making for achieving the SDGs. 	<p>Resource mobilisation</p>	
OUTCOME 2. ACCESS TO SURVIVAL, LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES By 2022, disadvantaged children have equitable	Percentage of children aged 0 to 4 years old that received early stimulation and responsive care from their parents or caregivers	impact - better access to services/direct improvement of the situation of children	23% (2014)	n/a (80% 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - With the support of development partners represented in Kyrgyzstan, including UNICEF, a 2019–2030 health sector strategy was developed and approved, incorporating a five-year action plan. - In partnership with the MOES and USAID, as part of a pilot project on inclusive education, UNICEF supported the inclusive transition of children 	<p>Modelling/piloting Partnership support Evidence based advocacy</p>	<p>n/a Children with congenital malformations Impact expected for the most vulnerable</p>

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
access to health and education services to survive, learn, develop and contribute to resilient, inclusive and sustainable communities	<p>Percentage of children under five who are stunted</p> <p>Newborns receiving postnatal care within two days of births</p> <p>Net enrolment rate in upper secondary education (%)</p> <p>Participation rate in organized learning one year before the official primary entry age</p> <p>National Multisectoral Committee for Nutrition available and functional</p> <p>Existence of a national policy or plan targeting anaemia reduction in women and girls</p> <p>EMIS provides comprehensive and regular data on OOSC and dropout risks</p>	<p>Impact institutional change -</p>			from preschool to primary school. Children of preschool age with special needs were identified, and ways to offer early stimulation and development of their social, emotional and cognitive skills for better learning in primary school were designed and piloted. 19 children with special education needs (7 girls, 12 boys) in 10 target kindergartens and 17 children with special education needs (8 girls, 11 boys) in preschool classes were identified and supported. A total of 20 teachers from targeted kindergartens and schools, and 19 specialists of the Psycho-Medical and Pedagogical Consultation (PMPC) of pilot districts and cities, were trained.		
			12.9% (2014)	n/a (5% - 2022)	<i>See contribution under outputs 2.1 and 2.2</i>		
			25% (2014)	n/a (30% - 2022)	- UNICEF supported a five-day ToT on the revised Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) guidelines for 105 medical workers in maternal and new-born facilities. The trainers are disseminating the new guidelines to 2,100 healthcare workers.	Resource mobilisation Partnership support	
			n/a	n/a	<i>See contribution under output 2.4</i>		
			0% (2014)	n/a (70% - 2020 / 90% - 2022)	<i>See contribution under outputs 2.3 and 2.4</i>		n/a Children with congenital malformations
			NO (2017)	n/a	<i>See contribution under output 2.2</i>		Impact expected for the most vulnerable
			NO (2017)	n/a			
			NO (2017)	n/a	<i>See contribution under output 2.4</i>		
Output 2.1. HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGHTENING <i>Healthcare professionals have the capacity to provide quality perinatal, modern home visiting</i>	Policy for home visits of new-borns is developed and/or revised, adopted and in use	impact – change in policy	NO (2017)	Postnatal home visiting service is under the modelling and relevant documents with	- UNICEF supported the piloting of postnatal home visiting services for new-borns at two family medicine centres in accordance with updated guidelines that include identification of children at risk of developmental delay, abuse and neglect, and referral to transdisciplinary services. This work and successful advocacy has resulted in the inclusion of a home visiting	Modelling/piloting Resource mobilisation Partnership support	n/a The activities under the output are aiming at strengthening the healthcare system.

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
<i>and adolescent-friendly services to the most disadvantaged boys and girls</i>			guidelines are developed, approved and in use by health providers		<p>indicator into the criteria for bonus payments to family doctors from the Mandatory Health Insurance Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Home visiting reform under piloting - With ongoing support for telemedicine services in the country, COVID-19 provided an opportunity to accelerate telemedicine reform and implementation. Telemedicine proved to be a means to ensure access of vulnerable families to essential health services. UNICEF supported the MOH to maintain home visiting services for new-borns through using smartphone-based technologies (WhatsApp) and related regulations was adopted. Parliament suspended a review of the draft law on telemedicine, based on evidence supplied by UNICEF. Based on UNICEF's technical guidance, Telemedicine is now considered inclusive of Primary Health Care and not only intended for secondary and tertiary facilities. Due to UNICEF advocacy, but parliament also halted a revision of a bill that would allow the import of unfortified flour during COVID-19. - UNICEF also provided technical assistance to clinical guidelines for managing COVID-19 in new-borns, children and adolescents. With primary healthcare services overwhelmed by the COVID-19 response, UNICEF paid attention to maintaining essential routine health services. UNICEF supported capacity building of neonatologists and other healthcare workers, training and awareness-raising on breastfeeding and supplementary feeding practices; and access to immunisation services. 		Impact expected for the most vulnerable and children with congenital malformations
% of targeted mothers reached through continuous social mobilization and communication to promote immunization		output	0 (2017)	39% (10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF partnered with governmental, social and religious organizations to support the MoH to promote immunization. - UNICEF expanded social mobilisation on immunisation to cover five additional regions. 7,937 under-vaccinated children under six years old were identified. Volunteers conducted face-to-face and telephone sessions with parents of 27% of the total number of under-vaccinated children. Of these, 852 children were vaccinated, representing 39% of the children whose parents 	Resource mobilisation Partnership support	n/a The activities under the output are aiming at strengthening the healthcare system. Impact expected for the most vulnerable and

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
					<p>were reached and 11% of all under-vaccinated children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to UNICEF support, the Ministry of Health (MOH) reported no vaccine shortage in 2020 despite the global impact of COVID-19 on supply chains. UNICEF completed the Cold Chain Equipment Optimisation Platform (CCEOP) priorities for 2020, increasing the proportion of vaccination points with specialised refrigeration equipment from 49 to 85 percent and ensuring safe vaccination services, especially in remote areas. - UNICEF supported the Republican Centre for Immunization (RCI) to complete the second phase of the Cold Chain Equipment Optimisation Platform (CCEOP) to install 341 specialised refrigerators. These installations increased vaccination points with specialised equipment from 49 to 85 percent, ensuring safe vaccination services, especially in remote areas. 		children with congenital malformations
Output 2.2. POLICIES AND STANDARDS FOR NUTRITION SERVICES <i>Government can produce multi-sectoral policies and standards to guide and monitor nutrition services to the most disadvantaged women and children</i>	Existence of a functional national multisectoral committee for nutrition Existence of a national management information system that includes disaggregated data on nutrition, including sex-disaggregated data Existence of a national programme targeting anaemia reduction among women and g	output output	Committee on Nutrition exists, but not functional (2017)	Food Security and Nutrition Programme approved in June 2019 Draft Government Decree on coordination of food security and nutrition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF assisted in the development of draft amendments to the Law on Protection of Breastfeeding and Regulation of Breastmilk Substitutes - UNICEF assisted the Government to strengthen a regulatory platform on nutrition and to develop new food standards. - ToRs for the National Coordinator, the SUN Multi-stakeholder Platform with linkage to Food Security and Nutrition Council developed and shared with the Prime-Minister Office - UNICEF supported the drafting of the Food Security and Nutrition Programme and the Government Decree on coordination of food security and nutrition. The Programme outlines policies and measures to improve nutritional status of population, including anaemia reduction. - Evidence generation for improved and targeted reduction of anaemia through National Integrated Micronutrient and Anthropometric Survey (NIMA) launch (Phase 1) - UNICEF supported the implementation of nutrition information systems to provide evidence for policy decisions and programming. The NTD register was rolled out in 46 health 	UN partnership Resource mobilisation Partnership support Evidence based advocacy	n/a <i>The activities under the output are aiming at improving the nutrition for all children</i> Impact expected for the most vulnerable and children affected my malnutrition

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
					<p>facilities out of 59 (primary, secondary and tertiary levels) in Bishkek, Talas and Issyk-Kul Provinces, with subsequent training of 261 medical workers on congenital malformations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF supported the development, dissemination and implementation of appropriate breastfeeding and complementary feeding recommendations in the COVID-19 context to 105 health facilities out of 202 Family Medicines Centres and hospitals (200,000 copies for breastfeeding mothers and 10,000 for medical workers). UNICEF provided technical and financial support for the development of guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) and adaptations to IYCF counselling and wasting management in the context of COVID-19. 290 medical workers received training on IYCF guidelines in the COVID-19 context and children's growth monitoring standards. Moreover, 560 medical workers received training on Severe Acute Malnutrition in the COVID-19 context. Nutrition messaging on IYCF during COVID-19 took place through social media platforms reaching 141,000 mothers. 50 messages on nutrition, including dietary diversity and IYCF during COVID-19, were disseminated through the Republican Health Promotion Center, reaching 14,175 Facebook, 2,229 Instagram and 368,300 YouTube users. - 306 medical workers were trained online on the guidelines on anaemia developed in 2019. 		
Output 2.3. Service providers can provide adolescent friendly services, including HIV prevention for the vulnerable and most at risk adolescents	Relevant national policy framework on adolescents	impact – change in policy	NO (2017)	Analysis provided support to the policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regulations, clinical protocols, standards, plans and tools were developed or endorsed, such as on post-natal care and screening adolescents to identify those using drugs - pilot HBSC - Report on "Adolescent Health" based on routine MOH data - analysis "Adolescent Health and Well-being" - To encourage HIV prevention and care, 100 adolescents living with HIV received support through smartphone-based applications and the development of a collection of stories based on their real-life experience, adhered to ARVs, and given information on HIV disclosure and healthy living. 	UN partnership Resource mobilisation Partnership support	Children / young people with HIV Young women Adolescent using drugs

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
					- Approximately 30,000 pregnant women received PMTCT services.		
Output 2.4. STRENGTHENING SYSTEM FOR ECD/ECE <i>ECD/ECE institutional capacities strengthened to deliver quality early development, learning and school readiness for all, especially most disadvantaged girls and boys</i>	Existence of a monitoring and reporting system on national budget allocation and implementation status on ECD across sectors	impact – improvement financing for children	NO (2017)	Guidelines on ECE funding and reporting mechanism are available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - budget brief of Early Childhood (pre-school) Education in Kyrgyzstan and analysis of expenditures and financing of ECE were done by national consultant. - About 80 financial specialists from diverse levels of ECE benefited from the capacity building works - UNICEF supported the Chamber of Accounts (CoA) to develop performance audit tools, with a focus on the ECE sector - UNICEF also supported key government officials' training to conduct an equity-based analysis of data sources on maternal and child health and child survival, and child nutrition, using the Equitable Impact Sensitive Tool (EQUIST). The training resulted in developing the first EQUIST report. EQUIST used publicly available and validated subnational data to provide a clear picture of the current health trends to identify the root causes that disrupts service delivery and effective implementation of essential interventions. - Guidelines on effective ECE funding based on the existing Local Self Government (LSG) legal and budget framework were developed. 	Modelling/piloting UN partnership Resource mobilisation Partnership support Evidence based advocacy	CwD Girls Children from ethnic minorities
	Availability of a national ECD policy or implementation plan for scale-up	impact – change in policy	Outdated policy (2017)	ECE in the Education Strategy New ECD/ECE standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF provided technical support to the Government of Kyrgyzstan to introduce child development centres (CDCs) - UNICEF participated with consistent support to the development of the Education Sector Strategy and Plan 		
	Cross-sectoral programme on early identification and intervention of children with developmental delays and disabilities developed and modelled	impact – change in policy & impact – institutional change	NO (2017)	Modelling agreed in 2018 and implemented EI&I TOC on further modelling and scale up redesigned based on SitAn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure remote learning with specific attention for children with disabilities, UNICEF supported the development and launch of an online educational portal to store all remote learning video lessons prepared by development partners. UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) to reach more than 1,400,000 preschool and school-aged children with remote learning. - When the Government decided to reopen preschools in June and schools during last quarter of 2020, UNICEF helped develop reopening guidelines for preschools and schools 		

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
					<p>with required training for teachers and ECE practitioners across the country to ensure the safe reopening of preschools and schools. All educational facilities received these user-friendly guidelines. Further on, to ensure IPC in schools, UNICEF provided approximately 33,000 litres of antiseptic and 57,000 litres of liquid soap to over 2,000 schools and 1,200 preschools across the country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF supported the development of an online platform for educational support workers to identify and support children, who may be vulnerable during the quarantine to ensure that children's psychosocial needs are addressed. With UNICEF support, 376 educational support workers were trained, along with 18 specialists, who guided educational support workers from district education departments to support children at risk. Approximately 11,616 children aged 7-14 (6,963 girls and 4,653 boys) were provided with phone counselling by these trained educational support workers. 		
Output 2.5. EDUCATION SYSTEM STRENGTHENING Education system is capable to provide quality and inclusive learning and development to the most disadvantaged children and adolescents	Education sector planning - Education Sector Plan or Transitional Education Sector Plan developed with UNICEF support available	impact - change in policy	Outdated policy (2017)	Sector Strategy adopted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF participated with consistent support to the development of the Education Sector Strategy and Plan 	Modelling/piloting Resource mobilisation Partnership support Evidence based advocacy	CwD Girls Children from ethnic minorities
	EMIS - National EMIS provides quality and timely data	output	Score 1 (2017)	Score 2.5 (Score 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF supported the system strengthening resulting in the launch of the new education management information system (EMIS) - UNICEF engaged its volunteers to assist school managers and EMIS focal points to validate existing data and complete any missing data. - UNICEF conducted real-time mapping of connectivity to the internet at all 2,141 public schools in Kyrgyzstan 		
	Multilingual Ed. - Community engagement in multilingual / mother-tongue education	impact institutional change	Score 2 (2017)	Score 2.5 (Score 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF and the MoES continued to implement multilingual and multicultural education in 18 schools in Batken Oblast - UNICEF reached approximately 15,000 children with special educational needs in 48 pilot primary schools to move forward the agenda of inclusive education. Teachers from the schools learned how to identify and support the individual learning needs of children with disabilities, special education needs and ethnic minorities 		

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
					- UNICEF also supported learning through remote learning platforms and capacity building of teachers, reaching over 1,400,000 children in need		
Output 2.6. - CLIMATE CHANGE AND RESILIENCE	Number of policies and strategies that are reviewed and elaborated to incorporate disaster risk and climate change	impact – change in policy	0 (2017)	2 (2)	- UNICEF partnered with the Red Crescent Society to model disaster risk reduction education in pilot schools in all seven provinces - UNICEF mobilized volunteers to support emergency drills in 109 schools - UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and Science (MOES) and the MES to jointly develop a roadmap on the national scale-up of DRR in educational institutions and to implement it in pilot schools	Modelling/piloting Resource mobilisation Partnership support Evidence based advocacy <i>(to a limited extent)</i>	All children, with important impact on children living in risk areas
	Proportion of local governments that implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030	impact institutional change	- 10% (2017)	26% (23%)	- Two guidelines, the school based DRR guideline for school administrations and the disaster risk assessment and analysis (DRA) guideline for municipalities, originally developed by UNICEF in partnership with the MES and MOES in 2017, were transformed into 11 video lessons. - Ten earthquake-resilient school building designs were developed under the guidance of UNICEF, with due quality assurance and capacity building of Government official - UNICEF conducted a study to legally assess and determine the feasibility of increasing the use in the Kyrgyz Republic of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones, for disaster risk mitigation and emergency response activities. The study confirms that the use of drones is an innovative way to enhance national capacity to conduct real-time monitoring in hard-to-reach areas that are prone to natural disasters and to objectively assess the likelihood of natural disasters and climate risks for vulnerable groups, including children. The legal framework would need to be revised to enable this practice in Kyrgyzstan		
OUTCOME 3. PROTECTION FROM VIOLENCE, DISCRIMINATION AND CONFLICT PREVENTION	Women (20-24 yrs.) married before age 18	impact - better access to services/direct improvement of the situation of children	11.6% (2012)	n/a (9% - 2022) 9% already in 2018	<i>See contribution under output 3.1</i> - Roadmap for C4D on child marriage under implementation with Gov. involvement - materials for children and their caretakers were developed and disseminated on how to prevent sexual violence against children. Support was also provided to the Child Hotline. The number	Modelling/piloting UN partnership Resource mobilisation Partnership support	Girls victims of violence

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
By 2022, disadvantaged children disadvantaged children and their families utilize equitable access to justice and social services to prevent and respond to violence, discrimination and family separation	Children 0-17 yrs. living in residential care		8,000 (2016)	n/a (4,000 2022)	<p>of calls to the hotline more than tripled in 2020 compared to previous year according to MLSD.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As part of Spotlight Initiative, UNICEF is conducting monitoring of judicial practice on child marriage cases and developing C4D roadmap to work in 6 pilot communities. - A mobile application for prevention of violence against girls and child marriage was developed and evaluated, and reached over 150,000 downloads. <p>! – the calculation of the baseline is problematic, according to interviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF works in preventing new entries in the system and proposed a case management system - An analysis, conducted with UNICEF's support, indicated an 86% decrease in the number of children in residential care institutions during lockdown, as many were taken back by their families. In this context, UNICEF initiated an assessment of the situation of children reunited with their families. The results indicated that many families were ready to keep children at home if the required family support would be provided. - In 2018, thanks to evidence-based advocacy by UNICEF and civil society actors, the president issued a set of policy recommendations on childcare reform. One recommendation requests the Government to declare a moratorium on the establishment of new residential institutions in the country, and to divert financial resources from residential institutions to establishing family social services and developing inclusive education for children with disabilities 	Resource mobilisation Partnership support Evidence based advocacy	Children in residential care

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
	State-funded free legal aid is established, available and offered to children in contact with the law in criminal, civil and administrative procedures	impact – change in policy & impact – institutional change	Limited (2017)	n/a (available to all children - 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An analysis, conducted with UNICEF's support, indicated an 86% decrease in the number of children in residential care institutions during lockdown, as many were taken back by their families. In this context, UNICEF initiated an assessment of the situation of children reunited with their families. The results indicated that many families were ready to keep children at home, if the required family support would be provided. 	Resource mobilisation Partnership support Evidence based advocacy	Children in contact and in conflict with the law
Output 3.1 FAMILY SUPPORT AND CHILD CARE Education system is capable to provide quality and inclusive learning and development to the most disadvantaged children and adolescents	Existence of legislation prohibiting all forms of corporal punishment of children, by setting (all settings, and by setting: home, schools, alternative care settings and day care, as a disciplinary measure in penal institutions/detention, and as a sentence	impact – change in policy	NO (2017)	Child Code prohibiting corporal punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF advocated for the Child Code The National Action Plan on the prevention of child marriages, developed with UNICEF's support, was endorsed on 3 September 2020, after being signed by all Governors of the country A Kyrgyzstan case study on kidnapping for forced marriage, developed by UNICEF, was included in the Universal Rights Group report "Realizing rights, changing lives: The impact of the United Nations human rights system on the enjoyment of children's rights." The case study was presented at a global roundtable by a Member of Parliament 	Modelling/piloting UN partnership Resource mobilisation Partnership support	Children victim of violence Girls victims of violence
	Percentage of identified children in difficult life situations whose cases were handled	impact - better access to services	37% (2017)	48% (47)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In response to the COVID-19 crisis, UNICEF supported the Government to provide psycho-social support to vulnerable children and their caretakers via multiple platforms, including the Child Hotline, Instagram, widely broadcast videos and online support. This support reached 1,523,654 children and their parents. 		
	Database on children in difficult life situations designed and teste	output	NO (2017)	Regulation on data base is drafted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF proposed an approach to monitor institutionalized children 		
Output 3.2 ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN Justice and administrative bodies can facilitate children's access to justice	Existence of specialized justice for children systems, such as capacity building and standards-setting within criminal and civil justice systems	impact – institutional change	Specialized professionals is trained irregularly	Online course available online	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online course on child friendly justice developed The guidelines on child-friendly legal aid, developed by UNICEF Regional Office and endorsed in December 2019 by the Ministry of Justice as a methodological tool to guide free legal aid providers, were enhanced by additional materials on how to defend child victims of sexual violence with a focus on girls. Using this tool, 277 new free legal aid lawyers have been 	Resource mobilisation Partnership support Evidence based advocacy	Children in contact and in conflict with the law

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
services and redress mechanisms					<p>trained in child-friendly legal aid, including on civil and administrative procedures. To date, 883 children have benefited from free legal aid by these trained lawyers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An on-line course on child-friendly justice, developed with UNICEF support and aimed at professionals involved in justice for children is now available. - UNICEF supported the Probation Department to implement the roadmap on the development of juvenile probation. - Two normative acts were developed and approved: "Procedure for interaction between state bodies on juvenile probation" and "Procedure for the application of juvenile probation and registration of juvenile clients." They aim at facilitating the application of alternative to custody measures. - A related training manual and training module on juvenile probation was developed and approved by the Probation Department. The Department was equipped to conduct on-line training and consultations with children during the pandemic. UNICEF supported the Prosecutor General's Office to analyse data on children in contact with the law to inform policy development with regards to justice for children. 		
	Provision of quality legal aid to children in criminal, civil, administrative proceedings at no cost	impact - change in policy & impact - institutional change	Limited (2017)	<p>Law amended and legal aid to all children after the revision of law on free legal aid</p> <p>The roster of specialized lawyers at the stage of approval by the MoJ</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF provided support for law amended and legal aid to all children after the revision of law on free legal aid - Trained lawyers are proposed for a roster of specialized lawyers at the stage of approval by the MoJ 		
Output ADOLESCENTS PARTICIPATION Adolescents have and use opportunities to	Number of adolescents aware of advocacy and participation channels to influence public service important to them	impact - better access to services	0 (2017)	1,579 in 2019 700 in 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF led the initiative on YCHFLG since 2017 - UNICEF implemented UPSHIFT and online UPSHIFT in 2020. 4,200 young people (71% Resource mobilisation 	Modelling/piloting UN partnership	Children from ethnic minorities

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	More disadvantage children benefiting
contribute to decision-making processes	Existence of functional local level mechanisms for participation of adolescents especially the most disadvantaged	impact institutional change -	NO (2017)	Unions of School parliaments in 10 rural municipalities and Youth Consultative Councils are in place in 18 urban municipalities + In 2019, Young people's councils exist in 33 pilot municipalities	<i>female) gained social innovation skills and experience</i>	Partnership support Business partnership (to a limited extent)	Young girls and females (partly) Children with disabilities Children from poor households Children in contact and in conflict with the law
	Number of private sectors are engaged to support YCFLG	output	0 (2019)	2 (5)			
	Local municipalities reflect adolescents views	impact – change in policy	0 (2017)	24 action plans with adolescent priorities in place			
	Number of cities certified as youth and child-friendly	impact institutional change -	0 (2019)	10	-		

Annex 2. Case Studies on UNICEF impact and contribution

Methodology for Process Tracing

Process Tracing is a theory-based evaluation method. It questions why and how change happens by tracking evidence of each link in the causal chain. Therefore, it is suitable for the evaluation of effectiveness and impact and, partially, the relevance as part of causal chain in the Theory of Change.

This method as a qualitative approach through ex-post design where there is no control group available. It is distinguishable from other more commonly used approaches of evaluation because it focuses on increasing our level of confidence in a causal story rather than trying to measure impact and attribute it to a particular event. It rests on the belief that all processes, if correctly identified and specified, would show empirical manifestations that if observed would increase our confidence on its existence.

The method includes assigning probabilities to assess the strength of within-case observations and evidence of how and why an effect occurred.

Assigning probabilities to assess the strength of ***within-case observations*** and evidence can be subjective, within the limit of the existing evidence. On the other hand, the entire Process Tracing analysis is transparent: the evidence determining the probabilities assigned are presented to all readers of the report and this allows stakeholders to understand the impact and contribution of UNICEF beyond the numbers related to the evaluators own (subjective) assessment.

The impact case studies about UNICEF contribution on three selected areas – (a) adolescents and youth participation and health; (b) inclusive education; (c) justice for children – are based on Process Tracing. The reports sections dedicated to the impact case studies is structure according to the steps that a PT evaluation needs to follow, explaining briefly in each sub-section what the evaluation team did, following the six steps of Bayesian Updating in Evaluation set out by Befani (2019): 1) formulating a contribution claim; 2) establish a prior level of confidence in it; 3) focus on one specific piece of evidence at a time; 4) estimate the sensitivity of that piece of evidence for that contribution claim (answering the question: *If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?*); 5) estimate the type I error of that piece of evidence for that contribution claim (answering the question: *If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?*); 6) Update of the prior into the posterior using the Bayes formula.

The contribution claims have been formulated in the Inception Phase of the evaluation and updated based on the feedback from UNICEF Kyrgyzstan Country Office (CO), before data collection through interviews. The prior level of confidence is established conventionally at 0.5.

The evidence used was collected from documents provided by UNICEF and the implementation partners for each of the three selected areas mentioned above and from interviews. Prior to the interviews, the evaluation team sent a list of the types of documents required to UNICEF CO and received the most important documents. Interviews have been also used to collect evidence and documents. Interviews are not considered independent evidence because the people interviewed know each other and have been working together, sometimes for several years. This would make them more likely to have a common discourse about the analysed subject. Even though complete independence is not assumed, the interviews of public authorities and civil society organisations about UNICEF's contribution, its relative importance compared to other stakeholders, its reputation and their trust in the organization are considered important evidence when documents are missing, also considering that evidence on reputation and trust are traditionally based on stakeholders contributions to the evaluation.

More iterations between the data collection and the analysis of the evidence can increase the possibility of obtaining more supporting evidence and minimize issues arising from absence of evidence. However, in practice, this process may increase the time and cost of the evaluation. For this evaluation, only one iteration of data collection and analysis was possible, due to time constraints.

Assessment of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan's contribution to early childhood development and education

For the assessment of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution in early childhood development (ECD) and education (ECE), Process Tracing was used, to determine the extent of UNICEF contribution and the

results of the contributing in a clear way. Using Process Tracing, each claim was analysed and, based on the available evidence, the level of confidence that the claim is true was assessed.

Based on the initial research, the evaluation team formulated the following change claim chain:

(1) UNICEF provided guidelines and methodologies for community-based kindergartens and Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries, (2) started testing early identification of CwD and the development of trans-sectoral intervention methodology, including the parenting package and (3) provided remote preschool lessons and the preparation for Safe Reopening of Kindergartens. Overall, (4) these contributions have been well received by the Government of Kyrgyzstan, endorsing the piloting of methodologies for better support early childhood development.

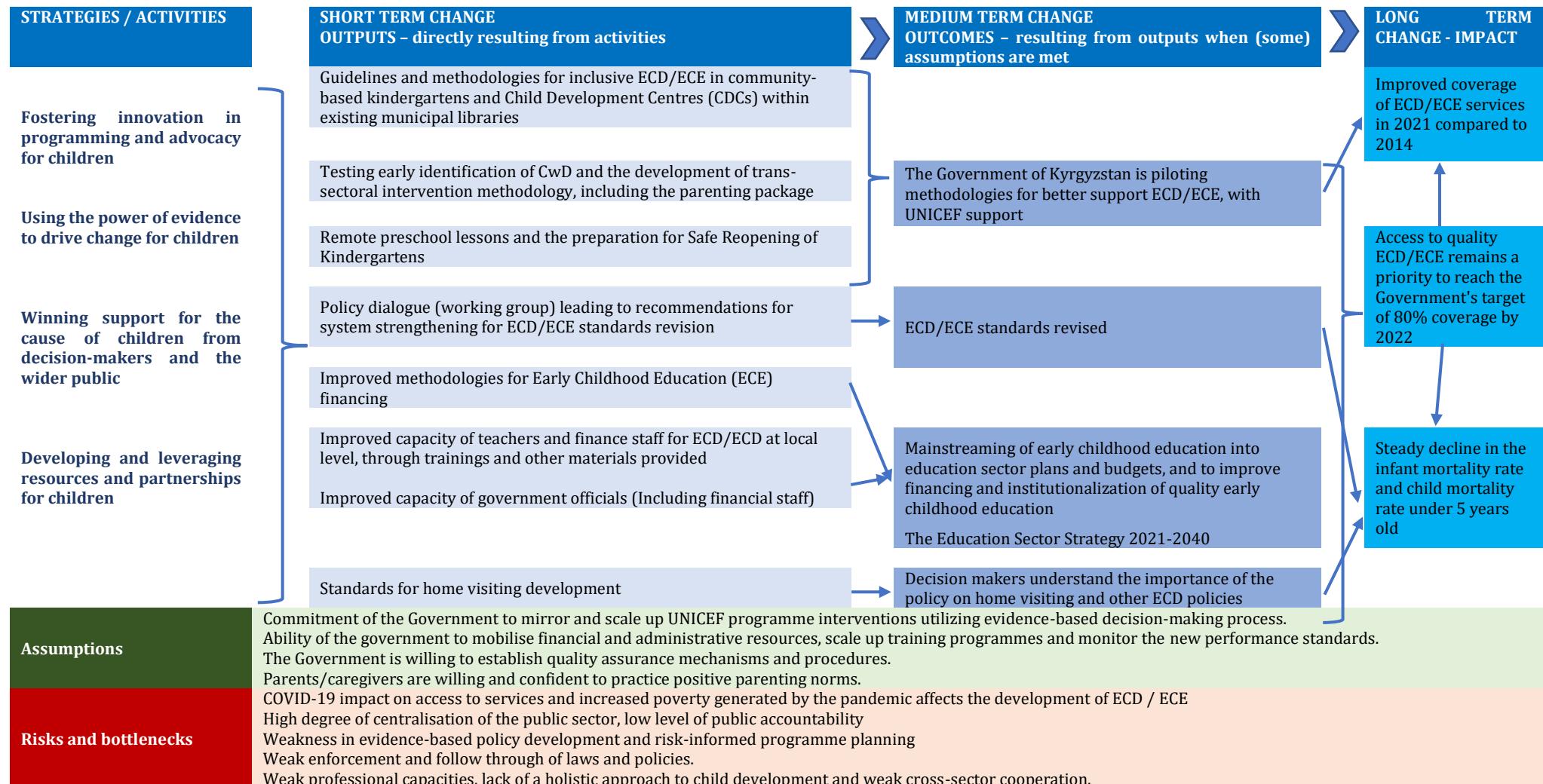
(5) UNICEF also supported the revision of the ECD/ECE standards, (6) provided technical assistance for Early Childhood Education (ECE) financing and (7) developed technical officials' capacity to mainstream early childhood education into education sector plans and budgets, to improve financing and institutionalization of quality early childhood education resulting in the Education Sector Strategy 2021-2040 including ECE.

(8) UNICEF supported the development of standards for home visiting and, (9) together with other interventions, this contribution to a better understand the importance of the policy on home visiting and other ECD policies among decision makers.

As a result of all UNICEF efforts, (10) access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) remains a priority to reach the Government's target of 80% coverage by 2022, leading to (11) the improved coverage of ECD/ECE services in 2021 compared to 2014. (12) More attention to ECD also resulted in the steady decline in the infant mortality rate and child mortality rate under 5 years old.

A visual presentation of the theory of change based on the change claim chain for the case study is presented below.

Figure 8. Theory of Change developed for the evaluation of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to early childhood development and education



The analysis of each claim and the general conclusions are presented in the following sections.

Claim 1: UNICEF provided guidelines and methodologies for inclusive early childhood development and education in community-based kindergartens and Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries

a) Evidence

Interviews and documents¹²⁸ underline that the community-based kindergartens have been introduced in the last decade in Kyrgyzstan with support from several development partners and SitAn 2021 underlines that they are proving successful at improving school-readiness, targeting especially children aged 3-7 years.

In 2018, UNICEF reported providing a new curriculum aimed at promoting positive gender socialization, appreciation of diversity, and the development of peaceful and tolerant behaviour among children and parents to 62 target community-based kindergartens. “A total of 120 teachers had received training and learning materials to nurture attitudes and perceptions among 2,000 children free of negative and restrictive gender stereotypes” and among 1,200 parents in 2018.¹²⁹ The benefits extended to about 6,000 children in 2019.¹³⁰ The novel approach has been also documented using experimental research design (report not identified/to be requested).

On the other hand, the promotion of Child Development Centres (CDCs) started more recently, based on a 2018 report on their relevance and recommended pathways for development¹³¹. According to UNICEF reports and the interviews with UNICEF staff, the CO advocated for legal reform to enhance, extend and improve the nation’s early childhood development / early childhood education (ECD/ECE) system. Within this approach, CDCs have been piloted in eight libraries and at kindergartens across the country in 2018, in 65 libraries in 2019 and 2020, reaching to more than 100 in 2021. By leveraging pre-existing infrastructure and professionals, the CDCs have been designed with the intention “to act as a cost-effective mechanism to extend government-guaranteed ECD/ECE services, both in terms of geographic accessibility and ensuring that the youngest age groups are reached.”

b) Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?

Sensitivity- 0.85. There is convincing evidence that UNICEF guidelines and methodologies for inclusive early childhood education in community-based kindergartens and Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries in selected communities for piloting. However, there is no evidence that methodologies and guidelines have been developed considering all bottlenecks of the system and risks, including the need to extensively train existent staff and to recruit new staff.

c) Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?

Type I error probability- 0.2. Although there is no evidence that will contradict the claim, all available evidence is based on UNICEF reports and interviews with UNICEF staff and stakeholders recommended by UNICEF. There are no good reasons to suppose UNICEF is falsely presenting facts about the number of teachers trained or CDCs organised, but there is no direct evidence available about the implementation of the guidelines and methodologies at local level that could indicate they are feasible. *In the theory of change, for the theory to be strong, identified support from UNICEF to the government needs to be usable and used effectively by the ECD/ECE system, otherwise the claim is considered (parlay) false.*

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.85) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.2), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **confident (0.8000) the probability of the hypothesis of “UNICEF providing guidelines and**

¹²⁸ SitAn 2021, KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: Education Sector Analysis 2007-2017 Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education, UNICEF, 2019

¹²⁹ UNICEF COAR 2018.

¹³⁰ UNICEF COAR 2019.

¹³¹ Analysis and recommendation report provided by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan country office.

methodologies for inclusive early childhood development and education in community-based kindergartens and Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries", being true given the evidence.

Claim 1	Evidence – Account and trail
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.85
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.2
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.8000

Claim 2: UNICEF started testing early identification of CwD and the development of trans-sectoral intervention methodology, including the parenting package

a) Evidence

UNICEF reported in 2019 the continuation of testing innovative approaches to early identification and intervention of disability. Concretely, 25 national members of transdisciplinary teams have been trained on developing individual family support plans and the intervention was implemented in 10 kindergartens and 10 pre-primary classes during the 2019/20 academic year, for the benefit of over 1,000 children.

The trans-sectoral intervention methodology for early identification of CwD and provision of services for children aged 0-8 years was developed in 2017 and tested in 2018-2019 and documented. The documenting report concluded that the piloted approach is successful in addressing the needs of children with disabilities, but rising awareness among parents is a key element of the effectiveness of the transdisciplinary approach for child development. The report also emphasises the need for: training, network support, motivation (including wages) and other capacity building for transdisciplinary teams, strong and clear coordination mechanisms, group work with specialists and children.¹³²

According to interviews with UNICEF staff, the positive parenting package was ready for testing when data was collected for this evaluation.

b) Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?

Sensitivity– 0.95. There is high confidence that the existing evidence appears in the case the claim is true. An independent evaluation of the intervention would be able to increase the confidence level on sensitivity

c) Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?

Type I error probability– 0.3. The contribution of UNICEF is not very well underlined by the evidence, except for its role as a supporting partner for the implementing partner – the Public Associations of Parents of Children with Autism "Hand-in-Hand".

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.95) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.3), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **confident (0.76)** the probability of the hypothesis of "**UNICEF testing early identification of CwD and the development of trans-sectoral intervention methodology, including the parenting package", being true given the evidence.**

Claim 2	Evidence – Account and trail
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.95

¹³² Документирование результатов тестирования трансдисциплинарного подхода к раннему вмешательству [Documenting the test results of the transdisciplinary approach to early intervention], 2020

Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.3
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.7600

Claim 3: UNICEF provided remote preschool lessons and the preparation for Safe Reopening of Kindergartens

a) Evidence

Interviews and documents show that UNICEF helped develop remote learning lessons for both preschool and school students, producing a total of 2,637 video lessons (988 for preschool and 1,649 for schools students) and supporting financially the production process. UNICEF estimates that 274,902 preschool-age children, including children with disabilities, benefited from remote lessons for preschool children, online and broadcasted by the national TV station, during COVID-19.

According to interviews, UNICEF lead the advocacy conducted by the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC) to convince the government to include lessons for preschool education in the package of remote lessons.

Moreover, guidance for the Safe Reopening of Kindergartens were developed and 5,686 printed guidelines have been delivered to 1,004 preschool educational institutions. In total, 9,500 preschool teachers were trained on the safe reopening of kindergartens.

b) Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?

Sensitivity – 0.85. Existing video lessons and guidance, as well as records of the training provided to teachers are the expected evidence for this claim. The confidence level could be increased by data related to the satisfaction of participants to training, to ensure that the support was effective.

c) Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?

Type I error probability – 0.2. There is no evidence to link UNICEF recommendations, guidance and training with actual practice in kindergartens. Therefore, although there is no reason to think that UNICEF did not provided support for the Ministry, there is no straightforward evidence that UNICEF support was effectively used in the preparation of kindergartens reopening. *In the theory of change, for the theory to be strong, identified support from UNICEF to the government needs to be usable and used effectively by the ECD/ECE system, otherwise the claim is considered (parlay) false.*

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.85) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.2), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **confident (0.800)** the probability of the hypothesis of “**UNICEF provided remote preschool lessons and the preparation for Safe Reopening of Kindergartens,**” being true given the evidence.

Claim 3	Evidence – Account and trail
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.85
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.2
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.800

Claim 4: The Government of Kyrgyzstan endorsed the pilot activities and methodologies for better support to early childhood development

a) Evidence

Piloting CDCs have been supported by the Government and an Order on how libraries can open the centres have been issued in 2018 and financial support has been ensured by the Ministry of Culture – the responsible authority for libraries. The *Law on Preschool Education*, defines development centres as

providers of “physical and mental development, early detection of the child’s individual developmental needs, diagnostics and the provision of special education and related services, as well as the improvement of the health of children who attend other educational institutions or who are being brought up at home.”¹³³

Moreover, the institutionalization of early education within the Ministry of Education – that organised a separate department for early education: the Preschool Department – is an important indicator of the governmental endorsement for ECE.

On the other hand, although piloted in 2018-2019, the transdisciplinary approach for early identification of CwD and for effective services provision was not effectively institutionalized by the government, both due to difficulties to reorganize services in 2020, in the context of COVID-19 pandemic, but also to the structural bottlenecks that have been identified during the piloting phase. Moreover, the interview with the UNICEF specialist on communication for development shows that there is less commitment from the government on the roadmap for communication and initiating change of the social norms in this respect. This may explain the lack of endorsement for the transdisciplinary approach for ECD targeting especially CwD.

The remote lessons for preschool children used online are broadcasted by the national TV station, as well as the guidelines distributed by official government channels for Safe Reopening of Kindergartens are themselves the evidence of the government assuming ownership over the materials prepared to support the early childhood education system to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

b) Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?

Sensitivity– 0.55. Although the institutionalization of early education within the Ministry of Education – that organised a separate department for early education: the Preschool Department – is an important indicator of the governmental endorsement for ECE, and there is good evidence on how the government took into account UNICEF recommendations and used the input of UNICEF in 2020 on its response the COVID-19 crisis, there is not enough evidence to support that overall the idea that the Government of Kyrgyzstan endorsed the pilot activities and methodologies for better support to early childhood development.

c) Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?

Type I error probability– 0.4. It is possible that, apart from the recommendations considered in 2020, the Ministry of Education and Science only used the name UNICEF proposed for initiative, but endorses other types of ECD/ECE implementation. The legal definition for CDCs is not clear enough to allow the evaluators to assess that the provision is institutionalising UNICEF proposal.

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.55) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.4), the account evidence of the documents and interviews only allow us to be **more confident than not (0.5789)** about **the probability of the hypothesis of “the Government of Kyrgyzstan endorsing the pilot activities and methodologies for better support to early childhood development”, being true given the evidence.**

Claim 4	Evidence – Account and trail
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.55
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.4
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.5789

Claim 5: UNICEF supported the revision of the ECD/ECE standards

a) Evidence

¹³³ Law on Preschool Education, Article. 7(1), ¶ 8.

In June 2020 National Early Childhood Development Standards were approved by the Prime Minister. The standards have been updated in line with social cohesion, gender and early intervention approaches and include Early Learning Development Standards (0-3). The standards are effectively disaggregated by month for each of the child's first 12 months; and then for two years; three to four years; five years; and six to seven years. They have been introduced to local education departments through an online conference¹³⁴ and UNICEF reports supporting the government in the elaboration of the standards.

However, it is still unclear how the standards are and will be used in practice, as there is no evidence on a monitoring system for the development of individual children.¹³⁵

b) Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?

Sensitivity- 0.65. Additional evidence on the concrete contribution of UNICEF to the standards and acknowledgement of the contribution from the Ministry would be needed to increase the confidence level.

c) Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?

Type I error probability- 0.5. Except for sources from UNICEF, there is unclear which was UNICEF contribution and there is also unclear how the standards will function, based on the findings of SitAn 2021. *In the theory of change, for the theory to be strong, identified support from UNICEF to the government needs to be usable and used effectively by the ECD/ECE system, otherwise the claim is considered (parlay) false.*

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.65) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.5), the account evidence of the documents and interviews only allow us to be **more confident than not (0.5652) about the probability of the hypothesis of "UNICEF supporting the revision of the ECD/ECE standards", being true given the evidence.**

Claim 5	Evidence – Account and trial
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.65
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.5
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.5652

Claim 6: UNICEF provided technical assistance for Early Childhood Education (ECE) financing

a) Evidence

Kyrgyzstan is one of the four countries selected for implementing the global Better Early Learning and Development at Scale Initiative (BELDS). In the BELDS framework, UNICEF developed technical officials' capacity to mainstream early childhood education into education sector plans and budgets, and to improve financing and institutionalization of quality early childhood education.

Workshops on the efficient fiscal management of ECE in the Kyrgyz Republic have been organised in 2019. According to BELDS Documenting report, 47 trainees participated in the questionnaire on the evaluation of the training's effectiveness showing that 100% of the participants claimed that their expectations from the training were fulfilled, 96.8% of the participants noted the importance of the training to enhance the skills of specialists of financial and economic departments of ministries, agencies and their regional representatives, directors of PSEOs, specialists of Local self-government bodies.

Moreover, an information video has been developed to summarize Kyrgyzstan's BELDS experience with strengthening ECE in the Education Development Strategy and Action Plan, as well as highlight the ECE

¹³⁴ UNICEF COAR 2020; SitAn 2021

¹³⁵ SitAn 2021.

financing challenges and recommendations to address them (based on the results of the ECE financing workshops that took place in November and December 2019).

In 2020, UNICEF prepared a budget brief for the ECD/ECE subsector and presented it to national stakeholders through capacity building workshops. The event: "From strategic goals to budgetary commitments" was held at the Conference Hall of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic on December 8, 2020 with the participation of specialists from the Department of Budget Policy and Financial Analysis, Ministry of Education and Science of the KR, staff of the Department of Preschool Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of the KR, staff of the Department of Financial and Economic Activity of the Department of Education of the Mayor's Office of Bishkek, staff of the district education centres of Bishkek, specialists from the Ministry of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic.¹³⁶

A publication on ECE funding was public in April 2021 and serves as a strong advocacy supporting document for the continuation of the work in the area.

As a result of the workshop a larger capacity building programme has been initiated. A training of trainers has been delivered to 84 persons that are expected to train 700 local staff members for better budgeting.

Interviews show that the representatives of the Ministry of Education appreciate UNICEF support concerning early ECE funding as exceptionally good, needed and with great chances to generate a significant impact in the field.

b) Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?

Sensitivity- 0.9. Additional expected evidence, on the effectiveness of the technical assistance provided is not available.

c) Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?

Type I error probability- 0.25. Although we can be certain about the assistance provided, based on the existing evidence is not clear that the Ministry and local level staff is following assistance from UNICEF, although it was very well appreciated. *In the theory of change, for the theory to be strong, identified support from UNICEF to the government needs to be usable and used effectively by the ECD/ECE system, otherwise the claim is considered (parlay) false.*

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.9) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.2), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **confident (0.7826) the probability of the hypothesis of "UNICEF providing technical assistance for Early Childhood Education (ECE) financing," being true given the evidence.**

Claim 6	Evidence – Account and trail
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.9
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.3
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.7826

Claim 7: UNICEF contributed to the development of technical officials' capacity to mainstream early childhood education into education sector plans and budgets, and to improve financing and institutionalization of quality early childhood education

a) Evidence

From March 2019 to December 2020, "financial and consultancy support was provided to the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) to integrate pre-school education into the national Education Sector Plan,

¹³⁶ BELDS documenting report.

analysing key priorities and challenges such as access, equity, quality and governance. Through the BELDS's initiative project served to build capacity of key partners, national stakeholders and care givers to plan and budget for inclusive and quality ECE at scale.”¹³⁷

The Education Development Strategy and Action Plan have been finalized (based on the recommendations of the independent appraisal) after an intensive iterative process with multiple rounds of review and revisions. The Education Development Strategy (2021-2040) was structured by subsectors, including the ECE subsector. ECE therefore has a distinct section dedicated to it, which outlines the vision for preschool education in Kyrgyz Republic in terms of expanding and ensuring equitable access while improving quality.¹³⁸

UNICEF contribution to planning and drafting the strategic documents is underlined by UNICEF in reports and interviews and it is acknowledged by the representatives of the Ministry of Education. UNICEF provided the education sector analysis that supported the strategy development.¹³⁹ Moreover, both UNICEF and Ministry representatives underlined in interviews that advocacy for mainstreaming ECE into the education sector strategic planning was enable by UNICEF participation to the Development Partners Coordination Council (DPCC) as co-chair with a specific focus on education. In this capacity UNICEF organised several meetings and lead the discussions on several stages of the strategic planning process and focusing on different drafts of the strategic documents.

The World Bank (WB) was also an important stakeholder in the strategic process. The BELDS documenting report states that the WB effectively led the development process and hired an international consultant, but UNICEF and GPE also played important roles in the process.

However, concerning progress in the mainstream of ECE into education sector plans, there is mix evidence. By one hand it is important to underline the creation of the Preschool Department within the Ministry of Education, as an institutional structure strengthening the government commitment for ECE. On the other hand, pre-school education was defined as a priority area in the Education Development Strategy for 2012-2020 as well.

b) Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?

Sensitivity- 0.65. The likelihood of the evidence, if the claim is true, is affected by the limited evidence about a meaningful change in attitude about ECD/ECE at the level of the government. Moreover, there is no evidence that financing of ECD will be improved.

Concerning UNICEF contribution to strategic planning, although accounts of the meetings (minutes) – organised by UNICEF with the participation of the Ministry and DPCC members – have not been provided for the evaluation, all interviewed stakeholders acknowledged the importance of these meetings.

c) Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?

Type I error probability- 0.4. Evidence do not allow for high confidence that UNICEF involvement in the elaboration of strategic documents for ECD/ECE made a significant difference in the improvement of provisions and a better approach of the government. An alternative interpretation of the evidence is that UNICEF organised important discussions and was present to debates but did not provide the needed advice for the strategic planning.

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.65) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.4), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **cautiously confident (0.6190)** the probability of the hypothesis of “*UNICEF contributing to the development of technical officials' capacity to mainstream early childhood education into*

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: Education Sector Analysis 2007-2017 Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education UNICEF, 2019

education sector plans and budgets, and to improve financing and institutionalization of quality early childhood education", being true given the evidence.

Claim 7	Evidence – Account and trail
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.65
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.4
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.6190

Claim 8: UNICEF supported the development of standards for home visiting

a) Evidence

An analytical review of the home visiting system in Kyrgyzstan has been published by UNICEF in 2016. The review identified several bottlenecks in the how home-visiting is planned and implemented, in relation with the health system.¹⁴⁰ On the other hand, the initial approach of home visiting was health sector specific, without attention to the possibility to develop an inter-sectoral approach.

As part of the project "Strengthening Maternal and Child Healthcare Systems" for 2018-2021, funded by the Government of Japan, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health of the Kyrgyz Republic and optimized the home visiting practice for new-borns and their mothers and modelled postnatal home visiting services in Suzak and Nookat Family Medicine Centres.

The pilot home visiting practice also encourages doctors and nurses to provide psychosocial support and make sure that new-borns grow up in a safe and healthy environment. The result of the project, according to UNICEF report, home visiting service was updated to include: (a) introduction of task shifting mechanism from family doctor to family nurse; (b) identification of a child at risk of developmental delay, abuse and neglect; (c) initiation of a family-oriented approach to address not only medical but also development and social needs.¹⁴¹

Within the pilot project for the intervention methodology for early identification of CwD and provision of services for children aged 0-8 years, the implementing partner noted that guidelines for home visits for home visiting professionals were developed in 2018, but the inclusion of a module on monitoring children with disabilities in the context of home visits was required. Moreover, training for healthcare professionals was provided for integrating early identification and monitoring of disability in the home visiting practice.¹⁴²

In 2020 UNICEF also reported that technical assistance was also provided to maintain home visiting services for new-borns through remote communication using smartphone-based technologies.¹⁴³

However, progress in reforming home visiting is reported as slow by stakeholders interviewed and UNICEF still needs to continue to support the Ministry of Health to scale up this intervention across the country, based on the success of the pilot programme.

b) Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?

Sensitivity– 0.65. Although the evidence is necessary, it is not enough for the claim. The evidence on actual improvement of home visiting standards is missing and this is linked to the fact that UNICEF the intervention is reported to be still in piloting phase.

¹⁴⁰ Analytical review of documents on the system of home visits in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2016,
<https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/media/1981/file/ANALYTICAL%20REVIEW%20OF%20DOCUMENTS%20ON%20THE%20SYSTEM%20OF%20HOME%20VISITS%20IN%20THE%20KYRGYZ%20REPUBLIC%20eng.pdf.pdf>

¹⁴¹ <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/stories/home-visiting-newborns-good-health>

¹⁴² Документирование результатов тестирования трансдисциплинарного подхода к раннему вмешательству
[Documenting the test results of the transdisciplinary approach to early intervention], 2020

¹⁴³ UNICEF COAR 2020.

c) *Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?*

Type I error probability- 0.5. Because UNICEF the intervention is reported to be still in piloting phase, there can be no taking over from UNICEF model into the national policy.

d) *Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level*

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.65) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.5), the account evidence of the documents and interviews only allow us to be **more confident than not (0.5652) about the probability of the hypothesis of "UNICEF supporting the development of standards for home visiting", being true given the evidence.**

Claim 8	Evidence – Account and trail
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.65
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.5
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.5652

Claim 9: UNICEF contributed to better understand the importance of the policy on home visiting and other ECD policies among decision makers

a) *Evidence*

In 2018 and 2019, UNICEF supported the piloting of postnatal home visiting services for new-borns at two family medicine centres in accordance with updated guidelines that include identification of children at risk of developmental delay, abuse and neglect, and referral to transdisciplinary services. This work and successful advocacy has resulted in the inclusion of a home visiting indicator into the criteria for bonus payments to family doctors from the Mandatory Health Insurance Fund. Moreover, the government understanding and support for CED is underlined by interviewed stakeholders with examples of initiatives recommended by development partners and taken onboard, as in the case of the booklets for parents, distributed by the government.

Evidence on government developing ownership and making progresses in the field on ECE have been presented above. However, educational and developmental opportunities for children aged 0 to 3 are limited, as the institutional network (excepting pilot CDCs) is covering children over 3 years old and the Law on Preschool Education has only provisions starting with 6 months¹⁴⁴. The general understanding in the policy framework seems to be that ECD for 0-6 months is limited to healthcare.

The *Law on Preschool Education* defines the preschool age as 0 to 7 years, the legislative framework for preschool education stipulates only that preschool educational organizations are to cover children from ages 6 months to 7 years, leaving out the vital period from 0 to 6 months.

Evidence, including the interviews with UNICEF staff, also show limited integration of the education, healthcare, child and social protection sectors when planning piloting and advocacy for home visiting and ECD in general, including within UNICEF office.¹⁴⁵

b) *Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?*

Sensitivity- 0.55. Although, there are some progresses reported, evidence shows that ECD is not a policy sector and remains scattered between sectors, with little progress at policy/government level in ensuring coordination and trans-disciplinary work. There is no evidence that ECD/ECE standards developed and

¹⁴⁴ SitAn 2021

¹⁴⁵ Although underlying the cross- and inter-sectorial character of ECD, members of UNICEF staff interviewed repeatedly referred the evaluators to other persons and recommended interviewing other persons within the CO to develop a full picture of the ECD work of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan. Although specialization is needed, the fact that the various interventions and pilot projects in the field of EDC are not closely coordinated is indicated by the interviews, even though this coordination is understood and emphasized by UNICEF staff.

mentioned above (analysis of claim 5) are well connected with the development of the home visiting policy, as the SitAn 2021 underlines there is no mechanism for monitoring the standards.¹⁴⁶

c) *Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?*

Type I error probability- 0.45.

d) *Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level*

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.55) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.45), the account evidence of the documents and interviews only allow us to be **more confident than not (0.5500)** about the probability of the hypothesis of "**UNICEF contributing to better understand the importance of the policy on home visiting and other ECD policies among decision makers**", being true given the evidence.

Claim 9

Evidence – Account and trail	
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.55
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.45
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.5500

Claim 10: Access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) remains a priority to reach the Government's target of 80% coverage by 2022

a) *Evidence*

The new Education Sector Strategy 2021-2040 adopted by the Government in May 2020 puts forward a target of reaching at least 80% of all children (aged 3-6) enrolled in ECE organizations and programmes. It seeks to leverage state- and local-level resources as well as public-private partnerships to expand services. Quality of ECE will be enhanced with the strengthening of quality standards, data systems, innovative educational materials as well as preschool workforce development.

The education sector analysis¹⁴⁷ shows there are diffident types of pre-school educational services, including new forms of early care already introduced to expand access to pre-school - Community Based Kindergartens (CBK), Child Development Centres (CDC) and the Nariste 480-hour school-readiness programme. All these programmes are supported by the new strategy, as each proved to be effective, based on separate evaluations for their pilots or implementation.

Other progresses in the field of ECE show the constant commitment of the Government (despite political instability) for the sector: "as additional measures to reduce the urban-rural gap in preschool education coverage, in 2017-2018 over 100 preschools were repaired, 40 preschools were opened thanks to the optimization of the network of schools and classes, and 471 community-based preschools were opened in 2013-2019. As a result, preschool education coverage in the country regions increased from 7.4 percent in 2012 to 19.5 percent in 2019. In addition, the requirements for sanitary and epidemiological standards and regulations, as well as the fire safety rules for the licensing were eased to encourage the growth of private nursery schools throughout the country. Also, the Tax Code has been amended to exempt private preschool education institutions from income tax. Thanks to these measures, the number of private preschool institutions increased from 58 to 171 as compared to 2012-2013."¹⁴⁸

The content of the strategy and the interviews support the claim that ECE remains a priority for the government. Interviews with representatives of the ministry also show that the process of strategic planning, including decision makers, technical policy makers within the Ministry and development partners

¹⁴⁶ SitAn 2021 (page 91 in de draft version).

¹⁴⁷ KYRGYZ REPUBLIC: *Education Sector Analysis 2007-2017 Strategic Choices for the Government to Improve Education* UNICEF, 2019

¹⁴⁸ BELDS documenting report

allowed the government to develop ownership (to a certain extent) over the targets recommended by the development partners and consultants employed to provide technical assistance for the strategy.

b) Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?

Sensitivity- 0.8. Existential strategic priorities are not enough to convince the commitment of the government. Lack of improvement concerning the funding of ECE affects the sensitivity assessment

c) Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?

Type I error probability- 0.2

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.8) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.2), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **confident (0.8000)** the probability of the hypothesis of "**ECE remaining a priority for the Kyrgyz Government,**" being true given the evidence.

Claim 10	Evidence – Account and trail
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.8
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.2
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.8000

Claim 11: Continuous prioritization of ECE ensured improved coverage of ECD/ECE services in 2021 compared to 2014

a) Evidence

After the decline of the ECE sector in the first post-Soviet decade, pre-school education was defined as a priority area in the Education Development Strategy for 2012-2020. Statistics show that the strategic commitment was followed by actual implementation and results, as Kyrgyzstan has made steady progress in providing access to pre-primary education in the last decade.

According to SitAn 2021, the number of ECE institutions in Kyrgyzstan, particularly nurseries and kindergartens, has increased consistently with the increasing number of children aged 0-7 but access to pre-school education is still limited and far from universal. Overall, in 2019 the percentage of the children enrolled in preschool education increased to 40% of children across the country, including 26% of children attending full-day preschools (197,000 children were covered by such nursery schools in 2019, which is 1.8 times more than in 2012, when 132,000 children attended standardized PPEIs). Coverage of children aged 0-3 with early development programs remains low at 4%.¹⁴⁹ Access to pre-school institutions is twice as high in urban compared to rural areas but this increased urban coverage is due to increases in the number of children in existing kindergartens. This has reached an average of 230 children per kindergarten in urban areas while in rural areas the average number of children per institution is 93. This inevitably impacts on the quality of the service provided.

Most ECD coverage in Kyrgyzstan is for the age group 3-6 years, which is used in official statistics to calculate coverage rates. For this age group the gross enrolment ratio (GER)¹⁵⁰ has almost doubled in recent years rising from 12.5% in 2006 to 25.2% in 2016, as has the net enrolment ratio (NER)¹⁵¹ - from 13% in 2007 to 26% in 2016. However, this means that **three out of four children aged 3-6 years (75%) still do**

¹⁴⁹ MICS 2018 and BELDS documenting report

¹⁵⁰ The number of students enrolled in each level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education

¹⁵¹ Total number of students in the theoretical age group for a given level of education enrolled in that level, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group.

not have access to early childhood education.

According to MICS 2018¹⁵², attendance at early education programmes is higher among children from urban areas and among families with higher levels of well-being. The levels of early childhood development are higher among children from urban areas (76%) and families with higher level of well-being (78%). Furthermore, most children with disabilities do not go to preschool. Those who attend do not always receive appropriate attention from pre-school teachers, who lack the skills necessary to provide inclusive education.

b) Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?

Sensitivity- 0.9. The sensitivity is diminished by the lack of data for the year 2020-2021 and the impact of COVID-19.

c) Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?

Type I error probability- 0.25. Although the trend cannot be denied, the limited coverage for the most vulnerable children and the impact of COVID-19 could reverse the trend for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022.

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.9) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.25), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **confident (0.7826) the probability of the hypothesis of “continuous prioritization of ECE generating improved coverage of ECD/ECE services in 2021 compared to 2014”, being true given the evidence.**

Claim 11	Evidence – Account and trail
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.85
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.25
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.7826

Claim 12: More attention to ECD also resulted in the steady decline in the infant mortality rate and child mortality rate under 5 years old.

a) Evidence

Kyrgyzstan has made progress in decreasing child mortality by half, from 2006 to 2018, (from 38 to 19 deaths per 1,000 live births and reducing the neonatal mortality rate (NMR) from 19 to 13 deaths per 1,000 live births from 2006-2018.¹⁵³ However, despite this progress neonatal mortality rates remain twice as high as the CEE/CIS region average mortality rate.¹⁵⁴ However, large regional disparities are still registered.¹⁵⁵

In 2018, the top causes of under-five mortality (which contribute to half or more under-five deaths per region) were primarily: neonatal causes; injuries; pneumonia; diarrhoea; and other causes of mortality (2015).¹⁵⁶ Data from UNICEF studies show no direct correlation of wealth status and under five mortality rate. Moreover, there is no direct correlation between gender and the under-five mortalities rates, but a strong correlation between urban/rural residency and the child mortality. This leads to the conclusion that quick access to basic services can be a factor limiting the child mortality rate.

However, considering that only 4% of children under 3 years old are benefiting from ECD dedicated services and the limited development of home visiting services (see above analysis under claim 9), the decline of the

¹⁵² MICS (2018) op cit. p28

¹⁵³ UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS 2006) and MICS 2018

¹⁵⁴ Gotsadze T., Imanaliev C. *Examples from the field 2017 Improving Maternal, Newborn and Adolescent Health*

¹⁵⁵ SitAn 2021.

¹⁵⁶ Child Health Epidemiological Reference Group (CHERG) *Causes of under-five and neonatal mortality estimates.* UNICEF (2015)

infant and child mortality rate is related with improvements of the healthcare services for mothers and new-borns.

b) *Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?*

Sensitivity- 0.6. The evidence shows that improved access and quality to health services is effective. There is no evidence of Governmental commitment to develop cross-sectorial early childhood services as a strategy to maintain and accelerate the trend of declining infant and child mortality rates.

c) *Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?*

Type I error probability- 0.5. The evidence can show commitment to improvement of in the health sector, not necessarily in the cross-sectoral sector of ECD.

d) *Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level*

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.65) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.5), the account evidence of the documents and interviews only allow us to be **more confident than not (0.5652) about the probability of the hypothesis of "increased attention to ECD resulting in the steady decline in the infant mortality rate and child mortality rate under 5 years old", being true given the evidence.**

Claim 12	Evidence – Account and trail
Prior probability of the claim being true	0.5
Sensitivity - If the claim is true, how likely would we expect to see this evidence?	0.65
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.5
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.5652

Conclusion

According to Process Tracing methodology, the confidence in the overall claim is set by the “weakest link” (or lowest posterior) in the causal chain, corresponding to claim 9 (*UNICEF contributed to a better understand the importance of the policy on home visiting and other ECD policies among decision makers*) with a posterior of 0.5500. This means that **we can only be more confident than not that UNICEF contributed in a substantial manner to the development of the Kyrgyz policy on early childhood development and education**, in line with the change chain presented above and with the theory of change of the area.

The analysis allows us to be confident about UNICEF input regarding:

- guidelines and methodologies inclusive early childhood development and education in community-based kindergartens and Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries
- remote preschool lessons and the preparation for Safe Reopening of Kindergartens
- general recommendations generated by the modelling project of early identification of CwD and the development of trans-sectoral intervention methodology, including the parenting package.

Moreover, there is sufficient evidence to be confident that access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) remains a priority to reach the Government's target of 80% coverage by 2022, although existent strategic priorities are not enough to be certain about the commitment of the government and additional improvements of ECD/ECE funding are needed. Moreover, although coverage of ECD/ECE services improved in 2019 compared to 2014, the limited coverage for the most vulnerable children and the impact of COVID-19 could reverse the trend for 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 and there is no evidence of a comprehensive plan to reach the most disadvantaged children: children from rural areas, children from poor households and children with disabilities.

Table 6. Process Tracing summary analysis for the area of Early Childhood Development and Education

Claim	Prior level of confidence...	Posterior level of confidence...	Assessment...	
			...that the claim is true	
1 UNICEF provided guidelines and methodologies inclusive early childhood development and education in community-based kindergartens and Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries	0.5	0.8000	Confident	
2 UNICEF started testing early identification of CwD and the development of trans-sectoral intervention methodology, including the parenting package	0.5	0.7600	Confident	
3 UNICEF provided remote preschool lessons and the preparation for Safe Reopening of Kindergartens	0.5	0.8000	Confident	
4 UNICEF contributions have been well received by the Government of Kyrgyzstan, endorsing the piloting of methodologies for better support early childhood development	0.5	0.5789	More confidence than not	
5 UNICEF supported the revision of the ECD/ECE standards	0.5	0.5652	More confidence than not	
6 UNICEF provided technical assistance for Early Childhood Education (ECE) financing	0.5	0.7826	Confident	
7 UNICEF supported the development of technical officials' capacity to mainstream early childhood education into education sector plans and budgets, to improve financing and institutionalization of quality early childhood education resulting in the Education Sector Strategy 2021-2040 including ECE	0.5	0.6190	Cautiously confident	
8 UNICEF supported the development of standards for home visiting	0.5	0.5652	More confidence than not	
9 UNICEF contributed to a better understand the importance of the policy on home visiting and other ECD policies among decision makers	0.5	0.5500	More confidence than not	
10 Access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) remains a priority to reach the Government's target of 80% coverage by 2022	0.5	0.8000	Confident	
11 The coverage of ECD/ECE services improved in 2021 compared to 2014	0.5	0.7826	Confident	
12 More attention to ECD also resulted in the steady decline in the infant mortality rate and child mortality rate under 5 years old	0.5	0.5652	More confidence than not	

Evidence at the disposal of the evaluation team is not enough to assess with confidence that UNICEF contributions have been well received by the Government of Kyrgyzstan and they generated directly improved policies. We can be cautiously confident that public officials increased their capacity for financing and budgeting planning regarding ECD/ECE, but this is not enough to be confident about the practical improvement in financing that will ensure implementation of the governmental commitment concerning the ECE attendance target at 80% in 2020.

The evidence on infant mortality rate and child mortality rate under 5 years old shows that improved access and quality to health services for new-borns and young children. However, there is still no convincing evidence of governmental commitment to develop cross-sectorial early childhood services as a strategy to maintain and accelerate the trend of declining infant and child mortality rates. This is related to the fact that ECD is not a policy sector and remains scattered between sectors, with little progress at policy/government level in ensuring coordination and trans-disciplinary work. The institutionalisation of early education within the Ministry of Education – that organised a separate department for early education: the Preschool Department – is an important indicator of the governmental endorsement for ECE, but not an indicator of a cross-sectoral policy approach, needed for ECD. There is also not enough evidence that ECD/ECE standards

developed and approved by the Government are well connected with the development of the home visiting policy, as the SitAn 2021 underlines there is no mechanism for monitoring the standards.¹⁵⁷.

Although existing evidence allow a cautiously optimistic assessment of ECD/ECE policy development and UNICEF contribution to thesis progress at policy, the most important bottlenecks identified still need to be considered in the future:

- lack of training and overall capacity of local staff in educational institutions, but also of local social workers to address the needs of young children in a comprehensive/holistic way
- lack of motivation (including wages) and other capacity elements (communication and team-work competences) for transdisciplinary teams that need to work together
- lack of strong and clear coordination mechanisms at government level and at local level

Moreover, COVID-19 impact on access to services and increased poverty generated by the pandemic affects the development of ECD / ECE because it affects the available budgets for service developments and increases a major risk factor associated with lack of access (poverty)

Methodology for Contribution Analysis

Contribution Analysis is a theory-based evaluation method. It analysis attempts to describe “**plausible association**”: where a reasonable person, knowing what has occurred/is occurring in the programme agrees that the programme contributed/is contributing to the outcomes. Therefore, it is suitable for the evaluation of effectiveness and impact.

Although Contribution Analysis does not specify the criteria used for assessing what constitutes evidence of the causal story, it does provide framework in which these valutative research decisions become transparent, which is a principal element in this methodology to bring empirical support to the claims contained in the causal story.

Contribution Analysis does not prove a contribution but provides evidence to reduce the uncertainty about the contribution made. This means that the approach does not intrinsically provide mechanisms for the quality assurance of evidence and rigor, but appropriate methods to assess evidence can be incorporated into the Contribution Analysis process, and in this way, it can be closer to Process Tracing.

Six steps are taken to produce a credible contribution story:

- 1) Set out the attribution problem to be addressed
- 2) Develop a theory of change and risks to it
- 3) Gather the existing evidence on the theory of change
- 4) Assemble and assess the contribution story, or performance story, and challenges to it
- 5) Seek out additional evidence
- 6) Revise and, where the additional evidence permit, strengthen the contribution story

Using a generative perspective on causality to infer that a programme made an important contribution to an expected result that has been observed, Contribution Analysis argues that a reasonable contribution causal claim can be made if:

- There is a reasoned theory of change for the intervention: the key assumptions behind why the intervention is expected to work make sense, are plausible, may be supported by evidence and/or existing research, and are agreed upon by at least some of the key players.
- The activities of the intervention were implemented as set out in the theory of change.
- The theory of change—or key elements thereof—is supported by and confirmed by evidence on observed results and underlying assumptions—the chain of expected results occurred. The theory of change has not been disproved.
- Other influencing factors have been assessed and either shown not to have made a significant contribution or their relative role in contributing to the desired result has been recognized.

¹⁵⁷ SitAn 2021 (page 91 in de draft version).

Assessment of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to adolescents and youth development, empowerment and engagement

The assessment of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to youth development, empowerment and engagement is based on the theory of change (ToC) developed by the evaluation team in consultation with UNICEF CO and following closely the planned ToC for Adolescents development and participation (ADAP). Short- and medium-term changes have been added to the theory of change to reflect UNICEF's activity targeting young people health, education and protection, considering that no empowerment and engagement is really achieved if the child/adolescent/young person is not safe and does not have a positive perspective about her future due to poor health or education or due to lack of access to healthcare and education.

UNICEF work targeting young people is complex and covers different areas. Among the most important activities¹⁵⁸:

- Studies have been conducted by UNICEF (or with UNICEF support) especially around youth health and well-being. This informed UNICEF actions resulting in regulations, clinical protocols, standards, plans and tools developed or endorsed, such as on post-natal care and screening adolescents to identify those using drugs;
- To encourage HIV prevention and care, UNICEF provided 100 adolescents living with HIV with support through smartphone-based applications. This supported the development of a collection of stories based on their real-life experience, adhered to ARVs, and given information on HIV disclosure and healthy living;
- UNICEF and the Ministry of Education continued to implement multilingual and multicultural education in 18 schools in Batken Oblast;
- Within the ADAP programme in border areas a special attention was paid in 2020 to youth mental health and training was provided to duty bearers on this issue;
- UNICEF involved young volunteers in modelling model disaster risk reduction education in pilot schools in all seven provinces and to support emergency drills in 109 schools;
- To empower girls and to support economic participation and employability among girls, UNICEF implements STEM and STEM4Girls.

Evaluations and reviews of each of these interventions can inform about the impact for adolescent and young people directly targeted in the pilot schools and communities and the theory of change of each of these interventions is consistent and able to generate impact.

However, these activities are not able to generate a wider impact, at scale, for children, and have not yet been scaled-up nationally. **The existing statistics and analysis, including the Situation Analysis of Youth and Adolescent Health and Well-being in the Kyrgyz Republic from 2019 and Situational Analysis (SitAn) from 2021, do not allow for the identification of the long-term change envisaged by the ToC.** The SitAn 2021 underlines that: "Youth unemployment is also higher than the national average and young men between 15 and 34 make up the largest group of labour migrants, so any reduction in employment opportunities affects this population group disproportionately."¹⁵⁹ Moreover, a majority of

¹⁵⁸ Based on UNICEF reports.

¹⁵⁹ The labour force participation rate for Kyrgyz youth (aged 15 to 24 years) was 40.1% in 2018, about two thirds of the national norm. The youth unemployment rate was 13.4% with 29.4% not in education, employment or training (NEET)-Gender and regional disparities are noticeable factors impacting negatively on youth's life chances. Labour force participation by young males (52.4%) was twice as high as for young females (27.3%) and young women (22.3%) were 2.2 times more likely to be unemployed than young men (10.1%). The NEET rate was also much higher for females than for males - 29.4% of young women versus 12% of young men. (ILOSTAT (2018) <http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/> accessed 17 May 2021). SitAn 2021 also underlines that The transition from school to work is challenging, especially for girls. In 2018, only about 14.2% of youth aged 15 to 24 were officially unemployed while about 20.50% were not in education, employment or training (NEET). Gender and regional disparities are noticeable factors impacting negatively on adolescents' life chances. Labour force participation by young men (52.4%) is almost

young people are working in low-skilled jobs in low pay sectors - agriculture (27.0%); construction (16.0%); and trade (16.0%). Jobs which do not require specific technical education or skills, account for more than half of youth employment and most working youth are employed in the informal labour market, particularly young women.¹⁶⁰

SitAn 2021 also mentions that youth- and adolescent-friendly services are particularly rare in rural areas, which restricts young people's access to youth- and adolescent-sensitive health issues, such as sexual and reproductive health. In recent years, Government investment in health has focused on child survival and adolescent health has not been prioritized, resulting in little progress made in promoting healthy lifestyles and well-being for youth and adolescents (SDG 3), low rates of sport activities among young people and nutritional deficiencies presents to over a quarter of the young people.¹⁶¹

Although all the indicators of HIV knowledge and testing improved from 2014 to 2018,¹⁶² the low level of knowledge among young women is a real concern.¹⁶³

UNICEF focused its energy and mobilized other developmental partners to prevent child marriage:

- A roadmap for communication and action against child marriage was developed and endorsed by the government.
- As part of Spotlight Initiative, UNICEF is conducting monitoring of judicial practice on child marriage cases and developed a specific roadmap for six pilot communities.
- A series of communication and advocacy products and events during 2018 sought to raise awareness and influence attitudes toward child and forced marriage, including production of an award-winning short film called 'Abduction' that was broadcast widely.
- More than 700 young children participated in celebrations of the International Day of the Girl Child in the city of Osh. Innovative live statue performances staged by children against gender-based violence drew public attention and gained extensive social media support, with over 190,000 views, 3,000 likes, and 277 comments in support of ending forced and child marriages in the country.
- Activities against child marriage are implemented at local level by partner CSOs to gain support from community and religious leaders and the strategy seems to generate results, as the rate of child women married before 18 decreased from 11.6% in 2012 at 9% in 2018.
- Materials for children and their caretakers were developed and disseminated on how to prevent sexual violence against children.
- Support was also provided to the Child Hotline and the number of calls to the hotline more than tripled in 2020, which is both an effect of the promotion and an indicator of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and lock-down/isolation.
- A mobile application for prevention of violence against girls and child marriage was developed, assessed and already reached over 150,000 downloads.

Although all these activities had immediate results and can be considered successful, SitAn 2021 still underlines that "Kyrgyz women, and especially rural women, are subject to specific types of violence such

twice as high as for young women (27.3%) and young women (22.3%) were twice as likely to be unemployed as young men (10.1%). (Kanat et al. *Analysis of Youth Labor Market Trends in the Kyrgyz Republic* University of Central Asia (2019) Bishkek available at <https://lifeinkyrgyzstan.org/publications/analysis-of-youth-labor-market-trends-in-kyrgyzstan/>)

¹⁶⁰ National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, *Open Data – Statistics of the Kyrgyz Republic*, <http://www.stat.kg/en/opendata/>.

¹⁶¹ *Situation Analysis of Youth and Adolescent Health and Well-being in the Kyrgyz Republic*, 2019

¹⁶² According to the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNICEF, MICS (2014 and 2019), in Kyrgyzstan, most youth (58.6% in 2014; 74.4% in 2018) had heard of AIDS, while only a small portion of adolescents had (15.5% in 2014; 17.8% in 2018). While those numbers increased between 2014 and 2018, the proportion of those who were aware of the two main ways of preventing HIV transmission was only 61.6% in 2014 and 67.1% in 2018. It should also be noted that the percentage of young women aged 15–24 who have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS is only around 25%, with an even lower rate in rural areas (around 20%). Over two thirds (67.2% in 2014 and 74.0% in 2018) of women in the country had been tested, but this may have been as part of regular ANC screening, rather than as a discrete HIV testing.

¹⁶³ SitAn 2021.

as child marriage, abduction for forced marriage and polygamy, although these forms of violence are specifically prohibited by law."¹⁶⁴

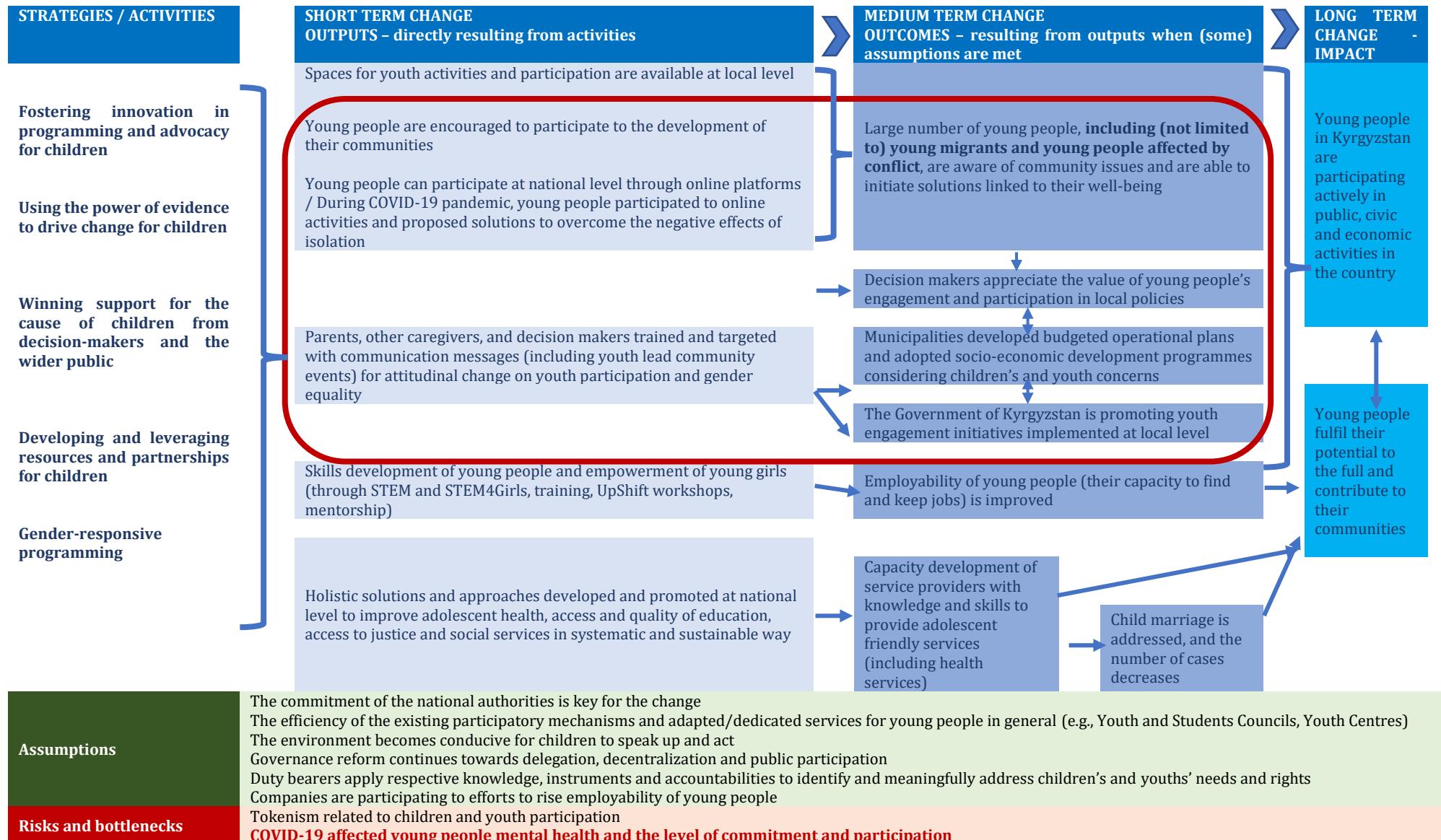
Important progresses have been made in justice for children. With UNICEF support and involvement trained legal aid is available for children and probation is developing to support child offenders reintegration. Although a remarkable achievement, the progress made around justice for children still needs to be measure at the level of the children, and judicial statistics needs to be improved on reintegration and recidivism, with disaggregation by age, gender, etc. in order to allow an impact evaluation.

SitAn 2021 also underlines that "overall prevailing gender and social norms do not fully support the concept or practice of children or adolescents participating in government decision-making processes. This lack of participation in turn reinforces and renews the existing lack of trust in government and undoubtedly opens the child's mind to the idea of migration as it develops into adulthood. Awareness-raising among young people and their adult counterparts, together with both individual and institutional capacity-building, and community engagement for social norm change are vital."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ SitAn 2021

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

Figure 9. Theory of Change developed for the evaluation of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution youth empowerment and engagement (Annex)



A theory-based impact evaluation requires the evaluator to identify the impact to be studied and to assess the processes and/or contributions and/or mechanisms that participate to the impact. In the context presented above, **the assessment of UNICEF contribution for the benefit of young people in Kyrgyzstan uses Contribution Analysis as the main methodological framework, to understand how UNICEF contributed to one important medium-term results: the Government promotion of youth engagement initiatives implemented at local level;**

To conduct the analysis, one parts is identified in the theory of change for the in-depth analysis and presented in the red frame in the ToC figure. This is in line with the methodological approach specific to Contribution Analysis, where 'nested impact pathways' are recommended in order to focus the analysis and to organize the evidence.¹⁶⁶ The next analytical step, after defining the 'nested impact pathway', is to embellish the nested impact pathway into the theory of change, by naming a subset of assumptions and contextual factors that may be most influential in explaining the links in the impact pathway. The primary purpose of Contribution Analysis is to assess the validity of the ToC (observed results, assumptions, influencing factors). Our goal was to gather the most relevant evidence of sufficient quality and from diverse sources to assess each impact pathway in the ToC. Data was initially collected based on documents provided by UNICEF CO¹⁶⁷. The narrative contribution was revised based on the initially gathered evidence and additional evidence was collected through interviews and from sources indicated by the interviewees to further support the ToC. For the identified pathway, the evidence gathered is organised in a table¹⁶⁸ underlying the limitations of the evidence.

The analysis of the collected evidence shows that UNICEF successfully piloted an intervention with **two main objectives:**

- 3) encouraging young people to participate and
- 4) raising the awareness of duty bearers and (to a lesser extent) caregivers (parents) and their capacity to listen child and adolescents voices and to integrate them into their decisions.

The initiative, implemented in communities, in the southern regions of the country, in the context of peacebuilding and social cohesion activities, was labelled Youth and Child Friendly Local Governance (YCFLG).

Initially the intervention included **two types of activities:**

- 3) organising consultations of adolescents and young people and
- 4) activities for duty bearers, together and separate from the ones with young people, including hearings of young people, to determine decision making at local level in line with the needs and expectations of young people.

The intervention sometimes has been implemented in cooperation by UNICEF, UNFPA and UNDP, with high-quality cooperation assessed by the dedicated evaluation¹⁶⁹. The State Agency for Youth, Physical Culture and Sports under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic partner for the implementation of the initiative in cities and towns included in the Regional Development Concept for the period of 2018-2022, considered as "growth points", under the label: 'Child Friendly Cities' in partnership with UNICEF.

Interviews also underlined the importance of the quality of cooperation and the work of the implementing partners and teams, their familiarity with the local communities and capacity to mobilise local resources.

Concerning mobilisation of resources and outreaching activities, these have been conducted based on the work with schools and local authorities, based on social media promotion and promotion at national

¹⁶⁶ Mayne, J., "Contribution Analysis: Coming of Age," *Evaluation*, 2012, 18/3:270-80; Mayne, J., "Useful Theory of Change Models", *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 2015, 30/2: 119-42.

¹⁶⁷ A practical aim was to gather evidence as efficiently as possible. To this end, we sought to identify existing information (collected for a purpose other than the current evaluation/Contribution Analysis) that met our criteria, and collected added information to fill gaps and expand on existing evidence.

¹⁶⁸ The table follows the model of the 'evidence of impact' table from Morton, S., "Research Impact Assessment: A 'Contributions' Approach," *Research Evaluation*, 2015, 24/4: 405-19.

¹⁶⁹ "Evaluation of UNICEF / UNFPA / UNDP project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' (2019-2020)", 2021.

level (through interviews about the activities, with representatives of the Government, broadcasted at national TV). To a lesser extent the local teams have been collaborating with social workers and pedagogists to identify and engage the most vulnerable young people.

As most outreach was organised in schools, the support from teachers, as well as the support and openness from local authorities and community leaders throughout the activities and the absence of direct opposition from parents proved to be key factors supporting the results. The absence of these factors: lack of support from teachers and local authorities and community leaders or the manifest direct opposition of parents hindered the results.

These activities generated, **according to the reviews and evaluation conducted by UNICEF:**

- 3) a satisfactory level of engagement and satisfaction from young people and
- 4) youth and child responsive plans in various municipalities.

The YCFLG was boosted when adding an additional tool for youth participation, namely the social innovation tool: **UPSHIFT**. This allowed adolescents and young people to participate to learning activities and to get engaged afterwards by proposing innovative solutions for the problems of their communities. Empowerment was achieved when proposed innovative solutions have been selected for implementation, by young people together with adults and resources have been made available for the implementation of solutions. **Resources provided by local authorities and by the local businesses ensured community support for youth participation, offering a concrete encouragement for young people and straightforward evidence of the existing impact at local level of these activities.**

In 2020, limitations to face-to-face activities determined the organisation of online activities. As activities at community level continued. **Young people have been additionally supported to participate at national level in an UPSHIFT inspired online workshop.** A total of 140 young people from 25 cities and villages participated in this online event. The initiative, organized as part of the "Child and Youth Friendly Cities" initiative under the State Agency for Youth, Physical Culture and Sports aims to find innovative solutions to overcome the harmful effects that confinement might be having on adolescents and young people. UNICEF, supported by civil society partners, assisted the teams in the development of the projects, contributing indirectly to improve the digital and research skills of the participants and enhancing their teamwork competencies.¹⁷⁰

At local level, other activities to encourage young people engagement and to empower them have been implemented (leadership and Innovation Academy, Janyration Chakyrygy Creative contest, cross-border events among youth and local self-government) and they have been considered effective, although sometimes not very well coordinated and without a clear connection.

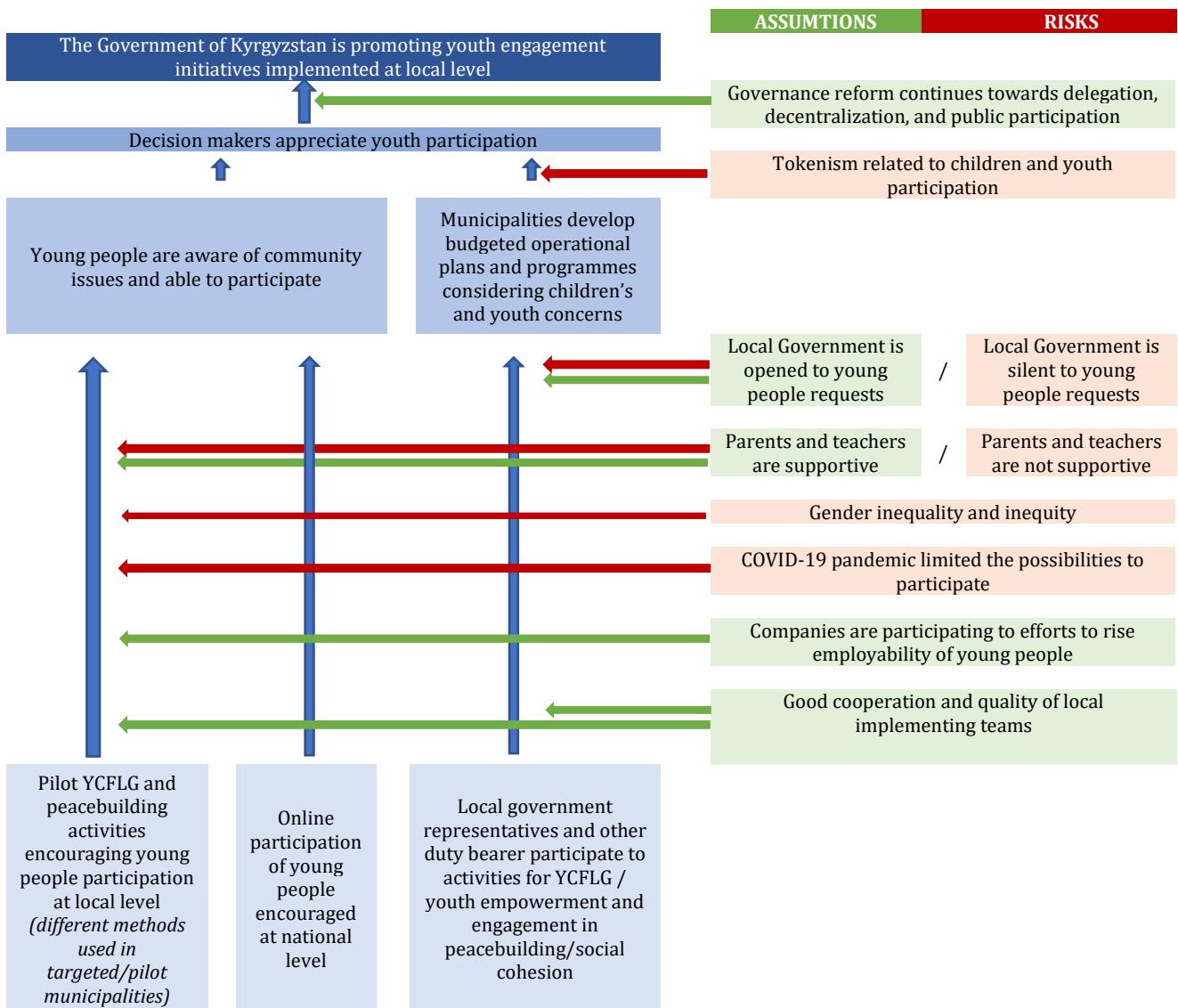
Data collected from participants to initiatives show that boys and young men participants felt empowered. Data are not consistent referring to girls empowerment, because some evidence shows they too felt empowered and having more possibilities to participate, but other evidence shows lack of empowerment. The percentage of Kyrgyz girls participant to the programme: 'Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan' that felt excluded and powerless increased by 6% after programme implementation compared to the baseline before.¹⁷¹ However, this evidence is not consistent with any other piece of evidence and therefore, in this case of conflicting evidence, it is not possible to identify what is the factor that could generate the lack of impact of the intervention over girls or if there is an error in the measurement of the quoted statistic. Although there are more girls and young women participating to activities, compared to boys and young men, the element of gender equity was not fully considered in the programme implementation and only marginally addressed by the problems identified and solutions generated by young people themselves.¹⁷² Considering gender differences and stereotypes, this can provide a part of the explanation for a more visible impact of the intervention among boys.

¹⁷⁰ <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/press-releases/young-people-25-localities-develop-innovative-solutions-overcome-negative-effects>

¹⁷¹ End of Programme Review Report for the programme: Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (2016-2020), 2021.

¹⁷² See also Gender Review 2020.

Figure 10. Revised Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to the Government support for engagement initiatives implemented at local level (Annex)



Although the programme aimed at including vulnerable children, the evidence is not consistent in this regard. **In municipalities included in peacebuilding programmes more children in vulnerable situations have been involved in project activities**, as per the programme design (purposefully placed in marginalised areas). This included children from ethnic minorities facing language barriers, children otherwise isolated from the community, children in conflict with the law. Children with disabilities were involved. The youth who participated in the project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' experienced it as a revealing experience of initiation into adulthood and self-leadership. The most spectacular transformations were witnessed among the most withdrawn, the most geographically isolated, and among young girls who discovered the roles they could take on.¹⁷³ On the other hand, there is no similar evidence on the involvement of children in vulnerable situations in all cities considered as "growth points", included in the 'Child Friendly Cities' initiative.

Where the involvement of vulnerable adolescent and young people took place, this was supported by the involvement of mentors in peer-to-peer activities, according to interviewed stakeholders and UNICEF representatives and anecdotal evidence, however, there is a need for further research on the contribution of the mentors to overall impact.

¹⁷³ Evaluation of UNICEF / UNFPA / UNDP project, *op. cit.*

On the other hand, the impact at the level of local authorities is unclear. Although youth and child responsive plans have been developed in several municipalities, there is no consistent evidence about the implementation of the activities planned, therefore about the long-term commitment of the local authorities.

However, the YCFLG was appreciated at national level and the Government bought-in, participating to the organisation of a national competition. The initiative was concluded with the awarding of the certificates to the three cities that won the "Child and Youth Friendly Cities" competition and to the other seven cities that were certified as youth and child-friendly cities in April 2021, showing the commitment of the President for the initiative.

UNICEF is directing advocacy efforts and technical support to drive the institutionalization of youth- and child-friendly planning and budgeting locally with the objective to ensure mandatory collection of age and sex-disaggregated data on children's and young people's needs and demands. National endorsement for the 'Child and Youth Friendly Cities' completion may be a particularly key step ahead in the collection of data about child and youth needs.

However, there is no guaranteed sustainability for the local activities addressing these needs at local level and a continuation of empowerment activities for young people and engagement opportunities that will allow these young people to participate.

Table 7. Illustrative evidence for the Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to the Government support for engagement initiatives implemented at local level

Impact pathway	Evidence	Limitations of the evidence
Pilot YCFLG and peacebuilding activities encouraging young people participation at local level (different methods used in targeted/pilot municipalities)	<p>UPSHIFT social innovation tool for its Youth and Child Friendly Local Governance (YCFLG) Initiative in 31 rural and urban communities including in areas bordering on Uzbekistan, having involved 1897 adolescents in the age between 14-17 years (over 60% girls) in assessing issues affecting them.</p> <p>In total UNICEF reports over 8,600 young people (over 60% girls) taking part to a series of participatory needs assessments within the frame of the YCFLG Initiative</p> <p>As a result of UPSHIFT initiatives, UNICEF reports over 6,000 young people (over 65% female) learning how to creatively turn issues into solutions and prototype them with communities and decision-makers.</p> <p>With UNICEF support, school parliaments have been established in 10 municipalities and consultative committees in 18 towns which attend the youth and child friendliness contest.</p> <p>Other participation methods used are leadership and Innovation Academy, Janyration Chakyrygy Creative contest, cross-border events among youth and local self-government.</p>	<p>Evidence is limited to UNICEF reports. It is unclear how data about the number of young people involved have been collected.</p>
Online participation of young people encouraged at national level	<p>A total of 140 young people from 25 cities and villages develop 32 innovative solutions to overcome the negative effects of isolation during COVID-19 pandemic, as part of an online UPSHIFT</p> <p>UNDP and UNICEF, with the support of the EU-UN joint Spotlight Initiative to end violence against women and girls, conducted the first Online Hackathon in Kyrgyzstan, in May 2020. The event resulted in ideas to use IT solutions developed by young people to help end domestic violence against women and children. The later developed game, Spring in Bishkek proves to be effective in raising awareness and motivating action among young people in relation to violence and child marriage.</p>	
Local government representatives and other duty bearer participate to activities for YCFLG / youth empowerment and engagement in peacebuilding/social cohesion	<p>Within the YCFLG, local authorities receive support in involving children in their planning</p> <p>Within the project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' activities targeting duty bearer, including parents, have been reported and evaluated as successful.¹⁷⁴</p>	<p>Although interviews with UNICEF staff allowed for more evidence about these activities, they are virtually missing from UNICEF annual reports</p>
Young people are aware of community issues and able to participate	<p>Studies conducted by UNICEF and data included in annual reports show that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 25% of young people in the pilot YCFLG communities feel that school administrations, local authorities and their parents now listen to them. - civic engagement has also resulted in a 31% increase in peacebuilding competencies, critical thinking and collaborative action <p>Pre-post-tests of UPSHIFT initiatives implemented within the YCFLG show that up to 61% young people learn how to recognize community issues and improve skills of causality analysis by 21%.</p>	<p>Although qualitative information and evaluations are confirming the result, it is disturbing that the assessment of the programme: Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan shows that girls/young women</p>

¹⁷⁴ "Evaluation of UNICEF / UNFPA / UNDP project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' (2019-2020)", 2021

	<p>Youth ability to communicate and collaborate has led over 300 project proposals and fulfilling about 150 of them to address the problems identified by young people (within the period 2018-2020)</p> <p>Young people demonstrated elevated levels of civic engagement in 2020. Young volunteers were invaluable in saving lives during the COVID-19 crisis, by directly supporting medical teams in hospitals and bringing medical equipment and drugs to patient's home.</p> <p>The youth who participated in the project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' experienced it as a revealing experience of initiation into adulthood and self-leadership. The most spectacular transformations were witnessed among the most withdrawn, the most geographically isolated, and among young girls who discovered the roles they could take on.¹⁷⁵</p> <p>On the other hand, the End of Programme Review Report for the programme: Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan presents the result of ex-post study on participant children. One may note that the percentage of interviewed boys who felt excluded and powerless, decreased almost threefold, whereas the percentage of interviewed girls who felt this way, increased by 6%.¹⁷⁶</p> <p>Regarding to the empowerment of girls, statistics showed that early marriage rate in the location decreased from 35-40% to 25%, but this data are considering nor reliable.¹⁷⁷</p>	feel excluded and powerless in 2020, more than in 2017.
Municipalities develop budgeted operational plans and programmes considering children's and youth concerns	<p>Budgeted youth and child responsive plans in 19 municipalities in total, all part of the Youth and Child Friendly Local Governance Initiative.</p> <p>UNICEF's advocacy resulted in scaling up the YCFLG initiative to over 40 urban and rural municipalities, according to UNICEF reports.</p>	<p>Evidence is limited to UNICEF reports.</p> <p>Planning alone is not a guaranty of youth empowerment and involvement</p>
Decision makers appreciate youth participation	<p>Financial support from the authorities and communities was provided for initiatives proposed by young people participating to UPSHIFT.</p> <p>Within the project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' the evaluation concluded that meaningful community development initiatives took place, led by the youth and supported by local self-government, such as legal clinics or new inclusive community venues.¹⁷⁸</p>	<p>Evidence is limited to some cases, anecdotal</p>
The Government of Kyrgyzstan is promoting youth engagement initiatives implemented at local level	<p>In 2019, the Government used the YCFLG initiative to implement a competition in the 18 cities included in the Presidential Regional Development Concept.</p> <p>The initiative was concluded with the awarding of the certificates to the three cities that won the "Child and Youth Friendly Cities" competition and to the other seven cities that were certified as youth and child-friendly cities in April 2021, showing the commitment of the President for the initiative.</p>	

¹⁷⁵ Evaluation of UNICEF / UNFPA / UNDP project, *op. cit.*, as well as the *End of Programme Review Report* for the programme: Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (2016-2020), 2021

¹⁷⁶ *End of Programme Review Report* for the programme: Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, *op. cit.*

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ Evaluation of UNICEF / UNFPA / UNDP project, *op. cit.*

	<p>The State Agency for Youth, Physical Culture and Sports under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, jointly with the UNICEF and with public organizations, implements the "Child Friendly Cities" initiative in cities and towns included in the Regional Development Concept for the period of 2018-2022, considered as "growth points".</p> <p>However, interviews underline the limited allocation of resources for young people from the national budget.</p>	
Good cooperation and quality of local implementing teams	<p>"From the project design to its implementation and reporting, the three implementing United Nations Agencies, with the administrative lead of UNICEF, experimented with an exceptionally deep level of cooperation. Joint design, joint tendering, joint monitoring and reporting, co-implementation of activities converged to fully materialize the "delivering as one" approach. The experience was time consuming, as procedures had to be adjusted and joint decision making demanded long clearance and negotiations. Compounded by the COVID-19 crisis, which required profound adaptation to move most activities online, these delays weighed on the implementing partners and (to a lesser extent) participants, who had to rush into activities during the second half of the project despite a non-cost extension. However, the commitment of the implementing partners and the leverage of the United Nations agencies made it possible to intensify implementation and pick up a rhythm that participants found exhilarating. The joint process maximized UN agencies' assets in terms back office, field presence, existing network of partners, reputation and political influence. The donor can trust in the value for money of the project. The momentum thus created will be precious for successor initiatives."¹⁷⁹</p> <p>The conclusion of the Evaluation of UNICEF / UNFPA / UNDP project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' is consistent with evidence from interviews conducted for the present evaluation.</p>	
Companies are participating to efforts to rise employability of young people	<p>There is limited evidence on the involvement of local companies in supporting UPSHIFT broad community initiatives. Interviews show UNICEF has plans to continue working to leverage powers from business, as the supporting factor from the private sector is acknowledged.</p>	Evidence is limited to some cases, anecdotal and related to UNICEF plans rather than the impact pathway.
COVID-19 pandemic limited the possibilities to participate	<p>COVID-19 pandemic is acknowledged as a limitation, but evidence from UNICEF reports, evaluations of initiatives in the border regions and interviews show a good adaptation of the programmes and initiatives.</p>	-
Parents and teachers are / are not supportive	<p>The evaluation of the project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' identified the work with parents and teaches as a lesson learned. According to the report: "The project recognised that parents, community members and influencers such as teachers, can impede children's participation, empowerment, and interethnic interactions, unless they are prepared. It was excellent practice to assume parents could instead function as accelerator, to involve them in several key activities, and to offer them empowerment and capacity building. At the same time, the project's action on other part of the assumption, which is to say the involvement of teachers and schools, lagged behind."¹⁸⁰</p> <p>Hindering factors identified by young people participating in projects are poor infrastructure, lighting, inferior quality of sport facilities in the village, teachers not committed to education, absence of activities in schools, unwillingness of school management to allocate a room for student parliament.¹⁸¹</p>	<p>Although the assumption and corelative risk are identified, there are few activities reported to address the risk.</p> <p>Interviews show that initiatives are limited to where schools are cooperating and children and adolescents in schools that are not opened to cooperate are often not covered.</p>

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ End of Programme Review Report for the programme: Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, *op. cit.*

Local Government is opened/ are silent to young people requests	This has been identified as a hindering factor in some communities by young people participating to initiatives as part of the programme: Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. ¹⁸²	
Tokenism related to children and youth participation exists	The risk is identified in the literature on youth participation and interviews, but not addressed by documents and planning.	
Gender inequality and inequity	<p>Data are not consistent referring to girls empowerment, because some evidence shows they too felt empowered and having more possibilities to participate, but other evidence shows lack of empowerment. The percentage of Kyrgyz girls participant to the programme: 'Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan' that felt excluded and powerless increased by 6% after programme implementation compared to the baseline before.¹⁸³</p> <p>Although there are more girls and young women participating to activities, compared to boys and young men, the element of gender equity was not fully considered in the programme implementation and only marginally addressed by the problems identified and solutions generated by young people themselves.¹⁸⁴ Considering gender differences and stereotypes, this can provide a part of the explanation for a more visible impact of the intervention among boys.</p>	The evidence is not consistent, and, in this case of conflicting evidence, it is not possible to identify what is the factor that could generate the lack of impact of the intervention over girls or if there is an error in the measurement of the quoted statistic.
Governance reform continues towards delegation, decentralization, and public participation	<p>The evaluation of the project 'Promoting Kyrgyzstan's youth cohesion and interaction towards Uzbekistan' identified policy bottlenecks for the development and scaling-up of a culture of youth participation. According to the report: "Peacebuilding projects can make inroads into systemic changes, in areas that directly address the key conflict drivers in targeted areas locally – but they cannot serve to assess other, broader reform projects that do not directly relate to peacebuilding"¹⁸⁵</p> <p>UNICEF underlines in the reports and UNICEF staff states in interviews the importance of engaging the central Government, not only the local ones. Moreover, this is visible in the advocacy of UNICEF for the rolling-out of the local youth participatory model.</p>	

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ End of Programme Review Report for the programme: Increasing Resilience of Youth for Peaceful and Inclusive Communities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan (2016-2020), 2021.

¹⁸⁴ See also Gender Review 2020.

¹⁸⁵ Evaluation of UNICEF / UNFPA / UNDP project, *op. cit.*

UNICEF reports underline that “the transformative value of the process lies in supporting more participatory processes for decision making and offering adolescents and young people opportunities to be heard before they can express their opinions through the electoral system. In turn, participation and active citizenship among youth will help reduce the gap between politicians and civil society, thus leading to a more cohesive and peaceful state.”¹⁸⁶ This is true in theory, however, at this moment the intervention generated impact at local level, with limited sustainability and a window of opportunity in the President’s involvement in awarding the certificates to ten cities recognized as friendly to children and youth. There is need for sustained advocacy taking profit of this window of opportunity, if still possible, not only for age and sex-disaggregated data on children’s and young people’s needs and demands, but also for regulations on youth consultation at local level, students and youth councils at school and community level, supported by the government and the development agencies and provided with tools to empower and engage young people, on the model of the initiative described.

The Contribution Analysis asks for an investigation of competing contribution stories that could have been supported by the same evidence. In this context, one needs to acknowledge that UNICEF contribution is not very well visible in the existent documents and evaluations, but this is often a strategy of UNICEF to allow for ownership development at the level of central government and local authorities. The intervention in some communities would have been possible without UNICEF participation, because UNDP and UNFPA¹⁸⁷ and the local implementing partners also have experience and expertise in implementing initiatives dedicated to youth development, empowerment and engagement. However, as UNICEF was involved, there evidence is convincing that it made a significant contribution, but it is difficult to confidently isolate it. The evidence collected show different specific objectives and targets for each partner, with UNFPA focusing on health (especially reproductive health), UNDP focusing on participation of young people over 18 years old, and UNICEF focusing on activities with adolescents. Moreover, interviews show that UNICEF and the implementing partners have the main ownership over the initiative, with UNFPA and UNDP manifesting less ownership when speaking about youth empowerment, engagement and participation.

Assessment of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to social protection for children

The assessment of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to youth development, empowerment and engagement is based on the theory of change (ToC) developed by the evaluation team in consultation with UNICEF CO.

A theory-based impact evaluation requires the evaluator to identify the impact to be studied and to assess the processes and/or contributions and/or mechanisms that participate to the impact. In the case of social protection, we identified **the extended coverage of the coverage of social assistance programme (SAP) for children by 7% in 2020 or additionally 25,329 children enrolled to the SAP.**

To conduct the analysis, one parts is identified in the theory of change for the in-depth analysis and presented in the red frame in the ToC figure. This is in line with the methodological approach specific to Contribution Analysis, where ‘nested impact pathways’ are recommended to focus the analysis and to organize the evidence.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ UNICEF COAR 2020.

¹⁸⁷ E.g., In Moldova UNFPA is supporting a complex programme of development of youth-centre based services, including empowerment and engagement activities.

¹⁸⁸ Mayne, J., “Contribution Analysis: Coming of Age,” *Evaluation*, 2012, 18/3:270–80; Mayne, J., “Useful Theory of Change Models”, *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*, 2015, 30/2: 119–42.

Figure 11. Theory of Change developed for the evaluation of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution social protection for children (Annex)



¹⁸⁹ <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/reports/multidimensional-poverty-assessment-kyrgyz-republic>

¹⁹⁰ Impact assured in the new Law of the State Benefits in the Kyrgyz Republic

¹⁹¹ http://president.kg/ru/sobytiya/12774_utverghdena_nacionalnaya_strategiya razvitiya kirgizskoy respubliki na 2018 2040 godi

¹⁹² Source: administrative data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, monthly reports on number of beneficiaries of the poverty-targeted benefit for families with children, # of beneficiaries observed was from August 2020 (308,842 children) to December 2020 (334,171). Regulation to relax eligibility criteria and thus, enroll more poor children came in force on 1 September 2020. The latter was recommended/advocated by UNICEF.

The next analytical step, after defining the ‘nested impact pathway,’ is to embellish the nested impact pathway into the theory of change, by naming a subset of assumptions and contextual factors that may be most influential in explaining the links in the impact pathway. The primary purpose of Contribution Analysis is to evaluate the validity of the ToC (observed results, assumptions, influencing factors). Our goal was to gather the most relevant evidence of sufficient quality and from diverse sources to evaluate each impact pathway in the ToC. Data was initially collected based on documents provided by UNICEF CO¹⁹³. The narrative contribution was revised based on the initially gathered evidence and additional evidence was collected through interviews and from sources indicated by the interviewees to further support the ToC. For the identified pathway, the evidence gathered is organised in a table¹⁹⁴ underlying the limitations of the evidence.

UNICEF Kyrgyzstan reports a long-term advocacy endeavour for extending for a universal or quasi-universal social assistance/social aid support for children. **Evidence provided by UNICEF and key informant interviewed show that UNICEF has been working in promoting (near to) universal social protection benefits for children and families in Kyrgyzstan, for more than a decade.** However, the constant economic development and growth in the country until the COVID-19 pandemic, as underlined by the World Bank¹⁹⁵, distracted the decision makers and international financial institutions from the needs of the most vulnerable families and children.

The evidence collected for this evaluation show that the reform regarding social benefits in the country has been started and progressed with difficulty, due to two main factors:

- **Institutional and leadership instability**, which made decisions obsolete due to the change of decision makers;
- **Disagreement among development partners and international financial institutions**, especially UNICEF, that advocated for (near to) universal social protection benefits for children and families, World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), warning about the lack of fiscal sustainability of the social policy proposals (and to a lesser extent UN Women, that advocated for a different social benefit system, which will also promote better gender equality).

The goal of investing in social protection for children has been explicitly recognized in the country's upcoming Development Strategy in 2018 and provided in the legal framework in July 2017, regulating initially universal benefits for children from 0 to 3 years old. However, the law was amended in October 2017, even before entering into force, in 2018.

In this context, the Monthly Benefit for Poor Families, renamed to Uybulugu Komok (UBK) in July 2018, is currently the only scheme that provides regular, predictable income support to poor households with children. Its limited coverage, targeting errors and low benefit value have been the topic of discussions among the Government and its development partners.

The latter agreed that “the current demographic window can be seen as an opportunity to invest in the youngest generation’s human capital development and boost their long-term productivity. In such a context, social protection is a key strategic tool in further decreasing poverty and securing the Kyrgyz Republic on a path of inclusive socio-economic development.”

Evidence shows that, due to this joint advocacy effort, the Government of Kyrgyzstan agreed to reform the UBK by introducing a universal birth grant and adjusting the means-test that determines eligibility, to strengthen the performance of the social assistance system. This decision may have been supported, as well, by the examples of countries in the region (one key informant interviewed mentioned that the example of the Russian Federation represented a key factor in determining the decision of some decision makers).

The situation when the reform was initiated – in 2019 – showed that a quarter of the population still lived in poverty, if measured at national standards. The institutionalisation of a multidimensionally

¹⁹³ A practical aim was to gather evidence as efficiently as possible. To this end, we sought to identify existing information (collected for a purpose other than the current evaluation/Contribution Analysis) that met our criteria, and collected added information to fill gaps and expand on existing evidence.

¹⁹⁴ The table follows the model of the ‘evidence of impact’ table from Morton, S., “Research Impact Assessment: A ‘Contributions’ Approach,” *Research Evaluation*, 2015, 24/4: 405–19.

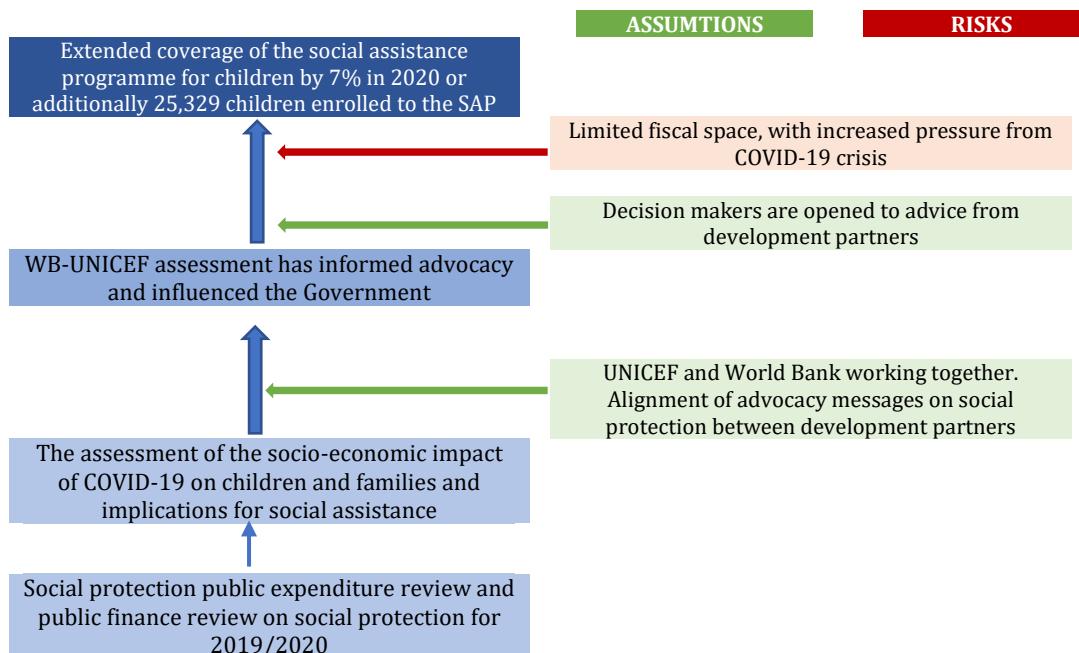
¹⁹⁵ World Bank, World Development Indicators Database, 2018. Database available at:
<https://databank.worldbank.org/source/world-development-indicators>

measurement of poverty, considering monetary and material deprivation, but also the lack or limited access to services, helped informing the decision makers in formulating solutions for the reform of UBK.

As reported by UNICEF, **better data and evidence on children** has been achieved in two steps:

- the institutionalization of National Multidimensional Poverty Measurement in 2019, because of UNICEF technical assistance and advocacy
- National Statistics Committee (NSC), with UNICEF's support, introduced the Multidimensional Child Poverty Index (child well-being index). Routine measurement of monetary child poverty is now complemented by an assessment of deprivations in health, education, living conditions, social inclusion, and protection¹⁹⁶.

Figure 12. Revised Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to extended coverage of social benefits (Annex)



In 2021, all existing data show that COVID-19 can double the poverty rate and generate a profound social and economic crisis. Based on the WB-UNICEF study conducted in May 2020, the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 could affect children in a disproportionate way, increasing the number of children living in poverty by between 160,000 and 570,000.

In this context, WB-UNICEF report on the predicted increase in child poverty informed advocacy for improved social protection coverage for children. The two organisations showed that the means-test used is not appropriate to respond to poverty generated by the COVID-19 crisis, because the "asset filters do not respond to transient poverty: households who have lost their source of income may still have assets they purchased before the crisis."¹⁹⁷ Four options/scenarios have been presented to the Ministry of Labour and Social Development, including the *status quo scenario – the no change option* (Option 1), but also one option eliminating the means-test (Option 2) and two other options promoting a different threshold for eligibility for the social protection benefit, with the means-test (Option 3) and without the means-test (Option 4).

The Ministry of Labour and Social Development to eliminate one of the eligibility filters for child benefits and thereby contributing to the 7% increase in coverage in 2020 and UNICEF can be cautiously confident that the recommendations provided, together with the WB, and the advocacy work done determined the change in the approach. There is no direct evidence regarding UNICEF and WB contribution, and an alternative explanation would be that the decision on changing the eligibility filters for child benefits was developed independently from development partners, by the Ministry. But there is a great

¹⁹⁶ UNICEF COAR 2020

¹⁹⁷ Eszter Timár and Franziska Gassmann, *Potential implications of the COVID-19 crisis on social assistance for children in the Kyrgyz Republic*, 2020. Report for the World Bank and UNICEF advocacy.

coincidence between the decision taken and generating the visible impact – the extended coverage of the social assistance programme for children by 7% in 2020 – and UNICEF and WB recommendations.

While this is a good first step, the magnitude of the problem still a much bolder approach to the expansion of social protection, but there is an important lesson learned that cooperation between development partners can increase the chances of impact.

Table 8. Illustrative evidence for the Theory of Change for UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribution to extended coverage of social benefits

Impact pathway	Evidence	Limitations of the evidence
Social protection public expenditure review and public finance review on social protection for 2019/2020	<p>Document available.</p> <p>It informed the assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and families and implications for social assistance, according to the interviews</p>	
The assessment of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and families and implications for social assistance	<p>The assessment is available for the evaluation team and</p>	<p>No direct evidence on the influence of the document on decision making.</p> <p>An alternative explanation of the impact would be that the decision on changing the eligibility filters for child benefits was developed independently from development partners, by the Ministry. But there is a great coincidence between the decision taken and generating the visible impact – the extended coverage of the social assistance programme for children by 7% in 2020 – and UNICEF and WB recommendations.</p>
WB-UNICEF assessment has informed advocacy and influenced the Government		
Extended coverage of the social assistance programme for children by 7% in 2020 or additionally 25,329 children enrolled too	<p>Statistical data available at the Ministry of Labour and Social Development</p>	
UNICEF and World Bank working together. Alignment of advocacy messages on social protection between development partners	<p>According to interviews, there is a good cooperation between UNICEF and the World Bank and there is good appreciation of UNICEF advocacy capacity on the side of WB.</p>	<p>Only circumstantial evidence: the change of approach of international financial institutions (WB and IMF) regarding social protection and their partial alignment with UNICEF advocacy agenda allowed for good advocacy results.</p>
Decision makers are opened to advice from development partners	<p>Only circumstantial evidence available about the decision-making process.</p>	<p>No straightforward evidence on the two assumptions related to the decision-making process, except for interviews.</p>
Limited fiscal space, with increased pressure from COVID-19 crisis	<p>Assessments of the WB and IMF.</p> <p>Interviews show that although there is a concern related to the COVID-19 crisis impact on poverty, there is less demand for external financial support on the side of the new government.</p>	<p>Interviews show that the openness from decision makers is limited.</p>

Annex 3. Stakeholders map

INFLUENCE

INTEREST

<p>Primary Stakeholders: State Bodies, CSOs, Donors, UN Agencies and IFIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SickKids Centre for Global Child Health <p>Secondary Stakeholders (rights holders and duty bearers who benefit from UNICEF contribution)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centres for Disease Control - National Testing Centre of Kyrgyzstan's (MoES) - Ministry of Emergency Situations - Teachers - Parents - Medical staff - Social Workers - Suzak (southern Kyrgyzstan). - Karakol (eastern Kyrgyzstan) - Local administrations and village and city municipalities - Municipality coordination groups - Bishkek city court - District courts in Osh and Issyk-Kul provinces - Rural Villages in the Batken Province 	<p>Primary Stakeholders: State Bodies, CSOs, Donors, UN Agencies and IFIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - President of the Kyrgyz Republic - Government of Kyrgyzstan - The Parliamentary Committee on Social, Education and Health Affairs - National Statistical Committee - Ministry of Healthcare and Social Development - High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) - Ministry of Education and Science - World Bank - International Monetary Fund/IMF - Education Development Partners Coor. Council - Global Partnership for Education - Inter-sectoral Coor. Board on Justice for Children, - National Coordination Council on Juvenile Justice - Ombudsman's office - GIZ German Agency for International Cooperation - UN Resident Coordinator in KR - European Union (EU Delegation) - Red Crescent Society - UN Women - Aga Khan Foundation / University - Step by Step - NGO Aijan - State Agency for Youth, Sports and Physical Training - Youth of Osh <p>Donors and/or Implementing Partners for the CP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - United Kingdom - Government of Japan - USAID - Asian Development Bank - Global WASH Thematic funding <p>UNICEF stakeholders (other Cos, ECARO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF ECARO
<p>Primary Stakeholders: State Bodies, CSOs, Donors, UN Agencies and IFIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State Registry Service - United Nations World Food Programme - Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS - Mercy Corps - UNESCO <p>Secondary Stakeholders (rights holders and duty bearers who benefit from UNICEF contribution)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Institute for Strategic Studies 	<p>Primary Stakeholders: State Bodies, CSOs, Donors, UN Agencies and IFIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Justice - Ministry of Interior - Coalition of Centres in Global Child Health <p>Secondary Stakeholders (rights holders and duty bearers who benefit from UNICEF contribution)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kyrgyz Academy of Education - University of Central Asia - Queen's University in Belfast - Northern Irish non-governmental consortium 'Early Years' - Clé de Peau Beauté <p>UNICEF stakeholders (other Cos, ECARO)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF Division for Data Research and Policy - UNICEF Headquarters

Annex 4. Results of the Social Network Analysis

In the case of Kyrgyzstan, the specialists/country officers that have provided us answers to the questionnaire work in following areas: early childhood development, child health, health and nutrition, education, child protection, climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR), customer relationship management (CRM), technology for development (T4D) and knowledge management.

According to the collected data, the main institutions with whom the CO collaborates are: Governmental bodies, NGOs and national public agencies/institutes/centres. As the below figure shows, from the institutions that have been mentioned by respondents, most connections have been established between governmental bodies and UNICEF CO (40% of the total number of connections), followed by the collaboration developed with national public agencies/institutes/centres (29%). Higher education institutions are also important partners of UNICEF CO Kyrgyzstan (10%) and UN agencies and other international organizations (8%).

Figure 13 Type of institutions/organizations indicated as important partners by Kyrgyzstan CO respondents



Source: Data collected through a survey conducted at the level of UNICEF CO Kyrgyzstan

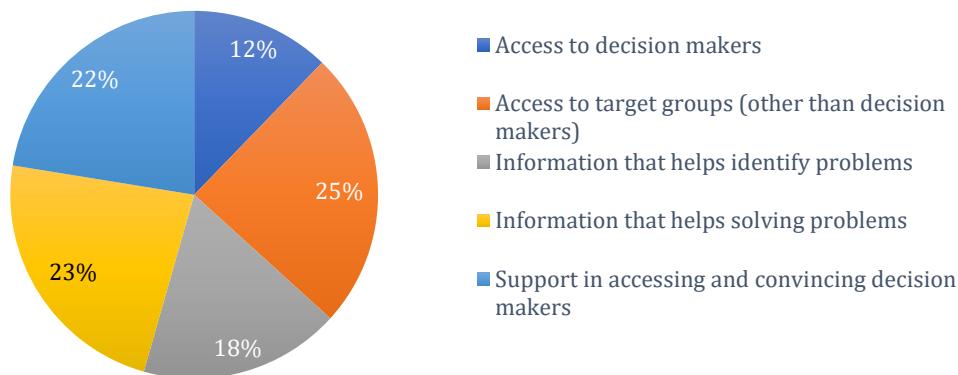
According to the collected data, the institutions with whom UNICEF CO staff has established the most connections are The Ministry of Education and Science (which has been mentioned 23 times by respondents to the social network questionnaire) and the Ministry of Health and Social Development (mentioned 15 times). Further, the respondents have also mentioned times The Republican Center for Health Promotion (6 times) and The Center of Immuno-prophylaxis and The Kyrgyz Academy of Education (4 times each).

Regarding the frequency of communication, as observed from the data collected, most frequent contacts have been established with: Humanitarian University, Osh State University, Pedagogical University, Perinatal Center of Bishkek, Regional clinical hospital and Teacher training Institute. For all the above-mentioned institutions the respondents indicated that they communicate daily. According to the data collected and based on the average frequency of collaboration for each identified category of stakeholders, the most frequent contacts have been established with local authorities. Nevertheless, only 2 respondents have mentioned LPAs as important collaborators. Further, the COs staff mentions as frequent collaborations, on a scale from 1 to 10 (where 10 means daily communication) the ones with national agencies or institutions (with an average of 6,91) and universities or higher education institutions (with an average of 6,52). The least frequent contacts, with an average of 5,38, were developed with the governmental bodies (e.g., Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Regional Development, Ministry of Digital Transformation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health and Social Development). As we can observe, the frequency of collaboration with diverse types of partners is not a significant factor.

According to the opinion of respondents, the primary benefit of the collaboration developed with the indicated institutions or organization was rated to access to target groups, other than decision makers (25% of the analysed case), followed by receiving information that helps solving problems (23%) and support in accessing and convincing decision-makers (22%). The figure below shows that the

importance given by the respondents to the benefits received from the collaboration with various stakeholders is similar.

Figure 14 Type of information or support provided by the partners of UNICEF CO Kyrgyzstan

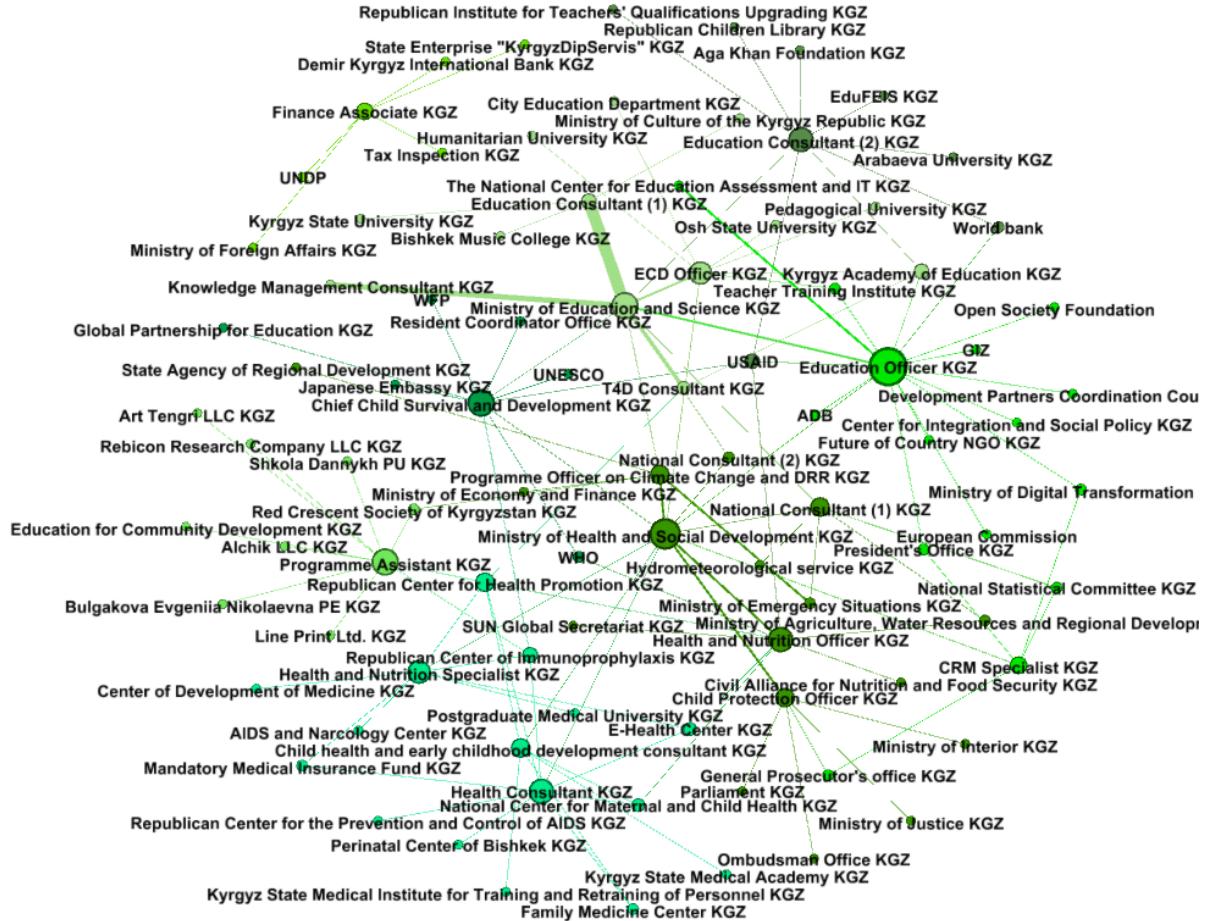


Source: Data collected through a survey conducted at the level of UNICEF CO Kyrgyzstan

In the case of governmental bodies, the most important types of support identified were information that helps solving problems (22,22%), followed by support for accessing and convincing decision makers, access to decision makers and to target groups, other than decision makers (each representing 20,37%). In the case of national agencies and institutes, the most valued type of support is related to the facilitated access to target groups (32,56), followed by information that helps solving problems and support for accessing and convincing decision makers (each representing 20,93%). The collaboration with higher education institutions brings UNICEF the benefit of receiving information that helps solving problems (40%) and of accessing target groups, other than decision makers (33,33%). In the case of the collaboration with UN agencies (such as: UNDP, UNESCO, USAID, but also the established collaboration within the departments of UNICEF CO of Kyrgyzstan) and other international organizations (such as: WB, WFP, WHO, EU), the most frequent benefits according to the opinion of respondents are support in accessing and convincing decision makers (41,66%) and information that helps solving problems (33,33%).

Another important criterion of the analysis is the perceived value of the collaborations established with diverse types of organizations or institutions. According to the collected data, on a scale from 1 (no value) to 10, the most valued collaboration is the one established between UNICEF CO and local authorities, receiving an average of 10 points, but as mentioned above, there were only two local authorities mentioned as important partners for UNICEF out of 147 nominalizations. Therefore, this case cannot be considered representative, but an outlier. Further, state agencies or institutions have received an average score of 8,22 and are followed by the partnerships developed with governmental bodies (ministries), which received an average of 8,06 points.

Figure 15. Social Network of UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan



Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan

Table 9. Metrics of the Social Network Analysis in Kyrgyzstan

Metric	Value
Average Degree	2.703
Average Weight Degree	3.121
Network Size	93
Network Diameter	6
Modularity	0.609
Average Path Length	3.616
Connected Component	2

Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan

In Kyrgyzstan, the social network of UNICEF CO has an average degree of 2.7 edges per nodes. When the weight is accounted in the calculation of the average, the average number of edges per node is 3.12 edges. These metrics indicated that on average, UNICEF's experts and the external partner organizations of UNICEF have around 3 connections in the network.

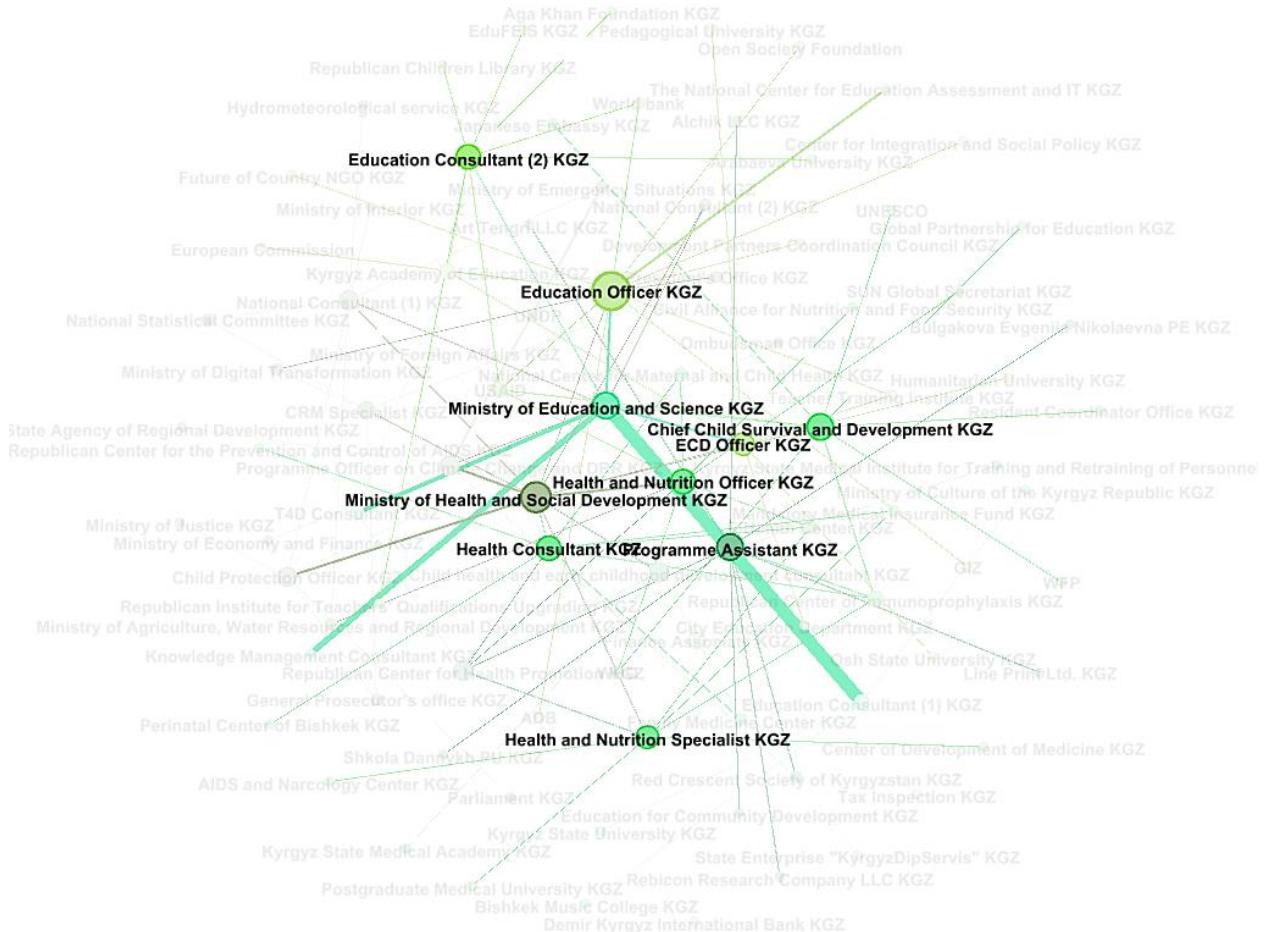
The size of the network is 93 nodes, and the network diameter has a coefficient of 6 nodes. According to the latter coefficient, the peripheral areas of the network of UNICEF CO Kyrgyzstan are not as isolated as the networks of UNICEF CO Ukraine and Bulgaria. The coefficient of 6 represents that the shortest path between the two most distant nodes in the network is 6 nodes. Regarding the characteristics of the overall partnership network developed by UNICEF CO of Kyrgyzstan, the data analysis shows the existence of a strong community, with various connections between actors in different clusters formed around the departments of the CO or the specialists/experts of the CO. This conclusion is based on the

modularity coefficient (0,609), which shows strong connections also between different clusters of interactions and not only within clusters.

Concerning the average path length, it has a coefficient of 3.616, which indicates relative strong flow of information in the network of UNICEF CO in Kyrgyzstan. The average number of steps along the shortest paths for all pairs of network nodes around 3 or 4 UNICEF experts and/or external partner organization of UNICEF, which is similar with the path from the network of UNICEF CO Moldova. This length shows that the peripheral areas of the network in Kyrgyzstan are not isolated and that edges are traversed between nodes multiple times. In other words, to reach a certain node in the network it only requires a path through 3 or 4 UNICEF's experts and/or external partner organizations of UNICEF.

Nevertheless, based on the connected component indicator, we observe that there are two groups of nodes or actors connected with each other, but not connected with the rest of the network. The Finance Associate, together with the Demir Kyrgyz International Bank, State Enterprise "KyrgyzDipServis", Tax Inspection from Kyrgyzstan, UNDP and Ministry of Foreign Affairs KGZ, are separated from the overall network of UNICEF CO Kyrgyzstan. The Finance Associate serves as hub in the separate connected component, as the Finance Associate has many edges pointing out of it to the other nodes that are part of the connected component.

Figure 16. Social Network of UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan filtered by number of degrees



Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan

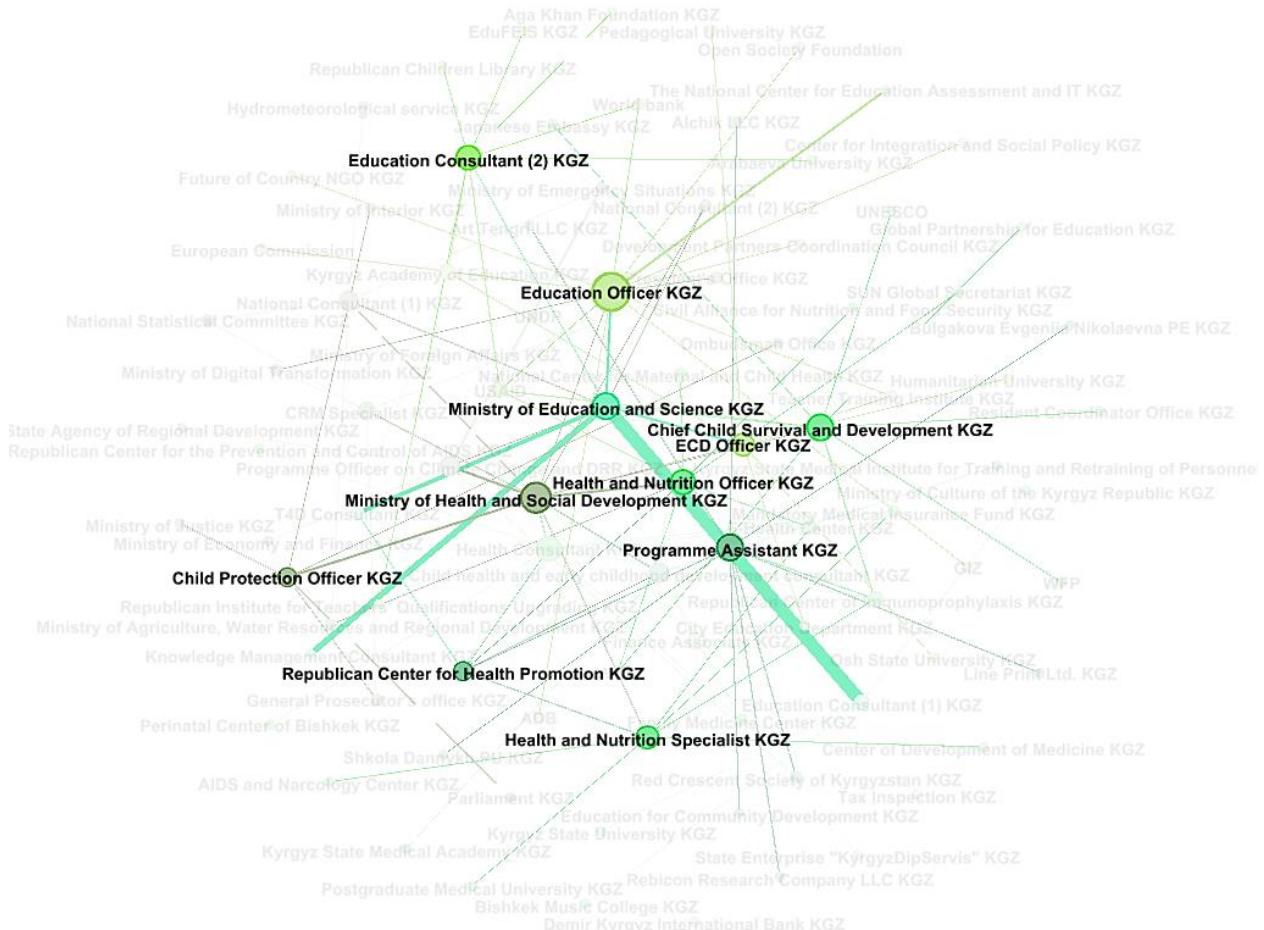
The graph from above highlights the nodes that have more than 7 degrees in UNICEF's network in Kyrgyzstan. The nodes that have the highest number of degrees are all from the CO of UNICEF Kyrgyzstan, as follow: the Education Officer with 16 degrees, the Ministry of Health and Social Development with 12 degrees, the Chief Child Survival and Development with 10 degrees, the Programme Assistant with 10 degrees and the Ministry of Education and Science with 10 degrees.

Table 10. Top 5 nodes in number of degrees in UNICEF network in Kyrgyzstan

Node	Degrees
Education Officer	16
Ministry of Health and Social Development	12
Chief Child Survival and Development	10
Programme Assistant	10
Ministry of Education and Science	10

Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan

Figure 17. Social Network of UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan filtered by betweenness centrality (higher than 234.939)



Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan

The graph from above presents the nodes that have the highest betweenness centrality coefficients in UNICEF's network in Kyrgyzstan. The following table presents the top 5 nodes that have the highest betweenness centrality coefficient in Kyrgyzstan:

Table 11. Top 5 nodes in betweenness centrality in UNICEF network in Kyrgyzstan

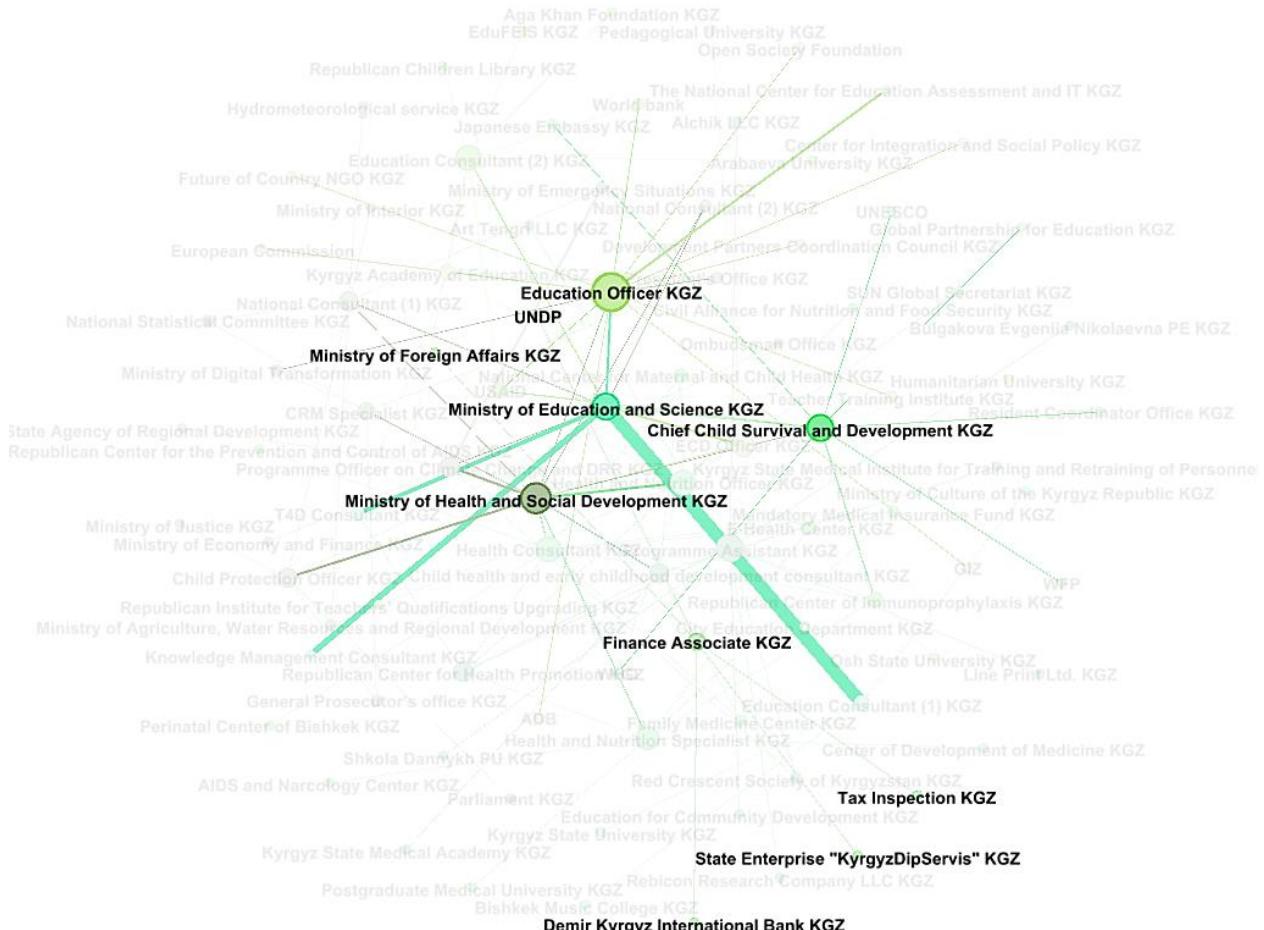
Node	Betweenness centrality	Degrees
Ministry of Health and Social Development	0.379265	12
Education Officer	0.228318	16
Ministry of Education and Science	0.216263	10

Node	Betweenness centrality	Degrees
Chief Child Survival and Development	0.154688	10
Programme Assistant	0.14454	10

Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan

The Ministry of Health and Social Development has the highest betweenness centrality coefficient (0.37), which indicates that this organization has the most influence in the flow of information in UNICEF's network in Kyrgyzstan. The other organisation that have the most influence in the network in spreading information is the Ministry of Education and Science (0.22).

Figure 18. Social Network of UNICEF in Kyrgyzstan filtered by closeness centrality



Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan

The graph from above highlights the nodes that have the highest coefficient in closeness centrality in UNICEF's network in Kyrgyzstan. The following table presents the five nodes with the highest closeness coefficient. The table includes the coefficients as well for the number of degrees and betweenness centrality.

Table 12. Top 5 nodes in closeness centrality coefficients in UNICEF network in Kyrgyzstan

Node	Closeness centrality	Degrees	Betweenness centrality
Ministry of Health and Social Development	0.439791	12	0.379265
Ministry of Education and Science	0.390698	10	0.216263
Chief Child Survival and Development	0.388889	10	0.154688
Education Officer	0.381818	16	0.228318

Node	Closeness centrality	Degrees	Betweenness centrality
Programme Officer on Climate Change and DRR	0.375	6	0.087766

Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Kyrgyzstan

The Ministry of Health and Social Development represents the node from UNICEF's network in Kyrgyzstan that has the highest closeness centrality coefficient. This indicates that the Ministry of Health and Social Development is the best positioned node in the network that can reach the other nodes in the network. The other nodes that have high closeness centrality are the Ministry of Education and Science (0.39), the Chief Child Survival and Development (0.39), the Education Officer (0.38) and the Programme Officer on Climate Change and DRR (0.38).

Four nodes, namely the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Chief Child Survival and Development, and the Education Officer have the highest coefficient in all measured metrics: number of degrees, betweenness centrality and closeness centrality. By consulting their connections and the other nodes with which they relate to, the evaluators found that the nodes relate to nodes across various fields. The Ministry of Health and Social Development have connections in the network with the following nodes:

- Health Consultant (betweenness centrality: 0.09, closeness centrality: 0.35)
- Child health and early childhood development consultant KGZ (betweenness centrality: 0.06, closeness centrality: 0.34)
- Health and Nutrition Specialist (betweenness centrality: 0.09, closeness centrality: 0.35)
- Health and Nutrition Officer (betweenness centrality: 0.10, closeness centrality: 0.37)
- Chief Child Survival and Development (betweenness centrality: 0.15, closeness centrality: 0.39)
- ECD Officer (betweenness centrality: 0.10, closeness centrality: 0.36)
- Programme Officer on Climate Change and DRR KGZ (betweenness centrality: 0.09, closeness centrality: 0.38)
- Education Officer (betweenness centrality: 0.23, closeness centrality: 0.38)
- Child Protection Officer (betweenness centrality: 0.09, closeness centrality: 0.32)
- CRM Specialist (betweenness centrality: 0.03, closeness centrality: 0.32)

Ministry of Education and Science have connections in the network with the following nodes:

- Knowledge Management Consultant (betweenness centrality: 0, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- Education Consultant (1) (betweenness centrality: 0.06, closeness centrality: 0.29)
- Chief Child Survival and Development (betweenness centrality: 0.15, closeness centrality: 0.39)
- National Consultant (1) (betweenness centrality: 0.06, closeness centrality: 0.35)
- Programme Officer on Climate Change and DRR (betweenness centrality: 0.09, closeness centrality: 0.38)
- National Consultant (2) (betweenness centrality: 0.007, closeness centrality: 0.34)
- T4D Consultant (betweenness centrality: 0.03, closeness centrality: 0.34)
- Education Consultant (2) (betweenness centrality: 0.11, closeness centrality: 0.31)
- Education Officer (betweenness centrality: 0.23, closeness centrality: 0.38)

The Education Office of UNICEF have connections in the network with the following nodes:

- European Commission (betweenness centrality: 0.00, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- GIZ (betweenness centrality: 0.00, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- Kyrgyz Academy of Education (betweenness centrality: 0.03, closeness centrality: 0.32)
- Ministry of Digital Transformation (betweenness centrality: 0.00, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- Ministry of Education and Science (betweenness centrality: 0.23, closeness centrality: 0.38)
- Ministry of Education and Science (betweenness centrality: 0.23, closeness centrality: 0.38)
- Ministry of Health and Social Development (betweenness centrality: 0.23, closeness centrality: 0.38)
- Open Society Foundation (betweenness centrality: 0.00, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- President's Office (betweenness centrality: 0.00, closeness centrality: 0.28)

- Teacher training Institute (betweenness centrality: 0.00, closeness centrality: 0.29)
- The National Center for Education Assessment and IT (betweenness centrality: 0.00, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- USAID (betweenness centrality: 0.06, closeness centrality: 0.34)
- World Bank (betweenness centrality: 0.01, closeness centrality: 0.29)

The Chief Child Survival and Development have connections in the network with the following nodes:

- Global Partnership for Education (betweenness centrality: 0, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- Japanese Embassy (betweenness centrality: 0, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- Ministry of Education and Science (betweenness centrality: 0.15, closeness centrality: 0.39)
- Ministry of Health and Social Development (betweenness centrality: 0.15, closeness centrality: 0.388889)
- Republican Center of Immunoprophylaxis (betweenness centrality: 0.066864, closeness centrality: 0.33)
- Resident Coordinator Office (betweenness centrality: 0, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- UNESCO (betweenness centrality: 0, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- USAID (betweenness centrality: 0.056, closeness centrality: 0.34)
- WFP (betweenness centrality: 0, closeness centrality: 0.28)
- WHO (betweenness centrality: 0.003, closeness centrality: 0.29)

Annex 5. Evaluation Matrix

Relevance

Evaluation questions and sub-questions	Evaluation questions and sub-questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
RELEVANCE						
Q5.1	To what extent has UNICEF responded to the (changing) needs of the most vulnerable throughout the programme implementation and	5.1.1. UNICEF-supported interventions are responding to the (changing) needs of the most vulnerable children, adolescents and their families 5.1.2. Implementation strategies effectively reflected the needs identified at planning stages and the evolution of these needs	Level of adequacy of CPs and their implementation strategies to needs of vulnerable children and their families identified in reliable assessments, studies, reviews and by key informants interviewed Examples of CPs interventions tailored to the specific needs of most vulnerable children (ideally for each goal area of intervention in the CPDs)	Document review Interviews (see Annex E) Observation	Review of existing documents and interviews' results (minutes, recordings, notes)	Reference materials for evaluation UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments CSOs (as identified in the stakeholders analysis)
Q5.2	consistently integrated the equity and gender equality in all aspects of programming and implementation, including policy and advocacy?	5.2.1. Implementation strategies are based on the identification of gender equality and difference issues and gaps and seek to address the issues and gaps identified.	Presence of gender equality as cross-cutting issue within the CPDs, implementation strategies of CPs, accountability (results) frameworks (including indicators) and reporting			
Q6	To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to changes in national needs and rights of the beneficiaries especially of the most vulnerable and in national priorities during programme implementation?	6.1. UNICEF-supported interventions are consistently informed by comprehensive assessments of the situations and needs of vulnerable boys, girls and youth. 6.2. UNICEF CPDs were aligned with country priorities and addressed key development issues	Availability of information, data and knowledge on changes in national needs and rights of the beneficiaries Evidence of consistency between the outcomes and UNICEF-supported interventions and national priorities and targets identified in official national strategic documents and by stakeholders at government level Mutual understanding amongst stakeholders about the expected and actual links between UNICEF-supported interventions and selected national priorities Stakeholders can identify actual or potential areas of convergence and divergence between the national strategies and UNICEF-supported interventions in the country	Document review Interviews Observation	Critical System Heuristics approach used to analyse interview results and to identify how the main stakeholders understand the context and its change and influence UNICEF actions within the respective context dynamics	Reference materials for evaluation UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments CSOs Other UN agencies, Donors/International development partners (as identified in the stakeholders analysis)

Q7	To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to the shifts caused by crisis or major socio-economic and political changes?	7.1. UNICEF reacted early to crisis or major socio-economic and political changes in each country and: - generated knowledge on the impact of the crisis or socio-economic and political changes on children	Availability of information, data and knowledge on crisis and major socio-economic and political changes impact on children, adolescents and their families		Realist Evaluation (<i>changes in national needs are part of the context analysed by the realist evaluation</i>)	
		7.2.- proposed measures, strategies and activities to respond to new needs and priorities	Stakeholders can identify UNICEF's proposed measures, strategies and activities to respond to new needs and priorities of children, adolescents and their families affected by crisis and major socio-economic and political changes			

Coherence

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
COHERENCE						
Q8	To what extent has UNICEF's Country Programme kept true to its mandate and aligned with UNICEF's global and regional strategies as well as UNSDCF and SDGs in any given country?	8.1. UNICEF's Country Programme developed in line with UNSDCF and SDGs and reflects UNICEF's global and regional strategies relevant to the country	Availability of references to SDGs and UNSDCF in programmatic documents, implementation strategies of CPs, reports, (e.g., CPDs, COARs). Number/percentage of outputs of valid CPD aligned with UNICEF's global and regional strategies	Document review	Review of existing documents and interviews' results (minutes, recordings, notes)	CPDs, COARs, implementation strategies of CPs, UNICEF's official web resources listing global and regional priorities
Q9	To what extent did UNICEF manage to build effective and sustainable partnerships in working towards addressing the predefined bottlenecks, advocating for evidence for equity and contributing to the results at scale?	9.1. COs have in place and apply procedures to build and sustain effective partnerships	Availability of established procedures to build and sustain effective partnerships	Document review Interviews	Review of existing documents and interviews' results (minutes, recordings, notes) Network Analysis	Internal guidelines, standard operating procedures, meetings minutes Partner ministries, representatives of relevant UN clusters, international stakeholders
		9.2. Regular collaboration with partners focuses on predefined bottlenecks and contributes to achieve the results at scale	Documented evidence of regular collaboration with relevant partners Percentage of interviewees assessing collaboration with UNICEF as effective / ineffective			

		9.3. COs advocate for equity and its evidence collection with relevant decision-makers in the country	Stakeholders can report about jointly solved bottlenecks / name advocacy actions triggered by CO / identify efforts for equity evidence or jointly achieved results at scale			(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)
Q10	10.1 What are the comparative advantages of UNICEF in relation to other actors in the country, including development partners, the private sector, the non-government sector and	10.1.1 Comparative advantage of UNICEF defined by relevant CO documents 10.1.2. Consistency in perception of UNICEF comparative advantage by CO and other actors in the country	Availability of narrative descriptions of CO / UNICEF comparative advantage Stakeholders can clearly distinguish the added value of UNICEF if compared with other actors in the country	Document review Interviews Observation Stakeholders Analysis	Review of existing documents and interviews' results (minutes, recordings, notes) (as identified in the stakeholders analysis)	CPDs, COARs, implementation strategies of CPs Partner ministries, representatives of relevant UN clusters, international stakeholders, national stakeholders, including development partners, the private sector, the non-government sector (as identified in the stakeholders analysis)
	10.2 to what extent were they necessary and sufficient for contributing to the results at scale to be achieved? (to be integrated with questions under "Impact" criterion)	10.2 CO uses its strengths and opportunities to achieve to the extent possible the results at scale	Stakeholders can recall achieved results and can clearly define the role of UNICEF in such achievements OR Stakeholders can recall expected (not achieved) results and can explain the expected role of UNICEF (where it did not take action, or the actions did not generate the expected results)			
Q11	How has UNICEF's approach to strategic partnerships changed over time, if any?	11.1. CO revised its approach to strategic partnerships in the last two years 11.2. CO introduced recently new /amended approaches to improve strategic partnership	Availability of documented evidence about changes or amendments to partnership approach CO team report about changes in partnership and can explain their outcomes	Document review Interviews	Review of existing documents and interviews' results	CPDs, COARs, implementation strategies of CPs CO team

Impact

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
IMPACT						
Q1	Did UNICEF contribute to the results at-scale? If yes, how and why did it make					

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
	a difference and for whom? If no, why not?					
Kyrgyzstan CP <i>Did UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribute to the results at-scale? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i>	1.1.1. Positive changes can be observed concerning the capacity of State institutions to deliver results for disadvantaged children (related to Programme Outcome 1)	Trends in institutional capacity of State institutions to deliver results for disadvantaged children All indicators related to Programme Outcome 1	Document review Data analysis	Longitudinal Analysis	UNICEF monitoring system National Statistical Office Reference materials for evaluation (studies and evaluations)	
	1.1.2. Positive changes can be observed concerning children's health, access to education and their protection from poverty and climate-related resilience (related to Programme Outcome 2)	Trends in national indicators and targets related to health, education, social protection and welfare of children and their families (and the institutional capacity to ensure children's development) All indicators related to Programme Outcome 2				
	1.1.3. Positive changes can be observed concerning the realization of children's rights, especially concerning their protection from violence, abuse and family separation (related to Programme Outcome 3)	Trends in national indicators and targets related to violence against children, abuse and family separation (and the institutional capacity to deal with this situations) All indicators related to Programme Outcome 3				
	1.1.4. UNICEF made significant contributions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- the capacity of State institutions to deliver results for disadvantaged children (related to Programme Outcome 1)- children's well-being (health, access to education and their protection from poverty and climate-related resilience (related to Programme Outcome 2)- the realization of children's rights, especially concerning their protection from violence, abuse and family separation (related to Programme Outcome 3)	Plausible evidence that UNICEF actions have made a positive contribution to national priorities and change in national indicators, with emphasis on policies and targets related to children's rights, especially of the most vulnerable ones, under each Programme Outcome Stakeholders can offer examples concerning how UNICEF actions have influenced concrete changes at <ul style="list-style-type: none">- institutional level and/ or- behavioural changes resulting in the development of child situation and improvement of indicators concerning children	Document review Interviews Observation	Review of existing documents and interviews' results (minutes, recordings, notes)	Reference materials for evaluation UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments CSOs <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>	
	1.1.5. Different conditions and factors influenced the effectiveness of UNICEF's CPDs	Evidence on different mechanisms being valorised by UNICEF to generate results at-scale for children, under each Programme Outcome. Evidence showing:	Document review Interviews Observation	Realist Evaluation	Reference materials for evaluation UNICEF COs	

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>how these mechanisms work</i> - <i>why these mechanisms work</i> - <i>for whom these mechanisms work best</i> 			Central Government Ministries and Departments CSOs <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>
	<p>Early Childhood Development in Kyrgyzstan</p> <p><i>Did UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribute to the results at-scale around early child development? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i></p>	<p>(1) UNICEF provided guidelines and methodologies for community-based kindergartens and Child Development Centres (CDCs) within existing municipal libraries</p> <p>(2) UNICEF cooperated with the Government of Kyrgyzstan to pilot these methodologies for better support for early childhood development.</p> <p>(3) UNICEF also provided technical assistance for Early Childhood Education (ECE) financing,</p> <p>(4) UNICEF developed technical officials' capacity to mainstream early childhood education into education sector plans and budgets, and to improve financing and institutionalization of quality early childhood education</p> <p>(5) UNICEF promoted policy dialogue resulting in the Education Sector Strategy 2021-2040</p> <p>(6) UNICEF supported remote preschool lessons and the preparation for Safe Reopening of Kindergartens,</p> <p>(7) UNICEF contributing to ensuring that access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) remains a priority to reach the Government's target of 80% coverage by 2022.</p>	<p>Evidence to support each statement</p> <p>The probability of observing the evidence being assessed if the statement is true (sensitivity) – for each statement</p> <p>The probability of observing the evidence we are assessing if the statement is false (Type I error) – for each statement</p>	Document review Interviews Observation	Process Tracing	Reference materials for evaluation UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments CSOs <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>
	Adolescents and youth participation and	(1) UNICEF leads the Youth-and Child-Friendly Local Governance (YCLFG) initiative	Evidence to support each statement in: (Step 1) Documents	Document review Interviews	Contribution analysis	Reference materials for evaluation

Evaluation questions and sub-questions	Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
<p>empowerment in Kyrgyzstan</p> <p><i>Did UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribute to the results at-scale around adolescents and youth participation and empowerment? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i></p>	<p>(2) motivated the Government of Kyrgyzstan to support and promote the initiative.</p> <p>As a result (3) youth centres and youth consultative have been developed.</p> <p>This led to (4) a large number of young people participating in need-assessments and other consultation and,</p> <p>as a result, (5) municipalities developed budgeted operational plans for 2020 and adopted socio-economic development programmes considering children's and youth concerns.</p> <p>(6) UNICEF also contributed to skills development of young girls through STEM and STEM4Girls (the programme on science, technology, engineering and mathematics),</p> <p>(7) UNICEF equipped service providers with knowledge and skills to provide adolescent friendly services, including HIV prevention for the vulnerable and most at-risk adolescents,</p> <p>(8) UNICEF developed holistic solutions and approaches to improve adolescent health, access and quality of education, access to justice and social services in systematic and sustainable way and</p> <p>(9) UNICEF engaged volunteers in advocacy and programme delivery, particularly DRR in schools.</p> <p>(10) As a general result, UNICEF supported young people in Kyrgyzstan to actively participate in public, civic and economic activities in the country.</p>	<p>(Step 2) Additional evidence and documents provided by stakeholder during interviews and observation</p>	Observation		UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments CSOs <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
Q2	Did UNICEF identify and reassess bottlenecks throughout programme implementation?	2.1. UNICEF COs identified and analysed bottlenecks and their impact on the realisation of CP outcomes and impacts	Bottlenecks and barriers identified and analysed in relation to their impact on the realisation of CP outcomes (according to their specific ToC) and impacts and children's rights	Document review Interviews Observation	Review of existing documents and interviews' results (minutes, recordings, notes)	Reference materials for evaluation UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments
		2.2. The analyses of bottlenecks generated specific activities implemented / measures taken by UNICEF COs to overcome challenges and bottlenecks	Evidence of measures taken to cope with barriers and overcome challenges and bottlenecks			
		2.3. UNICEF COs used risk management and risk prevention strategies to overcome challenges and bottlenecks	Evidence of management and prevention strategies and tools included in CPs and other planning documents			
			Evidence of management and prevention strategies applied when need (the risks materialised)			
		2.4. Activities to overcome challenges, bottlenecks and risks have been effective in diminishing their impact on children and policies for children	Perceived level of effectiveness of activities / measures taken to manage challenges, bottlenecks and risks Evidence / examples of successful activities / measures taken to manage challenges, bottlenecks and risks			
Q3	Did different groups, including children and the most marginalised, benefit in different ways from the Country Programme? Are the results likely to be maintained over time?	3.1. UNICEF's CPDs and COs considered differences between children and the needs of the most marginalised	Stakeholders can provide evidence of specific benefits for the most marginalised children and concerning reduced equity gaps with UNICEF's contribution	Document review Interviews Observation	Realist Evaluation <i>Result area analysis</i>	Reference materials for evaluation UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments CSOs <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>
		3.2. Different conditions and factors influenced the effectiveness of UNICEF's CPDs for the most marginalised groups	Evidence on different mechanisms being valorised by UNICEF to generate results for the most marginalised children			
		3.3. UNICEF's COs took measures to ensure sustainability of their results	Evidence of exit strategies and measures undertaken by UNICEF to ensure ownership and sustainability of results			
		3.4. The results obtained by UNICEF's COs are likely to be maintained over time	Evidence of: a. Concrete changes in national laws, policies, regulations, and plans that can sustain CPC results and strategies b. Scaling-up of pilot/model interventions	Document review Interviews Observation <i>Result area analysis</i>	Review of existing documents and interviews' results (minutes, recordings, notes)	Reference materials for evaluation UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Additional allocations of national budget and/or other donor resources d. Institutional capacity in place to sustain levels of achievement or a strategy/plan exists to indicate how it will be developed and funded e. Adoption of good practices or major lessons learned that led to changes in the strategic and organisational direction of the Government 			<p>CSOs <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i></p>
Q4	Which strategies or group of strategies were effective in producing results at scale?	<p>4.1. UNICEF's CO employed different strategies aiming to generate the planned outputs and outcomes. These strategies have been adapted to the country and sector context.</p> <p><i>In each result area under evaluation, a set of specific strategies can be identified, and each strategy has a specific purpose, contributing to the planned result.</i></p>	<p>Evidence of different strategies with specific purpose used and combined to achieve results at-scale.</p>	<p>Document review Interviews Observation</p>	<p>Case studies under the result areas selected. Information and analysis based on the impact assessment performed using Process Tracing and Contribution Analysis (case-based methods)</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments CSOs <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i></p>

Annex 6. List of interviewees

Interviews regarding the entire Country Programme

1. UNICEF CO Country Representative
2. Outcome manager of the CO
3. Outcome manager of the CO
4. UNICEF - OIC
5. Office of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic
6. World Bank (WB)
7. ADB
8. USAID
9. UN Resident Coordinator in KR
10. EU Delegation
11. Red Crescent Society
12. UN Women

Interviews regarding result area: ECD/ECE

13. UNICEF CO Early Child Development Officer
14. The Ministry of Education and Science
15. Ministry of Education
16. Step by Step
17. Aga Khan Foundation
18. UNICEF Consultant in the Ministry of Education
19. NGO Aijan

Interviews regarding result area: Adolescents and youth participation

20. UNICEF CO Adolescents and Youth Development Officer
21. UNICEF CO Officer in Osh
22. State Agency for Youth, Sports and Physical Training
23. UNFPA
24. UNDP
25. Peacebuilding Fund Secretariat
26. Youth of Osh

Interviews regarding result area: Social protection

27. Social Policy Specialist within the CO
28. Former decision maker within the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
29. Former specialist at the Ministry of Labour and Social Development
30. National Statistical Committee

Annex 7. Data collection instruments

Semi-structured interview guidelines

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
Q1	Kyrgyzstan CP <i>Did UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribute to the results at-scale? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i>	<p>1. In your opinion, the capacity of state institutions to deliver results for disadvantaged children has been improved between 2018 and 2021?</p> <p>2. Can you give the example of institutions that improved their capacity? How was progress possible? What factors supported the progress?</p> <p>3. Can you give the example of institutions that could not improve their capacity? Why progress was not possible?</p> <p>4. Based on your professional expertise, which indicators do you have in mind when assessing the capacity of institutions to deliver results for disadvantaged children?</p> <p>5. Did UNICEF contribute to the increased capacity? If yes, how? Please give examples for different institutions.</p> <p>6. In your opinion, between 2018 and 2021, have been improvements concerning children in Kyrgyzstan, regarding their:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Health b. Access to education c. Protection from poverty d. Resilience to climate change <p>7. If yes, for each of the four areas, how was progress possible?</p> <p>8. If no, for each of the four areas, why progress was not possible?</p> <p>9. Based on your professional expertise, which indicators do you have in mind when assessing the improvements concerning children in Kyrgyzstan?</p> <p>10. Did UNICEF contributed to the progress observed? If yes, how? Please give examples for different areas.</p> <p>11. In your opinion, between 2018 and 2021, children in Kyrgyzstan are better protected from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discrimination b. Violence c. Exploitation or abuse d. Neglect e. Family separation 	X	X	X	X	X	X
			X	X	X	X	X	X
			X	X	X	X	X	X

Evaluation questions and sub-questions	Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
	<p>12. If yes, for each of the five areas, how was progress possible?</p> <p>13. If no, for each of the five areas, why progress was not possible?</p> <p>14. Based on your professional expertise, which indicators do you have in mind when assessing the realization of child rights and child protection?</p> <p>15. Did UNICEF contributed to the progress observed? If yes, how? Please give examples for different areas.</p>						
Early Childhood Development in Kyrgyzstan <i>Did UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribute to the results at-scale around early child development? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i>	<p>Please give examples about UNICEF contribution to Early Childhood Development in Kyrgyzstan. Please refer especially to:</p> <p>16. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the CDCs?</p> <p>17. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the early childhood development policies?</p> <p>18. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the ECE financing?</p> <p>19. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to officials' capacity to mainstream early childhood education into education sector plans and budgets?</p> <p>20. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the Education Sector Strategy 2021-2040?</p> <p>21. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to remote preschool lessons and the preparation for Safe Reopening of Kindergartens?</p> <p>22. What other stakeholders contributed to the progress observed?</p> <p>23. Which are the most important elements that allow us to say that Early Childhood Education (ECE) remains a priority to reach the Government's target of 80% coverage by 2022?</p>	X	X			X	
Adolescents and youth participation and empowerment in Kyrgyzstan <i>Did UNICEF Kyrgyzstan contribute to the results at-scale around adolescents and youth participation and empowerment? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and</i>	<p>Please give examples about UNICEF contribution to adolescents and youth empowerment and participation. Please refer especially to:</p> <p>24. UNICEF contribution to the Youth-and Child-Friendly Local Governance (YCFLG) initiative.</p> <p>25. UNICEF contribution to youth skills development</p> <p>26. UNICEF contribution to raising the capacity of health professionals to provide adolescent friendly services</p> <p>24. How would you describe the commitment of the Government of Kyrgyzstan to support and promote the YCFLG initiative?</p> <p>25. How would you describe the popularity of youth centres and youth consultative bodies among young people?</p> <p>27. What data are available to measure youth engagement and participation in the cities participating to the YCFLG initiative?</p>	X	X				X

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
	<i>for whom? If no, why not?</i>	<p>Please give us your professional opinion about the budgeted operational plans for 2020 and the socio-economic development programmes considering children's and youth concerns? Please think especially to:</p> <p>28. What is their quality? 29. Was the consultation to develop them opened and inclusive enough? 30. Is the commitment to implement them strong enough?</p> <p>31. What other stakeholders contributed to the progress observed?</p> <p>32. Please give us your professional opinion about the situation of adolescents and young people in Kyrgyzstan? Would you say it was improved between 2018 and 2021? What data are available to measure youth engagement and participation in the social, economic and political life of the country?</p>						
	Social protection for children in Kyrgyzstan	<p>33. Please give examples about UNICEF contribution to children social protection. Please refer especially to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNICEF contribution to the methodology on multidimensional of child poverty measurement developed and the National Multidimensional Poverty Measurement and the Multidimensional Child Poverty Index¹⁹⁸ introduced by the National Statistical Committee; • UNICEF technical assistance and related training provided to the state statistical system; • UNICEF technical assistance for the drafting and costing of the law on state benefit to enable the Government to improve coverage of vulnerable children and their families by social assistance programme; • UNICEF contribution to better social protection public expenditure review and public finance review on social protection for 2019/2020; • Existing coalitions including UNICEF aiming to reduce child poverty and scale up existing social assistance programmes. 	X	X				X
Q2	Did UNICEF identify and reassess bottlenecks throughout programme implementation?	<p>34. Based on your professional opinion, which are the most important bottlenecks and barriers on the realisation of CP outcomes? (for each country, the CP outcomes will be restated if needed)</p> <p>35. How is UNICEF CO identifying and analysing the bottlenecks and barriers on the realisation of CP outcomes?</p> <p>36. What are the most important measures taken by UNICEF to cope with barriers and overcome challenges and bottlenecks on the realisation of CP outcomes?</p> <p>37. How is UNICEF CO identifying and analysing risks?</p> <p>38. What are the most important measures taken by UNICEF to manage the identified risks?</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X

¹⁹⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/reports/multidimensional-poverty-assessment-kyrgyz-republic>

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
		<p>39. What activities implemented by UNICEF to cope with barriers and overcome challenges and bottlenecks on the realisation of CP outcomes and to manage risks have been the most successful? What about the less successful ones?</p> <p>40. <u>In your opinion, how effective is UNICEF CO in managing challenges, bottlenecks and risks?</u></p>	X	X	X	X		
Q3	Did different groups, including children and the most marginalised, benefit in different ways from the Country Programme? Are the results likely to be maintained over time?	<p>41. Can you identify and give specific examples of benefits of UNICEF's activities for the most marginalised children?</p> <p>42. Would you say that UNICEF contributed to reduced equity gaps between children in your country? Can you give some examples?</p> <p>43. What strategies have been used by UNICEF to generate results for the most marginalised children? How have this been different the other strategies, concerning all children?</p> <p>44. What factors have been supporting or hindering UNICEF COs activities for the most marginalised children?</p> <p>45. What measures have been taken by UNICEF's CO to ensure the sustainability of its results?</p> <p>46. What measures have been taken by UNICEF's CO to ensure ownership of institutions in charge / duty bearers concerning the results obtained with UNICEF support?</p> <p>47. Please give examples of changes that ensure the sustainability of UNICEF results (mentioned before in the interview). Please think about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Concrete changes in national laws, policies, regulations, and plans that can sustain CPC results and strategies b. Scaling-up of pilot/model interventions c. Additional allocations of national budget and/or other donor resources d. Institutional capacity in place to sustain levels of achievement or a strategy/plan exists to indicate how it will be developed and funded e. Adoption of good practices or major lessons learned that led to changes in the strategic and organisational direction of the Government 	X	X	X	X	X	
Q5.1	To what extent has UNICEF responded to the (changing) needs of the most vulnerable throughout the programme implementation and	<p>48. In your professional opinion, what are the most important needs of children in your country?</p> <p>49. Based on your knowledge about UNICEF CP (in your area of expertise), are there any needs of children that are not taken into consideration by UNICEF?</p> <p>50. Please give examples of CPs interventions tailored to the specific needs of most vulnerable children.</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X
Q5.2	consistently integrated the equity and gender equality in all aspects of programming and	51. Please give examples of CPs interventions tailored to promote gender equality.	X	X	X	X	X	X

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
	implementation, including policy and advocacy?							
Q6	To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to changes in national needs and rights of the beneficiaries especially of the most vulnerable and in national priorities during programme implementation?	<p>52. How is UNICEF COs gathering information about...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The current needs of children in the country? b) The government priorities? <p>53. In your professional opinion, how well is UNICEF CO agenda aligned with national priorities?</p> <p>54. Are there any national priorities not taken into account by UNICEF CO? Why?</p> <p>55. Are there any objectives of UNICEF CO that are not national priorities? Why?</p>	X					
Q7	To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to the shifts caused by crisis or major socio-economic and political changes?	<p>56. Which are the most important crisis and major socio-economic and political changes that generated an impact on children, adolescents and their families in 2018-2021?</p> <p>57. Why and how this impact was generated?</p> <p>58. How did UNICEF respond to these crisis and major socio-economic and political changes?</p> <p>59. What changes have been made to UNICEF CO strategies and priorities?</p> <p>60. In your professional opinion, how effective was the response? What more could have been done?</p>	X	X	X	X	X	X
Q8	To what extent has UNICEF's Country Programme kept true to its mandate and aligned with UNICEF's global and regional strategies as well as UNSDCF and SDGs in any given country?	<p>61. Which are the most important UNSDCF, and SDGs considered by UNICEF CO when planning the CPD?</p> <p>62. How is UNICEF CO aligned with UNICEF's global and regional strategies?</p>	X			X	X	
Q9	To what extent did UNICEF manage to build effective and sustainable	<p>63. How is UNICEF CO building and sustaining partnerships?</p> <p>64. How would you describe your collaboration with UNICEF?</p> <p>65. Please assess your collaboration with UNICEF as effective or ineffective on a scale from 1 to 10.</p>	X		X	X	X	X

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
	partnerships in working towards addressing the predefined bottlenecks, advocating for evidence for equity and contributing to the results at scale?	66. Please give examples on your collaboration with UNICEF and jointly solved bottlenecks / advocacy actions triggered or other results obtained due to the collaboration?		X	X	X	X	X
Q10	10.1 What are the comparative advantages of UNICEF in relation to other actors in the country, including development partners, the private sector, the non-government sector and	67. How would you describe the UNICEF comparative advantage in relation to other actors in the country, including development partners, the private sector, the non-government sector?	X	X	X	X	X	X
	10.2 to what extent were they necessary and sufficient for contributing to the results at scale to be achieved?	68. Please give examples of achievements of UNICEF concerning policy reforms, the development of institutional capacity, changes in attitude and behaviours that could not be generated by other stakeholders. 69. <i>Can you recall expected (not achieved) results and can you explain the expected role of UNICEF (where it did not take action)?</i>	X	X	X	X		X
Q11	How has UNICEF's approach to strategic partnerships changed over time, if any?	70. What new partners have been identified in the last two years? 71. How did the CO revise its approach to strategic partnerships in the last two years, if the case? Why?	X					

Questionnaire for Social Network Analysis

Introduction

We are conducting a Multi Country Programme Evaluation, covering the Country Programmes of UNICEF in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine. The evaluation methodology includes several methods for the assessment of UNICEF impact, relevance and coherence with global, regional and national strategies and the work of the key stakeholders.

In order to answer evaluation questions on UNICEF work with partners, we are kindly asking you to complete this online survey that will take less than 10 minutes of your valuable time.

1. What is your name?
—

2. What is your position / function within the UNICEF Country Office?
—

3. Please identify up to 10 institutions/organisations that are important to you in your professional network. Please mention in brackets the departments that are relevant for your work in larger institutions/organisations identified. If several departments in an institution/organisation are relevant for different aspects of your work, please insert them in different lines.

1. Institution/organisation 1 (department) _____

2. Institution/organisation 2 (department) _____

...

10. Institution/organisation 10 (department) _____

4. For each institution/organisation (and the respective relevant departments) please identify the person(s) that are more important to you in your professional network.

1. Relevant person for institution/organisation 1 _____

2. Relevant person for institution /organisation 2 _____

...

10. Relevant person for institution /organisation 10 _____

5. For each organisation identified, please indicate the primary benefit that you receive from them

	Information that helps identify problems	Information that helps solving problems	Access to decision makers	Support in accessing and convincing decision makers	Access to target groups (other than decision makers)
Inst./org. 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inst./org. 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

...	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Inst./org. 10	<input type="checkbox"/>				

6. For each institution/organisation you identified, please assign a score based on the amount of contact you have with them

	1 (once a year)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10 (every day)
Inst./org. 1	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Inst./org. 2	<input type="checkbox"/>									
...	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Inst./org. 10	<input type="checkbox"/>									

7. For each institution/organisation you identified, please assign a score based on the value of information or other type of support they provide you that helps you in your work

	1 (no value)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Inst./org. 1	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Inst./org. 2	<input type="checkbox"/>									
...	<input type="checkbox"/>									
Inst./org. 10	<input type="checkbox"/>									

8. How long have you worked for UNICEF? (in years)

9. How long have you worked in your current position? (in years)

10. Please indicate whether your job is
- a. Executive management
 - b. International Professional
 - c. National Officer
 - d. General Service
 - e. Consultant & individual contractor

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Annex 9. Terms of References for the Evaluation

UNICEF Regional Office
Evaluation team

Terms of Reference Multi-Country Programme Evaluation

Country:	Europe and Central Asia Region (ECAR)
Object of evaluation:	Country Programmes (2018-2021) of Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine
Time period of evaluation:	December 2020 – August 2021
Geographic coverage:	Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine
Type of evaluation:	Multi-Country Programme Evaluation using Theory-Based Evaluation approach
Date of preparation of TOR:	October 2020

Contents

1. CONTEXT.....	3
2. OBJECT OF EVALUATION	3
3. EVALUATION CONTEXT.....	5
4. RATIONALE, PURPOSE AND USE OF EVALUATION.....	9
5. OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION.....	11
6. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION	11
EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS.....	13
7. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY.....	15
8. MCPE PROCESS.....	17
9. SPECIAL CONDITIONS AND LIMITATION	19
10. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	20
11. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS.....	20
12. WORKPLAN AND DELIVERABLES	23
13. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS.....	26
14. ANNEXES.....	28
Annex 1 TOC OR RESULTS MATRIX BY COUNTRY OFFICE.....	28
Annex 2 LIST OF PREVIOUSLY CONDUCTED AND ONGOING EVALUATION AND RESEARCH....	32
Annex 3. ETHICAL GUIDELINES AND CONSIDERATIONS.....	33
Annex 4. TECHNICAL QUALIFICATION CRITERIA.....	33
Annex 5. STRUCTURE OF THE EVALUATION REPORT.....	36

ABBREVIATIONS

CCA	Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	Convention on Eliminations of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEP	Costed Evaluation Plan
CO	Country Office
CP	Country Programme
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
CRC	Convention of the Right of Child
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECA	Europe and Central Asia
ECARO	Europe and Central Asia Regional Office
ERB	Ethic Review Board
ERG	Evaluation Reference Group
EU	European Union
GEROS	Global Evaluation and Research Oversight System
HRBA	Human Rights Based Approach
IP	Implementing Partner
IR	Inception Report
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MCPE	Multi-Country Programme Evaluation
MICS	Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey
QA	Quality Assurance
QCA	Qualitative Comparative Analysis
PT	Process Tracing
PSN	Programme Strategic Note
RAM	Results Assessment Module
RO	Regional Office
RSEs	Research, Study and Evaluations
SitAn	Situation Analysis
SOPs	Standard Operations Procedures
TBE	Theory-Based Evaluation
ToC	Theory of Changes
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNSCDF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

1. CONTEXT

Country Programme Evaluations (CPEs) in UNICEF fulfil a key role in identifying lessons which can inform the design of the next Country Programme or adjustments in the current Programme, and opportunities to improve UNICEF's performance¹. The CPEs assess (i) the contribution of the Programme of Cooperation to national development results; (ii) UNICEF's contribution to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF) results; and (iii) UNICEF's strategic positioning in relation to its child rights mandate.

Being strategic evaluations, CPEs are mostly used² to inform the direction of Country Programmes (CPs), which is outlined in the country programme documents that are designed and planned every 5 years, on average. At national level, CPEs may also inform the UNSDCF planning and evaluation processes and, at regional and global levels, they may inform multi-country evaluations, synthesis and strategic evaluations undertaken to assess and/or document UNICEF's performance, management decisions and policy and programme development. CPEs in UNICEF align with UNICEF's 2018 Evaluation Policy with which it has become a requirement for Country Offices (COs) to commission CPEs, at least, once every two programme cycles, and once per programme cycle, if monitoring information or audit point to a significant shift in the programme context, or a significant increase in the level of risk. To guard independence, CPEs are managed from Regional office (RO) level in close collaboration with COs and with final quality assurance undertaken by UNICEF's Evaluation Office in New York (Table 1)³.

Table 1. An extract from the revised Evaluation Policy on Country Programme Evaluation

Evaluation	Frequency	Evaluation manager	Quality assurance	Accountability for management response and use of evaluation results
Country programme evaluation	At least once every two programme cycles, sequenced to feed into subsequent country programme document and United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). At least once per programme cycle if monitoring and audit information points to a significant shift in the programming context or a significant increase in the level of risk.	Regional Evaluation Adviser	Evaluation Office	Representative, Regional Director

Source: UNICEF Evaluation Policy (June 2018)

According to the COs engaged in CPEs in 2019-2020, CPEs have proven to be useful source for COs to inform their next programme documents. In 2021, ECA Regional Evaluation team will manage country programme evaluations for the country programmes: Bulgaria, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine; which are currently starting a new planning cycle and preparing for their country programme document. For 2021, ECA Regional Evaluation Team proposes a new value proposition in the modality of CPE delivery with the intention of creating economies of scale and generating exchange and collaboration among countries through conducting a Multi-Country Programme Evaluation (MCPE). The new value proposition will focus on results at scale and propose a common ground framework reinforcing the connection of the programmes with UNICEF internal and external coherence and allowing reaching out to regional and global stakeholders in a more strategic manner, and minimizing the efforts required from the counterparts.

2. OBJECT OF EVALUATION

The object of evaluation will be the implementation of UNICEF Country Programmes of the selected countries for a period of at least four years (2016 – 2020)- or longer to ensure that long-term results

are captured in the upper middle-income region. Theory of Change (TOC) of each CO's CPD or a Results Matrix are included in Annex A¹. The Country Programmes (CPs) is UNICEF's contribution to the realization of the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged or vulnerable in a specific country. They reflect the long-term vision of UNICEF to reach out results at scale. CPs are implemented through the change strategies which adapt over the time to meet the needs of the target population in the local context. This is exactly what the MCPE is sought to explore i.e. *contribution of CPs to the results at scale and how those results were achieved (through which change strategies) and who benefitted from them and how.*

The objective of the CP is to accelerate progress towards realization of the rights of all children in each of the four countries. Aligned with the Convention on Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on Eliminations of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and reflecting a human rights-based approach, the CP is defined by a strong sector-based approach and an emphasis on up-stream systems strengthening. The primary documents that frame the CP are the Country Programme Document (CPD) and the Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) both of which align with key national policy and strategic documents including but not limited to: National Plan of Action to Implement concluding Observation of the UN CRC for each of the country; National Strategies and Programmes. Given that CPDs are developed together with the host governments of the four countries and other partners, there are many stakeholders involved in the implementation of the CPs. While governments have primary responsibility for administration of national development processes and programmes, civil society plays an essential role, particularly in implementation.

The main components of the selected CPs and their respective budgets are as the following:

	Current CPD components	Indicative Budget as in the latest CPD ² (in thousands of US dollar)
Bulgaria	Early childhood development and child care	1,215 (RR) + 4,300 (OR)
	Inclusive education and early learning	750 (RR) + 3,000 (OR)
	Prevention of violence, protection of victims and access to justice for all children	500 (RR) + 2,750 (OR)
	Partnerships for monitoring, communication and promotion of child rights in Bulgaria and globally	500 (RR) + 1,200 (OR)
Kyrgyzstan	Child rights-based monitoring systems and decision-making	1,300 (RR) + 6,000 (OR)
	Equitable access to services for child survival, learning and development	2,200 (RR) + 11,000 (OR)
Moldova	Child protection and access to justice	1,700 (RR) + 5,000 (OR)
	Equitable child-sensitive systems and services	2,520 (RR) + 8,400 (OR)
Ukraine²	Social change for child rights	1,300 (RR) + 5,300 (OR)
	Social inclusion and macro policies for children	900 (RR) + 3,000 (OR)
	Child protection in all settings	850 (RR) + 9,000 (OR)
	All children learn	800 (RR) + 7,000 (OR)
	Healthy early years and beyond	800 (RR) + 7,000 (OR)
	Water and sustainable environment	200 (RR) + 6,600 (OR)
	Independent child rights monitoring	1,100 (RR) + 2,200 (OR)

The main components are implemented through a number of programme and project activities throughout the countries with special focus on some of the geographical areas and demographic

¹ There are also programme specific TOCs which are available but not included in this ToR due to limited space.

² Other resources (emergency) for the humanitarian response in Eastern Ukraine is estimated at \$15 to \$20 million per year

groups which will vary from country to country. The budget of each CO as per their CPDs³ (in thousands of USD) are: Bulgaria (2018-2022) – 15,715 Kyrgyzstan (2018-2022) 31,730; Moldova (2018-2022) - 17,508; Ukraine (2018-2022) – 41,480.

The current assignment will start in 2021 – a year before the completion of the current CPDs. The timing is important in order to ensure that its results feed into the design of the new CPDs.

3. EVALUATION CONTEXT

The economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic could push up to 86 million more children into household poverty by the end of 2020 globally, an increase of 15 per cent, according to a new analysis released by Save the Children and UNICEF⁴. The analysis highlights that, without urgent action to protect families from the financial hardships caused by the pandemic, the total number of children living below the national poverty line in low- and middle-income countries could reach 672 million by year-end. Countries across Europe and Central Asia could see the most significant increase, up to 44 per cent across the region.

The impact of the global economic crisis caused by the pandemic and related containment policies is two-fold. Immediate loss of income means families are less able to afford the basics, including food and water, less likely to access health care or education, and more at risk of child marriage, violence, exploitation and abuse. When fiscal contraction occurs, the reach and quality of the services families depend on can also be diminished. For the poorest families, lack of access to social care services or compensatory measures further limits their ability to abide by containment and physical distancing measures, and thus further increases their exposure to infection. Hundreds of millions of children remain multidimensionally poor - meaning they lack access to health care, education, proper nutrition, or adequate housing – often a reflection of inequitable investments by governments in social services. For children living in countries already affected by conflict and violence, the impact of this crisis will further increase the risk of instability and of households falling into poverty. In this context, UNICEF continues to work with governments and other national and international partners to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the most disadvantaged in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine.

Bulgaria⁵

Bulgaria is an upper-middle-income country and a member state of the European Union (EU) since 2007. Its population is 7,000,039 people as of end 2018, of which children are 17% of the country's population. Bulgaria is one of the two countries in the EU with highest shares of children at risk of poverty and social exclusion, which was 38% in 2018 (around 410,200 children). Poverty and deprivation are more prevalent among Roma families living in marginalized communities: about half of Roma children live in households in the lowest decile of the income distribution, compared to fewer than one in ten Bulgarian non-Roma children. Roma families also tend to have less access to basic social services, and face exclusion and discrimination in education, employment and housing.

There is no complete data on the actual number of children with disabilities in the country, but the estimated number is about 26,000. With respect to the number of children in institutional care, it has dropped from 7,587 in 2010 to 662 in December 2018 (Agency for Social Assistance). At the end of 2019, the number of children in residential care is 3,095 and 45 % of them or 1,415 children are placed in family-type placement centers for children and young people with disabilities (ASA). The number of

³ These are indicative budgets including regular resources, subject to the availability of funds; and other resources, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions during the period of implementation of the CPD. Budgets may differ from the actual expenditure.

⁴ <http://www.unicef.org/events/support-families-during-covid-19.htm>

⁵ The text is an extract from 'Proposal_EU Child Guarantee_Bulgaria_FINAL_Submitted April 2020'

social services for children and families has almost tripled - from 241 in 2010 to 620 in 2018 (ASA). Despite this progress, the number of children who are separated from their families has not dropped and, annually, some 2,000 children continue to be separated and placed in alternative care.

Overall, the social protection system in the country is well established. Bulgaria has developed a comprehensive system of services and social benefits intended to support all vulnerable groups and to reduce poverty and social exclusion. However, the system is fragmented with considerable gaps in coverage, especially for the bottom 20% of the population (income-related). Many families are not accessing available services and benefits or the support they are offered is not necessarily adequate to their needs. About 75,000 households belonging to the poorest 20% of the population receive no social benefits at all. More than half of the children from the poorest 20% of the households receive no formal or informal care. As a result, the contribution of services and benefits to reduce poverty and social exclusion is lower compared to other EU countries.

Existing social services have not been developed systematically, and in some municipalities and settlements are unable to provide adequate support. There is a considerable number of medium and small size municipalities without any services for people with disabilities, and in many cases, support is limited to residential type care with no option for day care or consultation services. In other localities, available capacity is lower than demand, and long waiting periods may be common before users receive any kind of service.

Disadvantaged children and families usually require access to a coordinated set of services to mitigate risks of vulnerability, minimize dependency, and avoid falling into the intergenerational cycle of poverty and social exclusion. The newly adopted Social Services Act (2019), aimed at improving the quality, effectiveness, financing and monitoring of social services and delivery mechanisms, will address some of these challenges. The Act introduces changes to the definition, planning, accessibility, quality and funding of social services. It enables a significant shift towards prevention of family separation and social exclusion and provides a basis for the provision of integrated support, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable children and families. The effective implementation of the Act was postponed to July 2020.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in the country, UNICEF in Bulgaria is monitoring closely the situation of children and their families and is working with the Bulgarian Government, UN Agencies, municipalities, service providers, civil society, corporate partners and other partners to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus, strengthen national response capacities and keep children and their families safe with a special focus on the most vulnerable. UNICEF is providing timely communication on the best means of preparedness and prevention, including special guidelines and advice for parents, schools, health and other professionals, children and young people, through community-based communication, mass media and social media. UNICEF is supporting the efforts of the health, education, child protection and social welfare sectors for continuing the provision of services to children and families through the provision of some protective supplies and equipment as necessary to support the functioning of social services, strengthening remote counselling and development of alternative operation modalities.

Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan is a land-locked, lower-middle-income country of 6.5 million people. It has rich endowments, including minerals, forests, arable land, and pastures, and there is significant potential for the expansion of its agriculture sector, hydroelectricity production, and tourism industry. The country has experienced instability since independence in 1991. Corruption and nepotism were

suggested to be major stress factors underlying political and social upheavals in 2005 and 2010⁶. To prevent the concentration of power, a parliamentary constitution with elaborate checks and balances was adopted in late 2010, making the Kyrgyz Republic the only Central Asian country in which the president is limited to a single term.

Child poverty is a serious issue in Kyrgyzstan. Poverty is on rise (32% per cent) with children overrepresented in poverty statistics (41% in 2015), resulting in poor access to quality services and protection, and higher vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters⁷. Children living in poverty miss out on pre-school and school education and healthcare, and face malnutrition. The poorest children live mainly in rural areas in the southern regions of the country, many belong to families with three and more children and families with unemployed adults

In Kyrgyzstan, UNICEF's Country Programme 2018 - 2022 aims to reach the most disadvantaged children⁸. UNICEF works at policy level with the Government to improve the social system, and on the ground to make sure that this system reaches all children, with a particular emphasis on the most vulnerable. UNICEF works across sectors of child protection, health, social policy, early childhood development and education, WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene), response in emergencies, climate change and disaster risk preparedness, children with disabilities and youth.

The global COVID-19 pandemic changed lives in Kyrgyzstan as it did in many parts of the world. In light of the situation and early closure of schools, the Ministry of Education and Science, with the support of UNICEF and other development partners, developed a remote learning platform for all students and preschool children as of April 8. Over 1.7 million children were expected to follow the video lessons via various TV channels across the country, in which teachers conduct their classes according to the school curriculum.

Moldova⁹

The Republic of Moldova, which is one of Europe's poorest countries, saw a long-lasting political crisis involving three governments within the last 12 months. This political situation affected the development and implementation of various policies and strategies, including the National Development Strategy "Moldova 2030". In a context of high political instability following parliamentarian elections and local elections in the year 2019, the country experienced three different governments in less than one year.

Household consumption accounts for over 80% of GDP and depends strongly on remittances. The lack of opportunity is the main push factor for migration, particularly for rural youth. The Government's fiscal revenue for social services is affected by an estimated one third of the work force being employed informally. Children are the most affected by challenges faced by the social assistance system. As the financial accountabilities attributed to Local Public Authorities (LPAs) do not fully match available capacity to prioritize, finance and plan, social services for children and youth in health, education, child protection, social protection remain underfunded. UNICEF continued to advocate with LPAs to establish community level support services involving day care, family support and family-based placement services, including a minimum social services package. Some 20,000 children, of which 90% are children left behind by both or the only migrant parent were separated from their family in 2018 alone. While the number of institutionalized children decreased six-fold over the past decade, a quarter of those still in institutions are children with disabilities.

⁶ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/kyrgyzrepublic/overview>

⁷ <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/children-kyrgyzstan>

⁸ <https://www.unicef.org/kyrgyzstan/what-we-do>

⁹ The text is an extract from UNICEF Moldova Country Office Annual Report 2019.

Formal education does not fully provide the skills that young people need to transition to gainful adulthood. Moldovan students registered better results in PISA 2018 compared to 2015, however these results were still much below the OECD average, with about half of 15 year-old students not being proficient in reading, mathematics or sciences. In 2018, youth unemployment (15-24 years old) doubled the national average and youth inactivity is affecting about 60 per cent of young people. More than a quarter of unemployed youth is not in education, training nor have a job (NEET), whereas young women are the largest cohort in this category (NBS,2019). The lack of awareness and opportunities, the exclusion of disadvantaged groups and insufficient funding for Youth Councils and Resource Centres undermine the participation of children and youth.

Notwithstanding the turmoil in the political context and a certain slowdown of the implementation of the Country Programme, still tangible achievements were made in relation to the child rights agenda. The advancement of inclusive education remained at the forefront of the programme. A Joint Evaluation of the Implementation of the Programme for Development of Inclusive Education in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2020 was conducted with UNICEF support resulting in recommendations regarding system strengthening and change of social norms towards enrollment of children with disabilities and those with special educational needs in regular schools. The year saw also inclusion of Roma children in selected Roma densely populated communities in education through UNICEF's support for extensive work with all involved stakeholders. During the year, the Government successfully adopted a Decree on Regional Services for Children Victims and Witnesses of Crimes, while also specific legislation on cyber protection of children was enacted. Furthermore, the Secretariat of the Parliament of Moldova accepted to include legislative work on bullying on the Parliament's 2020 agenda by initiating four regional consultations and a national policy dialogue.

Ukraine¹⁰

Ukraine has travelled the path of post-Socialist transformation during its independence years¹¹. By now, the country has built well-established institutions of democratic society with market-driven economy as well as civil society institutions. Construction of the independent state was going on amid dramatic events and socio-political transformations accompanied by a great number of not only economic but also political crises. Since the "Maidan" uprising in February 2014, the country has witnessed several momentous events, including the outbreak of conflict in eastern Ukraine.

In its sixth year, the situation in the conflict-affected Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in eastern Ukraine continues to take a significant toll on the lives of more than five million people. After nearly four years of conflict in eastern Ukraine, 3.4 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance – 60% of them are women and children¹². Approximately 1.6 million people have been forced from their homes and tens of thousands of civilians have been killed or wounded. More than one half of the Internally Displaced Populations settled in Donetsk and Luhansk regions nearby the line of contact. Every day, the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine forces millions of civilians to make impossible choices whether they eat, buy medicine or send their children to school. UNICEF is supporting health, nutrition, HIV prevention, education, access to safe drinking water, sanitation and protection for children and families caught in the conflict. UNICEF's strategy in Ukraine is about protecting children and realizing child rights on both sides of the contact line. Responding to the urgent needs of 800,000 children and their families, UNICEF continues to strengthen social protection and psychosocial support, as well as

¹⁰ The text is taken from several sources which are identified in footnotes for each paragraph.

¹¹ Government of Ukraine 2020 Sustainable Development Goals Ukraine: Voluntary National Report

¹² <https://www.unicef.org/ukraine/en>

health, education and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services. The capacities of local professionals, authorities and civil society actors are being enhanced to strengthen preparedness and accountability to affected children. UNICEF is working to improve access to quality, inclusive, age- and gender-sensitive social services for children and families to increase their resilience to protection-related risks, including through cash-based interventions. UNICEF also works with humanitarian partners to target those closest to the conflict line, while also strengthening educational and community-based systems to support those impacted by the conflict. This bridging of humanitarian action and development programming is central to UNICEF's approach. As lead agency for the WASH and education clusters and the child protection sub-cluster, UNICEF continues to advocate with parties to the conflict to comply with international humanitarian law and child rights standards.

At the time of COVID-19, the most vulnerable families in terms of socio-economic impact of COVID-19 are the ones who cannot diversify their income¹³. Families with both parents and multi-generational households are more likely to compensate decline or loss of income by one family member with income or social benefits preserved by other family members. Whereas the following categories are more dependent on single income source and are more likely to fall into poverty as a result of COVID-19: single parents with children, households with children below 3 years old, and single pensioners above 65 years old; as well as families with 3 and more children, who have traditionally the highest rates of poverty.

4. RATIONALE, PURPOSE AND USE OF EVALUATION

Rationale: The key rationale for conducting MCPE and doing so at this stage of CP cycles for the four countries is identified in UNICEF's 2018 Evaluation Policy. According to the Policy, it is a requirement for COs to commission CPEs, at least, once every two programme cycles. Consequently, CPEs are included in the Costed Evaluation Plans (CEPs) of all the four COs to be conducted in 2021 with the view of them feeding into the developing of new CPDs for the next five years. The selected COs have identified an important priority to conduct in this programme cycle the CPEs and agreed on the proposal of this terms of reference as an strategic point of reflection and external view to design and plan for their next CPD.

CPEs have become an integral part of Country Programme management and play a challenge function to ensure that CO staff address strategic-level issues. The CPE process itself is unique bringing together the entire CO, RO, donor community in the country, Government and beneficiaries including young people. Therefore, CPEs are instrumental for facilitating the strategic reflection on how to best prioritize UNICEF efforts in each country and in the region as a whole to deliver the results for children.

The common purposes of the Country Programme Evaluation are to

- Strengthen accountability of UNICEF to national stakeholders by evaluating UNICEF's contribution to the results for children at scale especially for the most vulnerable
- Support the development of the next UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) by understanding and evaluating the implementation of the change strategies through which the Country Programme is delivered to better understand the added value of UNICEF in each country context.

¹³ Nataliya Borodchuk and Liudmyla Cherenko (2020) FIGHTING COVID-19 IN UKRAINE: Initial estimates of the Impact on poverty. UNICEF, 15 April 2020

- Draw lessons from the previous CPD implementation in order to make the best use of UNICEF's change strategies in each country and in the region as a whole, while considering current circumstances.

Use: The evaluation may be used by a broad range of stakeholders of which some have a direct stake in the evaluation because they are involved in implementation of the CP or programmatic frameworks, plans or strategies towards which the CP contributes. These stakeholders are referred to as Primary Stakeholders. Other stakeholders, i.e. Secondary Stakeholders, refer to rights holders and duty bearers who benefit from the contributions of the CP, and organisations with which UNICEF does not have any formal partnership but that work with similar programmes and on child rights issues for which lessons and good practices drawn from the CPE may be relevant. Primary stakeholders include but may not be limited to the:

State Bodies. UNICEF's main Government partners that UNICEF collaborates with relevant state bodies on the coordination and detailed contents of each CP component in each of the four countries. The line ministries and state agencies may include: Prime Minister's Office; Ministry of Health, Ministry of Social Protection, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Justice; different Departments on Youth and Minors; Pre-school and School Education, Teacher Training, Family Support; General Prosecutor's Office; Judges Training Institute, Supreme Court; Committee on Youth Affairs and Sport; Republican Centre of Additional Education; Committee/Agency on Statistics, etc. The government stakeholders will use the findings of MCPE for helping UNICEF design new CPDs.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). UNICEF COs are likely to have collaborated with CSOs, primarily, as implementing partners and in relation to piloting of CP activities. CSOs are the main vehicle in implementing the CPDs and will undoubtedly use the findings in their direct work to improve the services they provide and ensure that the voice of children is heard.

The academia: Through the CP implementation period, UNICEF COs collaborate with a range of academic institutions. Academia will use the findings of MCPE to inform their evidence generation activities.

Donors. UNICEF's multilateral and bilateral donors – without which the CP would not be possible – have a direct stake in the evaluation findings as these will account for UNICEF's performance. Donors include the European Commission (EU); the Department for International Development (DFID), UK; the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI); the Government of Japan; Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation; the Swiss Committee for UNICEF; the UK Committee for UNICEF; the US Fund for UNICEF; and USAID. Donors will use the findings of MCPE for learning purposes and informing their own programming.

UN agencies and international finance institutions. The UN system comprises of UN agencies resident in country and contributing from abroad¹⁴. The current UNDAF¹⁵ involved inputs from the WHO; the UNDP; the UNFPA; the UNODC; the UNAIDS; the UNESCO; the ILO; the FAO; the UN Women. In addition, UNICEF partners with Bi-lateral donors (USAID, DFID, SIDA, among others), the World Bank, and other IFIs. Similar to UN partners will use the findings of MCPE for learning purposes and informing their own programming.

UNICEF stakeholders. Finally, stakeholders inside UNICEF who have a particular interest in the MCPE include: Staff in UNICEF's COs; the Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (ECARO), and senior management in UNICEF who can draw upon the evaluation findings for regional and corporate learning and accountability purposes.

¹⁴ Resident: UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, WHO, UNHCR, IDB, UNODC, UNFPA; Non-resident: ILO, UNAIDS, OHCHR, UN Women, UNOPS, UNESCO, UNECE; Regional Center: UNRCCA; Coordination mechanism to support UN RC: OCHA, DSS

¹⁵ At the time, this was referred to as the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

5. OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

Aligned with corporate policy requirements, this formative MCPE serves both accountability and learning purposes. The MCPE will look back and assess the relevance, coherence and impact achieved throughout implementation of the CPs in the four countries to identify good practices, and draw lessons and forward-looking recommendations that can inform the 2023-27 CP planning process, which will commence during the last quarter of 2021¹⁶. The CPE has three objectives, which are to:

- Strengthen accountability of UNICEF to national stakeholders by evaluating UNICEF's contribution to the results for children at scale especially for the most vulnerable in Bulgaria, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine for which inequity and gender are considered to form part
- Support the development of the next UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) by understanding and evaluating the implementation of the change strategies through which the Country Programme is delivered to better understand the added value of UNICEF in each country context.
- Draw lessons from the CPD 2018-22 implementation in order to make the best use of UNICEF's change strategies in each country, in this group of countries, and in the region as a whole, while considering current circumstances.

Lessons and recommendations should include but not be limited to reflect upon: a) UNICEF's role and strategic position looking back and thinking ahead into the next CPDs; b) the appropriateness of type and combined use of implementation strategies; c) what UNICEF could do better and differently to enhance its contribution in the countries under scrutiny. The recommendations will have a forward-looking approach¹⁷.

6. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Time and Geographical coverage: The MCPE will be conducted for Bulgaria, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. MCPE will explore the current and previous programme cycles assuming that some results at scale would have required more than one cycle to materialise. The period of scrutiny could potentially span from earlier years depending on the impact of interest given that long-term results require longer time where one CP cycle might not be enough for them to materialise. COs are also welcomed to have a focus on a specific period of time when the CP was implemented e.g. COVID-19 epidemic or change in Government's highest leadership, etc. The final choice of the period to be evaluated will be defined during the inception stage depending on the impact areas that the CO would choose to explore. The geographical scope is flexible suggesting that COs can either focus on a specific spatial dimension of their work or specific target group, again depending on the impact areas selected for scrutiny.

Programmatic coverage: The evaluation will explore UNICEF's contribution to impact through the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance and coherence and take into consideration the UNICEF's eight change strategies as per UNICEF strategic Plan¹⁸ and others that might have needed to put in place:

1. Programming excellence for at-scale results for children
2. Gender-responsive programming

¹⁶ The rolling Country Situation Analysis is expected to be finalized in September to inform the drafting of UNICEF's Programme Strategy Note (PSN) that will begin during the third quarter of 2019 and is expected to be finalized by October 2019. Together with other relevant exercises and documents, the PSN will inform the CPD planning process that is expected to be completed by May 2020.

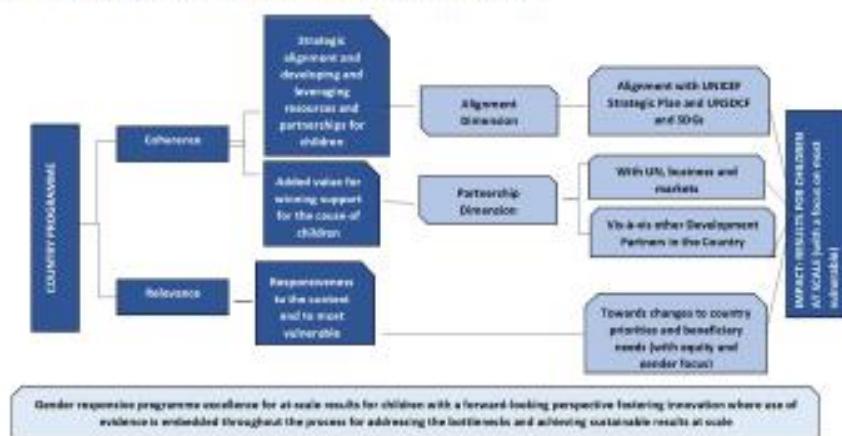
¹⁷ Considering the current circumstances and variables that keep changing overtime, the evaluation exercise will include recommendations that can be applicable in the uncertain and changing context towards the design and implementation of the next CPD.

¹⁸ https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_Strategic_Plan_2018-2021.pdf

3. Winning support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public
4. Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children
5. Leveraging the power of business and markets for children
6. United Nations working together
7. Fostering innovation in programming and advocacy for children
8. Using the power of evidence to drive change for children.

Figure 1 depicts the visual representation of the MCPE's focus and OECD-DAC criteria together with the UNICEF change strategies.

FIGURE 1 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF MCPE FOCUS ON RESULTS AT SCALE



In particular, Figure 1 presents the hypothesis that the CP (box in the far left) is delivered through the UNICEF change strategies (middle boxes) that can be conceptualized and aligned with the OECD-DAC criteria of coherence and relevance leading to *impact* i.e. results at scale (box in the far right). In the process we might identify other strategies that might not be considered in the current UNICEF Strategic Plan. The change strategies act as a catalyst towards achieving the results at scale¹⁹ and are a means to an end which is contributing to the results for children at scale with a special focus on most vulnerable. By exploring the UNICEF change strategies, MCPE will encourage a specific 'drill-down in detail' exercise to bring out about how UNICEF contributes to the results at scale, what its strategic positioning in each country is and will result in actionable recommendations.

The framework aligns itself with the two objectives of evaluations which are learning and accountability and also fits well with the three OECD-DAC criteria of impact, relevance and coherence as discussed above (with sustainability being embedded throughout and effectiveness being part of impact)²⁰. Sharing a common framework will allow learning about what is and is not working from the comparative angle and will therefore be helpful for both COs and RO to draw lessons at the country and identify trends at the sub-regional level.

¹⁹ UNICEF's approach to programming for children and young people aims to achieve sustained results at scale. That means maintaining and expanding support from both the public and private sectors – as well as non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, development agencies and United Nations partners. (UNICEF, Annual Report 2018)

²⁰ According to the revised UNICEF CPE guidelines, CPEs are not required to focus on all the OECD-DAC criteria. The suggestion is to focus on relevance, coherence and effectiveness. For the purposes of this MCPE, effectiveness is replaced with impact and is considered as part of it.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The project evaluation questions are formulated as per [OECD-DAC evaluation criteria](#) with some adjustment to UNICEF's change strategies and will explore relevance, coherence and impact. Sustainability and effectiveness are not explicitly scrutinised but are embedded in the selected criteria and their questions. Additional cross-cutting issues such as relevant human rights, including child rights, equity and gender equality are also examined as part of MCPE.

Impact: Impact will explore whether, how, and to what extent the UNICEF CP has generated or is likely to generate *significant positive or negative, intended or unintended results at scale*. Ideally, the evaluation seeks to identify longer term or broader in scope²¹ sustained results in systems or norms, and potential effects on people's well-being, human rights, and gender equality especially for those who are most vulnerable. At the same time, the evaluation will explore whether or not the CP was designed to reach at scale from the very start. The evaluation of UNICEF's contribution to the results at scale will be conceptualized using a Theory of Change of each specific CO and the CO's staff by identifying both the *most significant positive result* achieved by the CO as well as any *unintended result* that the CP might have led to. The identified results (both intended and unintended) need to be evaluated against the success or failure in addressing pre-identified bottlenecks in order to achieve or not achieve such a result. Investigating impact will require articulating specific claims (both intended and unintended) and identifying the change strategies forming the causal pathways towards the impact.

Key questions Did UNICEF contribute to the results at-scale? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?

Sub-questions: Did UNICEF identify and reassess bottlenecks throughout programme implementation?

Did different groups, including children and the most marginalised, benefit in different ways from the Country Programme? Are the results likely to be maintained over time?

Which strategies or group of strategies were effective in producing results at scale?

Relevance: Relevance examines the extent to which CP objectives and design are sensitive to the socio-economic, political, equity and capacity conditions in which it is implemented and are informed by evidence to identify and address the bottlenecks. It requires analyzing any changes in the context to assess the extent to which CP has been adapted so that UNICEF and its change strategies remain relevant over the time of the CP implementation. The evaluation will be required to examine if the needs of the beneficiaries especially those most vulnerable were assessed throughout the programme cycle and compare them to the situation throughout the implementation (as identified in the CCA and the SitAn). The evaluation will also explore significant changes in the context during programme implementation and the CP adjustments to them to achieve the results at scale.

Key questions: To what extent has UNICEF responded to the (changing) needs of the most vulnerable throughout the programme implementation and consistently integrated the equity and gender equality in all aspects of programming and implementation, including policy and advocacy?

²¹ While this is an ideal aim the evaluation can also identify more localized achievements that are considered worthy of being evaluated.

Sub-questions: To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to changes in national needs and rights of the beneficiaries especially of the most vulnerable and in national priorities during programme implementation?

To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to the shifts caused by crisis or major socio-economic and political changes?

Coherence: Coherence is twofold. First is the alignment dimension which is about examining the extent to which the CP objectives and design respond to UNICEF's own policies, and priorities, as well as those of the UN and continue to do so when circumstances changed. UNICEF CP has to be compatible with UNICEF's own regional and global strategies as well as with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF). The latter entails CP's compatibility with the wider UN work in terms of complementarity, harmonization, co-ordination and avoiding duplication of effort and bring the value added of the organization to fulfill its specific mandate. Evaluation can include looking at changes in coherence between the start and end of the period being evaluated. Coherence analysis will also look for synergies or inconsistencies between actions in a related field which are expected to work together.

Second is the partnership dimension where the idea is to explore the partnerships of UNICEF in delivering the CP and addressing the meaningful bottlenecks and advocating for evidence for equity to be sustained in national systems to reach the results at scale. Coherence analysis from the point of view of partnership will assess how UNICEF builds partnerships and with whom (e.g. UN, private sector including market and businesses, research and academic, etc.) and how it leverages resources for the results at scale. The evaluation will basically explore the effect of UNICEF strategic partnerships on the delivery of the CP. In addition, the analysis will include exploring the added value and comparative advantage of UNICEF vis-à-vis other development partners in each given context. This element will be explored through the systematic cross case comparison of UNICEF's partnerships where the analysis initially will seek to identify how UNICEF differs from other "players" or "actors" that have a stake in the policy sector at the country level and then identify if UNICEF appears to be important to achieve the results at scale.

Key questions: To what extent has UNICEF's Country Programme kept true to its mandate and aligned with UNICEF's global and regional strategies as well as UNSDCF and SDGs in any given country?

To what extent did UNICEF manage to build effective and sustainable partnerships in working towards addressing the predefined bottlenecks, advocating for evidence for equity and contributing to the results at scale?

Sub-questions: What are the comparative advantages of UNICEF in relation to other actors in the country, including development partners, the private sector, the non-government sector and to what extent were they necessary and sufficient for contributing to the results at scale to be achieved?

How has UNICEF's approach to strategic partnerships changed over time, if any?

These evaluation questions are final and are not subject to change. Each CO is able to add up to two questions to this list as/if needed.

B. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The approach and methodology presented is guided by the UNICEF's revised Evaluation Policy²², the Evaluation Norms and Standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG)²³, UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluations and Data Collection and Analysis²⁴ and UNICEF's reporting standards.

The proposed approach as a way forward is to design and implement a multi-country programme evaluation (MCPE) for Bulgaria, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. The proposed approach will have the common evaluative elements which are shared by the COs and the elements which will be optional for each CO to add. It is assumed that this design will be effective to strike a balance between the interests of each CO and RO's interest in learning across the region.

The MCPE will take the following general approach:

- Allow for maximum ownership by CO staff and place the least possible burden on UNICEF staff. Strike a balance between CO ownership and multi-country evaluation arrangements allowing some standardization of the aspects of the purpose, scope, evaluation questions, an overall methodology and team composition with a certain individualization to meet the varying interests of COs
- Engage country, sub-regional and regional key partners throughout the evaluation process
- Work in a way that will allow sharing good practices and lessons learned across and within countries. All of this toward the ultimate goal of improving UNICEF's the implementation of change strategies and accountability in all country contexts
- Make the maximum use of ongoing and recent evaluations, with a view to reducing duplication (as well as evaluative burden) and to deepening the available data set.
- Identify some key trends in the region that can inform other country programmes and promotes cross-fertilization
- Facilitate the identification of regional and sub-regional trends while the focus will be on the specific countries
- Ensure that current context and forward-looking analyses are formulated based on information and evidence available for a forward-looking recommendations and way forward.

The methodology will be chosen among the evaluation manager, technical committee, and the evaluation team. It will be based on the questions, what additional goals and interests the COs have, and whether various attributes of UNICEF CPs and evaluation process make it feasible to use different methods²⁵. Taken these considerations into account, the overall evaluative framework proposes a Theory-based Evaluation (TBE) with potentially both quantitative and qualitative methods and data collection and analysis techniques. Considering this double layer approach, it is likely that TBE methods such as process tracing (PT) and Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) or a combination of both would be suitable choices to answer the evaluation questions on impact and relevance (Table 2). The proposed evaluation methodology should reflect a human rights-based and equity-focused approach with data being disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, age, disability, etc., and it should pay diligent

²² UNICEF 2018 Evaluation Policy <https://undocs.org/E/CN.17/2018/14>

²³ UNEG Norms: <http://www.unewg.org/document/detail/121>, UNEG Standards: <http://www.unewg.org/document/detail/122>

²⁴ https://www.unicef.org/supply/files/ATTACHMENT_IV-UNICEF_Procedure_for_Ethical_Standards.PDF

²⁵ Belant, B. & O'Donnell, M. (2016) Choosing Appropriate Evaluation Methods: A Tool for Assessment and Selection.

attention to ethical issues. Table 2 proposes possible methodological options to answer the evaluation questions and evaluation teams are welcome to suggest an overarching design to make it all work as a holistic framework. The bidders are also required to propose preliminary plans for primary data collection in each country with some level of standardisation across the four countries. More is discussed in the next section.

TABLE 1 OECD-DAC CRITERIA, EVALUATION QUESTIONS AND APPROACHES, TECHNIQUES TO ANSWER THEM

	Questions	Technique, approach
Impact	Did UNICEF contribute to the results at-scale? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?	Theory-Based Evaluation (for example Process Tracing, Contribution Analysis, Realist Evaluation)
	Did UNICEF identify and reassess bottlenecks throughout programme implementation?	Document review and observation
	Did different groups, including children and the most marginalised, benefit in different ways from the Country Programme? Are the results likely to be maintained over time?	Systematic comparison, Realist Evaluation, QCA
	Which strategies or group of strategies were effective in producing results at scale?	QCA
Relevance	To what extent has UNICEF responded to the (changing) needs of the most vulnerable throughout the programme implementation and consistently integrated the equity and gender equality in all aspects of programming and implementation, including policy and advocacy?	Document review and observation; Systems-based Evaluation
	To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to changes in national needs and rights of the beneficiaries especially of the most vulnerable and in national priorities during programme implementation?	Systems-based Evaluation (several options)
	To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to the shifts caused by crisis or major socio-economic and political changes?	Systems-based Evaluation (several options)
	To what extent has UNICEF's Country Programme kept true to its mandate and aligned with UNICEF's global and regional strategies as well as UNSDCF and SDGs in any given country?	Document review and observation
Coherence	To what extent did UNICEF manage to build effective and sustainable partnerships in working towards addressing the predefines bottlenecks, advocating for evidence for equity and contributing to the results at scale?	Network Analysis or some other forms of systems-based evaluation
	What are the comparative advantages of UNICEF in relation to other actors in the country, including development partners, the private sector, the non-government sector and to what extent were they necessary and sufficient for contributing to the results at scale to be achieved?	QCA Stakeholder analysis of different partners will be needed

	How has UNICEF's approach to strategic partnerships changed over time, if any?	Document review and observation
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Please note that due to the current uncertain circumstances due to the consequences of COVID19 and decisions around it taken place in each country, the recommendations and analysis of questions may include scenario analysis to ensure that recommendations are applicable in the future. It is therefore encouraged the use of evaluative methods such as participatory systems mapping when doing a forward-looking stakeholder analysis²⁶, and/or Bayesian Belief Networks, or similar.

The team together with UNICEF evaluation team will clarify strategies for conducting analyses and disaggregation of data with a view to assess UNICEF's contribution to diverse beneficiary groups. The team will, furthermore, review the TOCs for the individual programme components with a view to verify evaluability, devise strategies for how to manage possible data limitations. The team will be expected to explain its approach to triangulation and quality assurance of all evaluation deliverables and to clarify, how it plans to engage key evaluation stakeholders to promote participation, ownership and utilization of the evaluation.

Available data include a number of relevant evaluation and research which have been completed in each CO (Annex 2) that will inform, particularly, the contextual analysis to be undertaken during the Inception Phase. In addition, all COs have been reporting annually on output indicators in UNICEF's Results Assessment Module (RAM), but challenges in accessing data for selected outputs and outcomes prevail in relation to some programme sectors. The output level indicators mainly rely on the project-level data. The evaluation team will also find that disaggregation of data, at times, is limited, and baseline date unavailable, which will influence assessment of changes.

9. MCPE PROCESS

Once the evaluation team is on board, the evaluation will be structured in the following main phases defined by accompanying activities as described below:

A Desk Review: The evaluation team will commence the evaluation with a document review for which an electronic library will be established for each CO comprising relevant documentation that will be updated on an ongoing basis during the evaluation process. Documentation made available to the team may include but will not be limited to: CP financial information; programme monitoring data covering the timeframe for the evaluation; work plans; available TOCs for CP components; management plans and strategy notes; situation analyses; Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and other relevant surveys; donor reports; needs assessments; corporate key policies, strategies and normative guidance that has informed the development of the CP; reports and studies relevant for the operational context; and Government and partner key policy and strategy documents. It is important that the evaluation team develops a framework for the desk review. It will be a useful stage for identifying the first glimpse of potential results that COs may be interested in focusing on and identifying the boundaries of MCPE. Desk review will also be instrumental for identifying the areas of focus, based on the evaluation questions based on existing data.

Initial Briefings; In addition to the desk review, brief introductory skype interviews with staff from UNICEF's Regional Office and the COs will inform the detailed planning of the evaluation methodology. Once the initial desk review is completed, there will be a joint and separate call(s) with wider MCPE stakeholders to introduce the evaluation and the team to the entire CO staff and key evaluation stakeholders, including members of an Evaluation Reference

²⁶ The map can be used to run through potential scenarios of change. For example, if there is a factor stakeholders have high control over, we may explore how a range of different changes in that factor affect the rest of the map, using the map to walk through these changes step by step.

Group (ERG) established as a sounding board for the evaluation to foster transparency and participation and to review key evaluation deliverables.

An Inception Report (IR) An inception report (a joint report for the entire MCPE) will be submitted that demonstrates impartiality, and that aligns with UNICEF's quality standards²⁷. The IR will be subject to quality assurance, a review conducted by internal evaluation stakeholders and the ERG, an ethical review – should proposed data gathering involve vulnerable groups, sensitive subjects and/or use of confidential data – and, finally, quality assurance by ECARO that requires a satisfactory rating for the field mission to proceed and be considered an acceptable product²⁸. The approval of the IR marks the completion of the Inception Phase. Based on the desk review, the IR will provide a contextual description and focus; justifications of proposed changes to the evaluation ToRs; an a detailed methodology (including sampling strategies for all primary data collection activities; and analytical evaluative methods at the country and regional level); proposed impact areas for scrutiny; refined theoretical framework; a description of the quality assurance mechanism of the evaluation team. The IR will also outline evaluation team strategies for management of data gaps, or data reliability issues, and it will include ethical considerations relating to primary data generation and use, as per UNICEF guidelines. Attached to the IR will be an evaluation matrix outlining evaluation questions, sub-questions, judgement criteria/indicators, data sources and instruments/methods; a preliminary regional and in-country stakeholder analysis²⁹ ([example](#)) that will be refined for the Evaluation Report; the MCPE TOC overall and one per participating CO; a work plan with a timeline; and an overview of the division of labour between the evaluation team members. IR could add the evaluation team's assumptions of "ideal evidence" to test their theories/hypotheses of what evidence would conclusively prove (or strengthen considerably) and what evidence would conclusively disprove (or weaken considerably) their theories.

Virtual data collection: Following the inception phase, a three-week virtual data collection with full participation of all team members will be organised during which primary and, if relevant, secondary data will be generated and collected. Important to note that the international evaluation team members are not expected to travel. National consultants hired in each country will be the primary vehicle for data collection, analysis and in-country validation and do so either face to face or virtually depending on the COVID-19 situation in each country.

An Evaluation report (ER) and a brief Synthesis Report (SR): The evaluation team will prepare a draft evaluation report (one per CO) that will be subject to a review undertaken by CO staff, members of the ERG and the evaluation manager; an external quality assurance that requires a satisfactory rating and, if required, an ethical review. Following the first review of the draft report and the initial quality assurance, the evaluation team will incorporate the comments provided as appropriate and prepare a final report. Approval of the ER as a product will be subject to quality assurance by the ECARO evaluation team. Once a final draft report has been approved, the evaluation Team Leader together with the national consultants will present the evaluation findings and recommendations to each CO staff, the ERG and, if relevant, other national stakeholders. The Team Leader will, furthermore, present the evaluation findings to relevant stakeholders from UNICEF's RO and, if required, selected headquarter staff. The regional report as well as each of the four country offices reports will comply with UNICEF's reporting standards and be no longer than 40-60 pages excluding annexes, each. Upon completions of the evaluation report (including the regional and the 4 country office reports), it will be rated in UNICEF's Global Evaluation and Research Oversight System (GEROS)³⁰, and

²⁷ Please refer to Annex D

²⁸ For details on UNICEF's external quality assurance review, please refer to Annex D

²⁹ <http://www1.worldbank.org/publicsector/anticorrupt/PoliticalEconomy/stakeholderanalysis.htm>

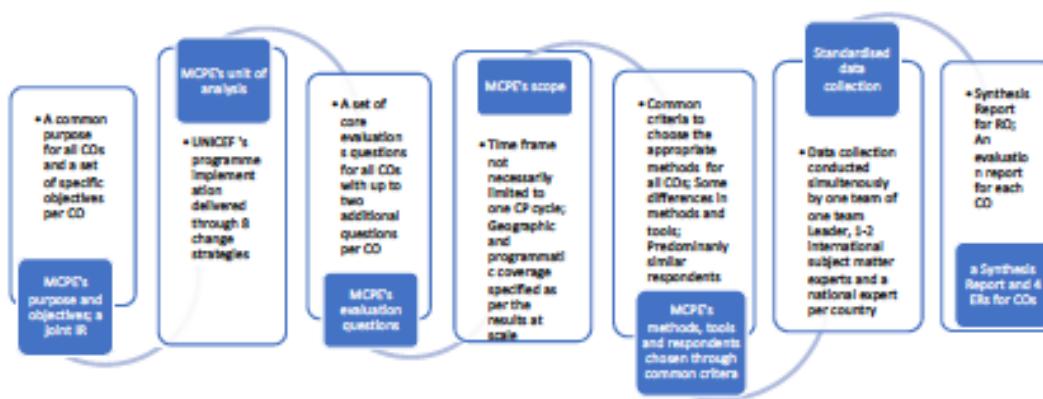
³⁰ https://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/Index_GEROS.html

it will be published on UNICEF's global website. A brief synthesis report is also expected to be produced compiling the key findings, conclusions and recommendations for the RO.

10. SPECIAL CONDITIONS AND LIMITATION

There are two special conditions. First, it is a multi-country evaluation. Figure 2 illustrates the aspects of the CPE which are standardized for all the COs and those which are flexible and can be adjusted by COs. As shown, most of the areas are flexible to accommodate the COs' interests and needs.

FIGURE 2 KEY MILESTONES OF THE MCPE



The MCPE will answer a set of core evaluation questions suggested above for all the COs as well as some additional questions added by COs (up to eight). MCPE will explore the current and previous programme cycle assuming that some results at scale would have required more than one cycle to materialize. However, COs are also welcomed to have a particular focus on a specific timing e.g. COVID-19 epidemic or change in Government's highest leadership, etc. depending on the results that the CO would choose to explore. The geographical scope is flexible suggesting that COs can either focus on a specific spatial dimension of their work or specific target group, again depending on the results selected for scrutiny. The overall methodology will be the same to all COs i.e. criteria to choose the appropriate methods to answer the evaluation questions. All the methods and tools will be predominantly the same but can differ depending on the limitation and possibilities available in each country. Institutions/organisations and respondents can be similar i.e. equivalents of the same institution across the countries with some specific ones added in any given context, for example, some countries may have more NGOs/CSOs partners. Respondents will vary from country to country. It is envisaged that there will be one central team conducting MCPE with an international team leader, one or two experts and one national expert per each country (CO will help to identify national experts). The team will be selected and managed by RO. The outputs will include a joint inception report (IR), a joint synthesis report and four individual evaluation reports for the four COs.

Second, the special condition is around the COVID-19 restrictions. Considering the current travel restrictions, the bidders should prepare technical and financial proposal accordingly.

Limitations include

- Lack of systematic documentation of the design and implementation of some programme interventions may limit the evaluation.
- Due to ongoing structural reforms in some of the governments e.g. Ukraine, a high staff turn-over has been observed in recent years, which does influence availability of institutional memory.
- Not all key informants might be available or reachable at the time of evaluation.
- Evaluation should be conducted without travelling to the country, which will have certain challenges associated with it.

11. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Considering UNICEF's strategic agenda to harness innovation and deepen and widen the evidence base to drive and sustain global progress towards the realization of children's rights, ensuring ethical conduct in evidence generation is imperative. This is necessary both in its own right and as a significant contributor to ensuring quality and accountability in the evidence generation process, especially when it involves children. The evaluation team remain in strict adherence with UNEG ethical guidelines and code of conduct. The team leader will be in charge of leading the entire process and be responsible for timely and quality deliverables of the entire process as well as of the evaluation outputs.

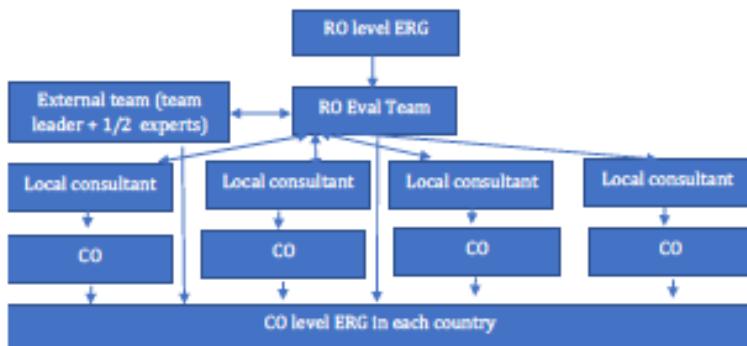
Evaluation methodology should be based on UNEG Ethical considerations and respond to UNEG ethical guidance to evaluation as guiding principle to ensure quality of evaluation process (<http://www.uneval.org/search/index.jsp?q=ETHICAL+GUIDELINES>) as well as on Standard Operations Procedures (SOP) for Quality Assurance and Ethical Standards in UNICEF-supported Research, Studies and Evaluations (RSEs) towards Measurable Results for Children in the CEE/CIS Region and UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis. UNICEF will use its existing LTA for external ethical approval to get a clearance. Annex 3 lists the sources for the ethical guidelines.

Evaluation team members should identify any potential ethical issues and approaches, as well as the processes for ethical review and oversight of the evaluation process in their proposal. At this stage, it is not anticipated that MCPE will engage children under 18 and other vulnerable groups of the population in data collection. However, should bidders propose otherwise, all MCPE deliverables will be subject to ethical approvals through the regional LTA holder.

12. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The activity will be managed by the RO and conducted by external contractors (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS BETWEEN RO, CO AND EVALUATION TEAMS



The activity will be managed by the RO and conducted by external contractors (Figure 4). The RO will be responsible for the day-to-day oversight and management of the evaluation and for management of the evaluation budget. A form of cross-divisional stakeholder / advisory group (e.g. Evaluation Steering Committee, Evaluation Reference Group (ERG)) will be required both at the RO level as well as for each country. Further discussion is needed on the form and membership of such a group at the country level. At the top-level ERG will consist of RO advisers and chaired by the Regional Director. The top-level ERG will provide guidance and supervision to the CPEs. UNICEF Regional Evaluation Team¹⁰ will work closely with the external evaluation team headed by a MCPE team leader and supported with other team members including local experts. The team leader will be working with local consultants based in each of the MCPE country who will be a local specialist¹¹. Each CO will have a focal point (CRM/M&E/Evaluation focal point) to be the first line of contact on behalf of the CO who will work with the CO staff and ERG. The RO will assure the quality of the evaluation and guarantee its alignment with UNEG Norms and Standards and Ethical Guidelines and provide quality assurance checking that the findings and conclusions are relevant and proposed adaptations are actionable. All major deliverables will be reviewed firstly by RO (zero draft) and then by the ERG and COs. The MCPE process will be collaborative, transparent and effective to the extent possible. Table 3 outlines the key tasks and roles of RO and COs.

TABLE 3 RO AND CO ROLES AGAINST KEY MILESTONES

Key milestones	RO	COs
Concept Note	To draft a CN, organize a workshop to discuss it with COs, finalise it based on comments/feedback	To participate in the workshop, provide comments
Terms of References	To turn a CN into a ToR, get QA done, advertise for a tender or select an LTA holder	To provide comments; organise consultation within the CO and identify CO's own interest areas, provide details of the aspect of CPE which are adjustable to local contexts i.e. light green (table 1)
Selection of external company and local consultants	To identify a team leader and evaluation team, raise a contract	To identify local consultants

Budgets and human resources	To manage CPE budget, ensure MCEs and Advisers have availability to undertake this assignment	COs transfer their financial contribution to the RO account ³¹ ; make sure CRM/M&E/Evaluation focal point is available to work with RO on CPE and that programme staff are available for interviews and reviewing CPE outputs as required
Preparing a library of all programme documents:	To identify a space for library, to provide a list of necessary materials for desk review	To share materials as requested
Setting up a two-layered ERG	To identify and set up ERG at the RO level, call for meetings, facilitate the commenting process	To identify members of ERGs and set up the CO level ERG, call for meetings, facilitate the commenting process
Data collection	To manage and oversee the process to ensure that it is timely and as per the inception plan.	To make themselves available for interviews, workshops, meetings; to identify respondents for data collection, provide their details for remote data collection
MCPE outputs (inception and evaluation reports)	To make sure they are of good quality, share with COs for comments	To provide comments
Dissemination	To make sure that CPE has management responses for each CO, to produce additional communication materials; to conduct internal and external-looking dissemination events	To contribute to and lead some of the dissemination events
Management Response	To make sure evaluation reports provide actional recommendations	To develop MR based on the recommendations

UNICEF as a commissioner takes the accountability of the evaluation and ECARO Evaluation Adviser is designated as supervisor for this evaluation. Support for this evaluation will be provided by ECARO Evaluation team which will perform a managerial function for this evaluation (Evaluation Manager).

The Evaluation Manager will have the following responsibilities:

- Lead the management of the evaluation process throughout the evaluation (design, implementation and dissemination and coordination of its follow up);
- Convene the ERG meetings; Facilitate the participation of those involved in the evaluation design;
- Coordinate the selection of the Evaluation Team;
- Safeguard the independence of the exercise and ensure the evaluation products meet quality standards;

³¹ Financial arrangements will be discussed and agreed by COs and RO.

- Connect the Evaluation Team with the wider programme units, senior management and key evaluation stakeholders, and ensure a fully inclusive and transparent approach to the evaluation;
- Facilitate the Evaluation Team's access to all information and documentation relevant to the intervention, as well as to key actors and informants who should participate information-gathering methods;
- Provide the evaluators with overall guidance as well as with administrative support; Oversee progress and conduct of the evaluation, the quality of the process and the products;
- Manage/support relationship between COs, partners, etc
- Approve the deliverables and evaluate the team's work in consultation with ERG
- Take responsibility for disseminating and learning across evaluations on the various programme areas
- Ensure that all deliverables are submitted to external QA review conducted by external institution;
- Disseminate the results of the evaluation.

The RO and CO ERGs will:

- Review and provide comments and feedback on the quality of the evaluation process as well as on the evaluation products (comments and suggestions on the TOR, draft reports, final report of the evaluation).
- Facilitate the communication/presentation of results to COs and relevant partners at the regional and country level

The Evaluation Team will report to Evaluation Manager and conduct the evaluation by fulfilling the contractual arrangements in line with the TOR, UNEG/OECD norms and standards and Ethical Guidelines; this includes developing of an evaluation (implementation) plan as part of the inception report, drafting and finalizing the final and synthesis reports and other deliverables, and briefing the commissioner on the progress and key findings and recommendations, as needed. The Evaluation Team should also adhere to UNICEF's Evaluation Policy, to UNEG's ethical guidelines for UN evaluations and to UNICEF Reporting Standards. Evaluation team members will sign a no conflict of interest attestation. Annex 4 presents the technical requirements of the team. The Evaluation Team must demonstrate personal and professional integrity during the whole process of the evaluation. The Evaluation Team must respect the right of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensure that sensitive data cannot be traced to its source. Further, the team must respect ethics of research while working with children including using age appropriate consent forms, age appropriate data collection, and principle of do no harm. Furthermore, the team and its members must take care that those involved in the evaluation have an opportunity to examine the statements attributed to them. The evaluation process must be sensitive to beliefs, manners, and customs of the social and cultural environment in which they will work. Especially, the team must be sensitive to and address issues of protection, discrimination and gender inequality. Furthermore, the team members are not expected to assess the personal performance of individuals and must balance an assessment of management functions with due consideration of this principle.

13. WORKPLAN AND DELIVERABLES

A tentative time frame for the evaluation is provided below. The evaluation is expected to be completed within nine months upon signing the contract.³² This might be subject to change depending on the prevailing situation on ground at the time of the evaluation.

TABLE 2 WORKPLAN

Activity	Duration
Signature of contract	Two weeks
Desk review and planning phase to start the reviews and explore possibilities for data collection and identify impact areas	Four weeks in total
Producing a detailed Inception Report (IR) describing initial findings based on the preliminary desk review, the evaluation methodology, detailed implementation plan, the outline of the Evaluation Report, dissemination plan.	Five weeks
External and Internal quality assurance (QA) review process of Inception Report; ethical review process if required	Three weeks
Incorporation of received feedback and revising tools for field work	One week
Remote data collection (taking into account the risks related to COVID-19) in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine	Four weeks in each country taking place concurrently
Data analysis and writing of the first draft of four country-evaluation report in English (four in total i.e. one report per country)	Six weeks spent concurrently
External and Internal quality assurance (QA) review	Two weeks
Incorporation of received feedback and finalising four country-evaluation reports	One week
Synthesis report	Three weeks
External and Internal quality assurance (QA) review	Two weeks
Incorporation of received feedback and finalising synthesis report	One week
Preparation of the PowerPoint Presentation in English	One week
Submission of the country-evaluation reports, a synthesis report and a PowerPoint Presentation in English to UNICEF and presentation of the Evaluation Report findings at UNICEF organized events	One week
TOTAL	Approx. 36 weeks within 9 months duration ³³

The evaluation process at all stages should follow UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis.

The Evaluation Team is responsible to submit the following Deliverables

Inception Report in English - Electronic version to be submitted within two months after signing a contract and initial briefing with the Evaluation Manager. This report should be 30 to 35 pages in length and should be in line with UN standards for IRs. The IR should outline detailed scope, evaluation

³² interested companies/institutions should indicate the expected time to complete the assessment in their proposals

³³ This is only the duration of the evaluation i.e. total calendar days. The total number of person days should be proposed by the bidder to fulfil the requirements of the ToR and duration of the project.

framework; methodology; sampling, field visit timing and modality, data collection methods, timeline for activities and submission of deliverables, dissemination plan). A draft will be shared in advance for comments and approved by the ERG. Final inception report will be presented by the Evaluation Team to the CO and ERG and quality assured by Regional Evaluation Advisor and external QA institution. Draft report should be finalised within maximum of three weeks after submitting the first draft.

Sample: Inception Report – Content . Note: This is a sample, and can be adapted to the needs of this exercise

1. Presentation of the context and object of evaluation
2. Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation
3. Theory of change or construction of the theory of change (if absent) (1 generic ToC and 1 ToC per CO – 5 in total)
4. Evaluation framework (evaluation criteria and questions), with an evaluation matrix (disaggregating each evaluation criterion, with evaluation questions, indicators, information sources and methods of gathering information)
5. Preliminary stakeholder analysis, analytical framework and preliminary positioning of stakeholders
6. A complete methodology with:
 - an explanation and rationale of the methodological design and analytical framework;
 - sample and list of people to interview and sites to visit;
 - data collection tools (questionnaire, interview guidelines, etc.);
 - limitations and mitigation measures;
 - ethical considerations;
 - data analysis (how the data will be analysed, what technique and approach will be used, software, etc.); forward-looking methodology for recommendations;
 - dissemination of the evaluation;
7. Work plan and description of the role and responsibilities of each team member.
8. Deliverables and quality assurance

Country-Evaluation Reports in English - Electronic version of the first drafts should be submitted after completion of a three-week data collection conducted concurrently and should be in line with UNICEF adapted UNEG Evaluation Report Standards and be maximum of 40 pages in length (excluding annexes) answering all the evaluation questions per country. It will also contain an executive summary of no more than 5 pages that includes a brief description of the context and current situation, the purpose of the evaluation, its methodology and its main findings, conclusions and recommendations. It should fairly and clearly represent the views of the different actors/stakeholders. It should clearly give the conclusions and forward-looking recommends in a way that is substantiated by evidence. The draft will be shared with the ERG to seek their comments. Although particular for each concept, the reports will have common components, and same analytical framework as described in these ToRs, which should allow for a systemic analysis. The draft report will be quality assured by the Evaluation Manager. The final draft will be quality assured by external QA institution, if needed. There will be four Country-specific evaluation reports in total (one per country). All supporting evidence will be shared with the ECARO's Evaluation Team.

Synthesis Report in English - Electronic to be submitted after Country-Evaluation Reports are complete). Synthesis report should synthesise key findings of the four Country-Evaluation reports. The synthesis report will enable regional office to have a comparative systemic view of how strategies have been implemented in each participating country under a specific context. It will describe strategic positioning of UNICEF among regional and national stakeholders and regional support in COs' country programme implementation. The Final Report should be submitted along with the Power Point presentation or similar electronic means in English (electronic version). Presentation should be based on the finalized evaluation report summarizing the entire process, purpose, objectives, methodology,

findings. It will have specific recommendations and conclusions for the overall view of the four countries. All supporting evidence will be shared with the ECARO's Evaluation Team.

Dissemination plan and advocacy approaches should be developed as part of the IR and then discussed/agreed with the CO. Primarily, the result will be disseminated to the CO senior management. The findings will be discussed at the management team meetings, programmatic reviews to inform the CO's programming. The plan for dissemination and advocacy of the Evaluation result will be cleared by the Evaluation Manager.

The Evaluation Team should propose a timeline to submit the deliverables in their implementation plan (in proposals). Necessary and adequate time (at least two weeks) should be allocated for review and quality assurance processes of the deliverables by the Regional Evaluation Advisor and External Institution.

All reports should follow the structure and detailed outlines discussed and agreed with UNICEF (Annex 5)

14. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Proposer(s) must submit a technical and a price proposal (in separate documents) that will be split between technical and commercial (price proposal) scores (an 70/30 split).

A) The technical proposal (70 points) should include the following information:

- Cover letter
- Presentation of the firm/research institution/consulting group and experiences
- Understanding of the ToRs and Evaluation needs
- Team composition (incl. identification of team leader), with complete CVs
- Matching the team skills with the required skills
- Proposed methodology and rationale for it
- Detailed Timeline/Chronogram and level of effort by each team member (role of each team member)
- Sample(s) or link(s) of previous Evaluation(s) by the team members

The technical proposal will be assessed with the following criteria:

Technical sub-criteria	Description	Maximum Points
Completeness of technical requirements (5 points)	Overall conformity of the proposal, including appropriate referencing and supporting documents (description of institution and key personnel, understanding of ToRs, matching team skills with required skills, proposed methodology, detailed timeline, references and written sample)	5
Qualifications of team (35 points)	Overall conformity with requirement of the Team leader	20
	International Evaluation specialists	10
	National consultants	5
Quality of technical proposal (30 points)	Understanding of the ToRs (match between the proposed approach and requested scope of evaluation)	4
	Quality of the methodology and methods proposed, innovative design, rationale for the methodology	20

Realistic work plan and level of efforts of team	2
Understanding of ethical considerations and integration of such in the methodology	4
Maximum Score for technical criteria	70
Minimum Score for technical compliance	49

Total Maximum points for the technical proposal is 70 points. Only proposals which receive a minimum of 49 points will be considered further.

B) Financial Proposal should include:

1. Detailed budget as per the Financial Proposal template
2. Explanation of budget assumptions with regard to planning, team composition, field work, etc.

The total amount of points allocated for the price component is 30. The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal that is opened and compared among those invited firms/institutions which obtain the threshold points in the evaluation of the technical component. All other price proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price; e.g.:

Score for price proposal X =
$$\frac{(\text{Max. score for price proposal (30 Points)} * \text{Price of lowest priced proposal})}{\text{Price of proposal X}}$$

Total obtainable Technical and Price score: 100

The Proposer(s) achieving the highest combined technical and price score will (subject to any negotiations and the various other rights of UNICEF detailed in this LRPS) be awarded the contract(s).

All interested institutions are requested to include in their submission detailed costs including:

- a) Daily rate including hours per day
- b) Expenses associate with remote data collection, and translation etc. Please include all relevant costs that are required for this exercise) to be agreed prior to commencing project
- c) Any additional requirements needed to complete project(evaluation) or that might have an impact on cost or delivery of products
- d) The consultants would be required to use their own computers, printers, photocopier etc.

Payment is contingent on approval by the Evaluation manager and will be made in three instalments:

- a) 30% upon clearance of an Inception Report
- b) 40% upon clearance of the finalized Country-Evaluation Reports
- c) 30% upon clearance of a Synthesis Report

The institutions may propose different payment schedules that will be considered during the assessment of the proposal.