

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

UNICEF Country Programme Evaluation
MOLDOVA

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This report represents the evaluation of Country Programme of Co-operation between the Government of the Republic of Moldova and UNICEF 2018-2022 within the framework of the Multi-Country Programme Evaluation, covering UNICEF Country Programmes in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova (hereinafter Moldova) and Ukraine

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations of the evaluation of the UNICEF Moldova Country Programme (CP) for the period January 2018 to June 2021. The evaluation is part of the Multi-country Programme Evaluation, commissioned by UNICEF Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, covering UNICEF programmes in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine. It examines UNICEF's activities across Moldova under its two core Outcomes – Equitable Child Services and Social Change for Children's Rights – to assess the impact, relevance and coherence of the CP and the work of the Country Office (CO) with its partners. The evaluation aims to support the planning process for the next programming period.

Overview of the Country Programme 2018–2022

The planned impact of UNICEF Moldova CP is that all children in Moldova, especially the most vulnerable, enjoy their rights to education, health, adequate standard of living and participation within a child friendly legal environment, and are protected from abandonment, neglect, discrimination, exploitation and violence. The results structure of the CP consists of the two outcomes supported by nine outputs. The achievement of simultaneous results under both Outcomes is a prerequisite for substantial progress to address key child deprivations and uphold the realization of child rights.

Outcome 1 focuses on achieving Equitable Child-Sensitive Systems and Services through five Outputs:

- the prevention of family separation, discrimination and violence against children
- instituting procedures and practices in the justice system that protect and reintegrate children in contact with the law
- making schools and pre-schools ready to enrol the most vulnerable children, and building their capacity
- quality mother, child and adolescent health services
- an equitable social protection system.

Outcome 2 focuses on Social Change for Child Rights through four Outputs:

- improved capacities and skills of duty-bearers
- caregivers' engagement in the realization of child rights
- improved adolescent awareness and participation
- support for the social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups of children¹ seeking concerted and sustainable action by all systems and duty bearers in addressing the realization of all rights of the child.

In addition, the CP added several outputs and planned activities in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring a swift and sensitive answer to the emerging and urgent needs of children.

Purpose of the evaluation and its audiences

The purpose of the evaluation is to strengthen the accountability of UNICEF to national stakeholders by evaluating UNICEF's contribution to the results for children at scale, especially for the most vulnerable. The evaluation aims to support the development of the next UNICEF Country Programme Document (CPD) by understanding and evaluating the implementation of change strategies applied, and to draw lessons from activities and results to make the best use of UNICEF's resources and comparative advantage in the future. This strategic evaluation covers the whole CP and complements sectoral evaluations and specialized studies carried out over the past five years.

The primary users of this evaluation are intended to be the UNICEF Country and Regional Offices. Secondary users are the Government of the Republic of Moldova, UN agencies, development partners with programmes in Moldova, and civil society organizations (CSOs).

Evaluation context

The Republic of Moldova, one of Europe's poorest countries, has faced a long-lasting political crisis involving several governments within the last three years as well as large public protests. According to assessments by the UNICEF CO in its annual reports, this political situation has affected the development

¹ Children with disabilities, Roma children, children left behind by migrating parents, children from poor families, and those living in the poorest areas of country.

and implementation of various policies and strategies, including the National Development Strategy 'Moldova 2030'. Political instability translates into the instability of key institutions for children's well-being. In addition, the country's fragmented territorial-administrative structure and its incomplete decentralization process continue to result in the very low capacity of local governments to invest in social development and, consequently, to ensure the adequate provision of social services at local level.

The breakaway region of Transnistria, with about 500,000 inhabitants, remains out of the control of Moldovan constitutional authorities.²

A large number of vulnerable children remain at risk because of child poverty, the poor quality of education and healthcare services and the limited effectiveness or absence of cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms.

Evaluation methodology

The Terms of Reference proposed a theory-based approach, based on the CP Theory of Change (ToC) developed by the UNICEF CO in Moldova. The evaluation questions are structured around the OECD DAC³ criteria of relevance, coherence and impact. Relevance refers to the extent to which the programmes is responding to the needs of its beneficiaries, the coherence refers to the compatibility and complementarity of UNICEF work in Moldova with other programmes, and interventions of other institutions and organisations, and the impact refers to the high-level and long-term changes generated by the programme at local and national scale. An in-depth impact assessment was undertaken for three selected areas – inclusive education; justice for children; and youth engagement (including youth-friendly health services) – to provide lessons learned on UNICEF practices and strategies in achieving impact for children at scale. Other evaluation methods utilized for the evaluation include a stakeholder analysis and a social network analysis.

Data collection methods were mainly qualitative, including a wide-ranging document review and consultations with 31 key informant interviewees in Chişinău and the districts (*raioane*). The key informants included interviewees from UNICEF, government entities at multiple levels, UN agencies and other development agencies, and CSOs. In addition, UNICEF CO staff completed a questionnaire for the social network analysis.

The evaluation methodology fully considered ethical considerations and the obligations of evaluators. Interview respondents were assured confidentiality, with appropriate safeguards in place for all participants in focus groups including young people. Child rights, equity and gender were key issues throughout the evaluation.

Key findings

Relevance

UNICEF builds its programme on extensive evidence and lessons learned both from the implementation of previous interventions, and from needs assessments and studies conducted within the scope of the current CP. Based on the CP priorities and the context analysis, UNICEF aimed to reach all children of all ages in Moldova in both the planning and implementation phases of the programme. The alignment of the CP to the needs of children needs and to national priorities continues to be ensured through the support of UNICEF Moldova for the government to improve national statistics and strategic planning for the rights and well-being of children.

The CP and its related activities have addressed the needs of the most vulnerable groups of children. These are as follows: child victims of violence, neglect and exploitation (especially in Chişinău and its metropolitan area⁴), children with special educational needs and with disabilities, children in residential institutions, children in conflict with the law and in probation programmes, pregnant adolescents and young mothers, pregnant women and children living with HIV/AIDS, most-at-risk adolescents and especially vulnerable adolescents (MARA and EVA), and children from poor households.

² UNICEF Moldova, 'Light Situation Analysis addressing social inclusion of vulnerable groups, violence against children and youth empowerment and participation. Update of the situation of children and youth in the Republic of Moldova', 2019.

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

⁴ Chişinău accounts for around one quarter of Moldova's population.

UNICEF continued address the needs of children in Moldova during CP implementation in 2020 and 2021, when the focus shifted in part to understanding and responding to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Answering the challenges of COVID-19 and its effects, UNICEF Moldova acted fast to support the Government to ensure basic safety for front-line workers. While the pandemic demanded a change in strategy from advocacy to services and equipment provision, UNICEF mobilized its advocacy and capacity building activities to ensure an effective and sustainable response from the key duty bearers. Specific technical assistance and capacity building activities have also been implemented, therefore, in the fields of child protection, education, health, immunization and early childhood development.

Equity and gender equality are considered in the CPD, although it did not include specific outputs related to equity and gender equality. UNICEF Moldova undertook a gender analysis for each area of its work, and gender was mainstreamed into several areas, especially health and youth. Less integration of gender equality is identified in child protection, justice for children, inclusive education and social protection. Overall, however, gender equality has been well included in CP planning and implementation, but complex intersectionality or compounded discrimination and inequalities are still addressed in a limited manner.

Coherence

UNICEF Moldova has been successful in using its comparative advantages to, for example, work effectively with a range of different partners. These relate to its expertise, its strategic focus and its ability to build and sustain effective partnerships with the Government of the Republic of Moldova, other key public institutions at central and at local level (such as the Ombudsperson for the Rights of the Child), other UN agencies and development partners and CSOs. UNICEF Moldova has built a strong network of support for advocacy, communication for development and system-strengthening activities.

UNICEF Moldova sustains eight main types of partnerships:

- with the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the line Ministries
- with local public authorities for the modeling and piloting of projects (more so during the current CP than in the previous programming period)
- with implementing partners to provide services and technical assistance for key institutions
- a nationwide partnership for the rights of the children, through its support for the National Council for Child Rights Protection
- with public institutions that have an important technical role in the effectiveness of the systems and services dedicated to children (National Bureau of Statistic, Republican Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance, National Probation Inspectorate)
- with CSOs, for more effective advocacy
- with UN agencies, and
- with international and development organizations.

Impact

In most of the areas where UNICEF Moldova works, available evidence shows important progress in the realization of child rights in the country that has been supported by UNICEF.

UNICEF has contributed to the following important results at scale for children:

- the adoption of important legal provisions to strengthen the legal framework for child rights (Law 112/2020)
- the improved impact of child benefits and Social Aid on child poverty
- the improved gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education
- an increased proportion of vulnerable pregnant mothers using social protection mechanisms
- the development of a cross-sectoral coordination mechanism in targeted districts for the provision of services to children with disabilities
- an increased percentage of adolescents who indicate that their views are taken seriously in decisions made at home, school and in their community (according to U-Report)
- increased access to youth-friendly health services, and
- increased availability of better services for children in contact and in conflict with the law.

More limited, but nonetheless positive results, have been achieved on improvements in legislation and legal practice concerning children in contact and in conflict with the law, and the percentage of caregivers who accept children with disabilities in regular pre-schools and schools.

In many sectors, however, social norms are still not favourable to child rights. This can be seen in the case of the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream education or the reintegration of young people in conflict with the law, where the attitudes of professionals and the wider public remain detrimental to systemic change. In addition, new risks to sustainability have been generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The differences between children and the needs of the most marginalized children have been considered in all CP activities to a large extent and they have been the main beneficiaries of many of the results presented above. However, three groups of vulnerable and marginalized children are less covered: Roma children (especially girls), homeless children, and children with severe disabilities.

The four most important ways in which UNICEF Moldova has contributed to the observed impact are:

- advocacy for policy development and changes in national strategies and the legal framework, based on evidence generated, specifically in the area of education, WASH, social and child protection
- technical assistance to key institutions for child rights and services
- support for capacity building through the training of duty bearers (in education, health, child protection and the judiciary), and
- engagement on partnerships and advocacy with civil society, UN agencies, international and development organization partners.

Evidence shows that UNICEF uses a combination of strategies in all cases to determine policy changes, institutional strengthening and improved services, and to generate results for children at scale.

Conclusions

The evaluation finds that UNICEF Moldova has successfully addressed the important and pressing needs of children in the country – particularly its vulnerable children – and has supported policy and institutional development for their benefit. This has been made possible by the use of data analysis and research on children's needs and the perseverance of advocacy activities to ensure that these needs are included in governmental priorities, despite political and institutional changes in the country.

Evidence-based advocacy is complemented by other strategies to improve policies and the realization of children's rights in Moldova. The most important complementary strategy is the CO's work with partners. Therefore, UNICEF's ability to leverage different partners' advantages and to play the role of convener is essential for the effectiveness of advocacy and for impact for children at scale through improved policies.

In terms of overall attention to equity and gender, UNICEF Moldova exhibits several good practices and practices in the area of health and youth empowerment and engagement that could be transferred to other COs. Moving towards a fully gender transformative approach, there is a need for a stronger focus on approaches to address persistent intersectionality or compounded discrimination and inequalities. There is, for example, a need to better address the intersections of gender and ethnicity and of gender and disability as factors in discrimination, as well as the gender dimension of justice for children.

As noted, UNICEF Moldova works well with a range of different partners to drive change for children and their families and use its comparative advantages to build and sustain effective partnership for children's rights and well-being.

UNICEF Moldova has made important contributions to positive changes in the life of children at scale in Moldova, implementing activities that have generated an impact through, as noted, advocacy for policy development and change, technical assistance to key institutions for child rights and services, and support for the training of the duty bearers key areas.

There is a general agreement among stakeholders that the results achieved by UNICEF's CP are sustainable, but that some risks to their sustainability have been generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lessons learned

The adoption of strategic and legal provisions is key for change and, in some areas, advocacy for improved legal frameworks is an indispensable step for further impact in the lives of children. However, evidence-based advocacy alone cannot generate change for children at scale directly, because most of the existing bottlenecks are not legal, but institutional and related to practice and social norms. Another important lesson learned is that sector-specific bottlenecks limit impact at national scale for all vulnerable children in the country. For example, UNICEF's impact in the field of health has been hindered by systemic problems within the healthcare system itself, from the emigration of doctors to informal payments.

Another lesson learned is the importance of ensuring budgeting mechanisms that are regulated at national level and financial allocations for all policies proposed or reformed. The usual approach is advocacy for a policy measure, which is often piloted or modelled at local level in selected communities before scaling-up nationally. The results from pilot or modelling activities are used to advocate for scaling up. However, the lack of a sufficient budget can be one cause of limited capacity at national and local level for policy implementation and is often related to political will and technical budgetary planning mechanisms. These latter mechanisms need to be addressed from the beginning, as happened successfully in the case of youth-friendly health services.

In the context of multiple central government reforms, the sub-national decision-making arena is a critical point of change. In this context, local public authorities need additional information on the benefits of decentralization, as well as interventions to increase their capacity to provide inclusive and quality services for children.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. To ensure impact, scaling-up and sustainability of pilot and modeling projects, for current and future projects implemented at local level (either pilot or modeling projects) a clear exit strategy needs to be developed. In the case of future projects, the exit strategy should be developed in the planning stage of the intervention in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. It is important to plan for scale up from the beginning. The exit strategy needs to be flexible and should be adapted if political and institutional changes require modifications of the plan for scaling-up. The strategies should include a thorough analysis of sector specific bottlenecks; a plan to address the bottlenecks related to institutional capacity and resources at national level and in all municipalities; a plan to address the budgeting issues from the beginning of each model to ensure long-term financing, ideally public financing; communication activities to gain support from partners on models, including other UN agencies, international organisations/development partners and civil society to enhance the impact of advocacy and to contribute to the larger task of supporting institutional strengthening at local level, but at national scale; documenting and evaluating the pilot or monitored projects, as well as advocacy strategies to use and present the collected evidence and conclusions to the government.

Recommendation 2. Gender should be mainstreamed into all sectors of UNICEF's work, ensuring that gender-transformative actions are planned and implemented. The Country Office should fully consider the recommendations from the Gender Programmatic Review conducted in 2021. Specific issues to be taken into account include: the participation in education (beyond primary education) of Roma girls; the risk of child marriage in traditional communities (especially Roma communities, but not exclusively); protecting and addressing the specific needs of girls and young women victims of crime, including girls and young women who are victims of violence, exploitation and trafficking.

Recommendation 3. The future CP should balance its humanitarian work and policy development objectives addressing the long-term effects of COVID-19 pandemic on children. The CO's emergency preparedness should be strengthened and embedded in the Country Programme. On the other hand, policies advocated in response to the new needs should take into account good practices and lessons learned in other countries or at local level. In addition, the engagement of partners and the development of strategies to leverage resources for children affected by the changes generated by the pandemic should be integrated into the next Country Programme Document and future strategies for its implementation.

Recommendation 4. Finalize and adopt the advocacy and partnership strategy, articulating the strategic value of partnership for each group of organizations (UN agencies, the EU, other international organizations, civil society). Partnerships have proved instrumental in ensuring the success of the other strategies employed, and lessons learned from previous challenges show that the activities that have the greatest impact are implemented in partnership. Planning partnerships in a long-term and strategic way is, therefore, important to maintain UNICEF coherence and impact.

Recommendation 5. To address the needs of children with multiple vulnerabilities, advocacy and technical assistance is needed to strengthen integrated social responses and services. Cross-sectoral coordination would contribute to strengthened referrals and appropriate care for children and increase access to and the efficiency of social services. It would connect different sectors that need to work together to ensure children's access to basic and specialized services.

Recommendation 6. To address the limited impact of youth participation initiatives, as the level of youth participation in decision-making in Moldova is limited, **the UNICEF CO should develop initiatives to support the wide participation of children and young people in decision-making processes.** The initiatives regarding policies, programmes and services should, among other activities, include raising awareness among young people and the adults on the importance of youth participation in all spheres and sectors.

Recommendation 7. Continue and strengthen the evidence-based innovative and diverse approaches in Communication for Development and Behaviour Change (C4D and C4BC). This recommendation considers the importance of social norms as hindering the promotion of child rights in all communities and families. UNICEF's focus should include capacity building for partners to ensure a systematic approach that shifts from stand-alone donor-driven campaigns to evidence generation and social listening to inform C4D and C4BC strategies, interventions and messages.

Recommendation 8. Introduce new monitoring tools to keep a better track of the activities, especially advocacy and capacity building activities, and their outputs. This will help UNICEF to trace more clearly the change pathways from the activities to results for children and will support future impact evaluations. Conducting Process Tracing analysis for this evaluation proved challenging, given the need to analyse a large body of evidence about the way in which UNICEF activities led to results: changed legislation, increased institutional capacity etc. Documenting the path from research (its conclusions and recommendations), to government policy decisions, including by keeping records of advocacy meetings and events, commitments made and draft policy documents will contribute to more effective learning from experience in future evaluations, showing what activities and strategies are more effective in determining policy change. Improving the registration of institutional memory and tracing advocacy activities (events, meetings with decision and policy makers and partners, the implementation of communication campaigns) in connection with policy decisions, declarations on policies or institutional changes could also allow for a better understanding of how policy change is happening. Moreover, a consistent approach to trainings (for example using pre and post testing) and other capacity building activities targeting service providers, social workers or civil servants may help connecting the capacity building activities with observable institutional changes and will help UNICEF identify the best strategies and methods for capacity building.

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Table of acronyms

C4D	Communication for development
CCF	Children, Community and Family Moldova (Copil Comunitate Familie Moldova)
CEE CIS	Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States
CFS(S)	Child Friendly School (Standards)
CO	Country Office
CoE	Council of Europe
CPE	Country Programme Evaluation
CPD	Country Programme Document
CRC	Child Rights Convention
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CwD	Children with Disabilities
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDEI	Early Detection and Early Intervention
ELDS	Early Learning Development Standards
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GIZ	German Corporation for International Cooperation GmbH
IRP	Institute of Penal Reform
J4C	Justice for Children
LPA(s)	Local Public Authority (Authorities)
MCAH	Mother, Child and Adolescent Health Services
MCPE	Multi-Country Programme Evaluation
MECR	Ministry of Education, Culture and Research
MHLSP	Ministry of Health, Labour and Social protection
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
NBS	National Bureau of Statistic
NEET	Not in Employment, Education or Training (on Youth)
NHIC	National Health Insurance Company
NCPA	National Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse
NCCRP	National Council for Child Rights Protection
PFB	performance-based financing
PHC	primary health care
PAS	Psycho-pedagogical Assistance Service
RCPA	Republican Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SitAn	Situation Analysis of Children and Women
ToC	Theory of Change
UN	United Nations
UNDAF	United Nations Development Framework
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund

UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VAC	Violence Against Children
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation
YFHC	Youth Friendly Health Centres
YFHS	Youth Friendly Health Services
YK	Youth Klinik(s)

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings of the evaluation of the UNICEF Moldova Country Programme (CP) 2018-2022. The evaluation was commissioned by the Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) of UNICEF and is part of the Multi-Country Programme Evaluation (MCPE), covering country programmes evaluations in Bulgaria, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova and Ukraine and including a synthesis report. The evaluation was carried out 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 have been continued and contributed to UNICEF impact, taking into account UNICEF's global strategic plan 2018-2022.

The CP 2018-2022 had an initial budget of USD 4,57 million from regular resources and USD 12,93 million in other resources and aimed to reach all children and young people across the whole of Moldova through national level policy change and service improvements at all levels (national, provincial and district levels). The Country Programme is structured following two outcomes: (1) development of child-sensitive policies, systems and services, including child protection, justice for children, education, health and social protection and (2) promotion social change for child rights by working with duty bearers, care givers and children and adolescents to improve their awareness and to empower them.

This is a strategic evaluation that complements the sectoral evaluations and specialized studies that have been carried out by UNICEF and external experts during this period. The evaluation report is also drafted in order to complement the Situational Analysis (SitAn) carried out in 2021 in Moldova and is intended to inform, together with SitAn, the priorities for the next Country Programme of UNICEF Moldova and the decisions on the most effective strategies to be used for an impactful Country Programme. The evaluation assesses the relevance, coherence and impact achieved throughout implementation of the CP, contributing to accountability and drawing transferable lessons learned for the future and other UNICEF CO.

Many of UNICEF's partners were government ministries and agencies at national level, but a number of projects and programmes of UNICEF Country Office (CO) in Moldova also aimed at institutional strengthening at district level. The evaluation assesses the CP's collaboration not just with government structures but also with UN agencies and other development partners, as well as the civil society organisations (CSO) participating to CP implementation as implementing partners or joining efforts with UNICEF for advocacy.

Chapter 1 (the introduction) of this report 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 ethics issues. 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 organized by the evaluation criteria and with special focus on selected impact areas.

1.1. Brief description of the context and current situation

1.1.1. Geographic and demographic context

Moldova is a landlocked, low middle-income country in transition situated in Eastern Europe, bordered to the west by Romania and to the north, east and south by Ukraine. Moldova has a population of 2.6 million people (in 2021 according to the National Bureau of Statistic) and about 20% are children. According to the 2019 Light Situational Analysis (SitAn) the demography in the Republic of Moldova is characterized by reduced fertility rate, rather low life expectancy and intense outmigration. The population is rapidly decreasing, including a number of children. Migration from Moldova has been progressively increasing, with an estimated one third of the working-age population currently abroad. Due to this situation, many children are left behind by migrant parents and under the care of the extended family (often grandparents).

1.1.2. Poverty

The 2019 SitAn concluded that poverty rates, although decreasing, remain high, particularly affecting children and households with children, 24% of children living below the poverty line. Moreover, the situation is especially serious in rural areas. The analysis shows **“there is a lack of integration of laws and policies comprehensively addressing poverty and social exclusion in the country**, while the financial mechanisms to reach ambitious goals and targets set in policy framework are weak and insufficient. **Budget allocations for social-assistance are mostly not child- or poverty-focused.”**⁵ In fact, the financial allocation for the social assistance programmes is insufficient, and social assistance programmes are poorly targeted. As a result, social assistance programmes are less effective and a portion of the poor households with children in excluded

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.

SitAn 2019 underlines that there is a lack of integration of laws and policies comprehensively addressing the poverty and social exclusion in the country, while the financial mechanisms to reach ambitious goals and targets set in policy framework are weak and insufficient. Budget allocations for social-assistance are mostly not a child- or poverty-focused. Cash-based social benefits are low and fragmented and largely ineffective in preventing, reducing and eliminating economic and social vulnerabilities and are lacking direct link to specific children focused outcomes, while their equity is not ensured. Current offer of social services at the local level significantly fails to meet the needs and to respond effectively to the vulnerabilities among children, while also faced with challenges of the low availability of local specialists and high turnover of staff.

Moldova faced important setbacks due to the COVID-19 crisis this year, and recent progress to reduce poverty has been reversed. On average, Moldovan households with children have lost 15 per cent of their income due to the pandemic, putting more pressure on an already high child poverty rate at 24 per cent. ⁶ The government took several measures to offset the negative impact of COVID-19. Personal protective equipment (PPE) was purchased to support front-line staff, especially in health centres. Social protection legislation was amended to support people (including returning migrants) who had no work record. To strengthen financial support to families with children, the income eligibility threshold was increased, and the adult equivalency formula adjusted. This support, although necessary, appeared to be largely insufficient.⁷

1.1.3. Political and administrative context

The Republic of Moldova has faced a long-lasting political crisis involving several governments within the last three years as well as large public protests. According to UNICEF Country Office assessment in its annual reports, this political situation affected the development and implementation of various policies and strategies, including the National Development Strategy “Moldova 2030”. One of the effects of political instability is the instability of the key institutions for children wellbeing. Ministries that have been key stakeholders for UNICEF have undergone several reorganizations over the last three years. Moreover, the fragmented territorial-administrative structure and the incomplete decentralization process continue to result in the very low capacity of local governments to invest in social development and, consequently, to ensure adequate provision of social services at the local level.

There is high deficiency and high turnaround of professionals in all social sectors, devaluing invested resources. This is related with the intense outmigration and brain drain affecting all sectors of activity

⁵ Light Situation Analysis addressing social inclusion of vulnerable groups, violence against children and youth empowerment and participation, 2019.

⁶ UNICEF Moldova Annual Report 2020

⁷ Ibid.

in Moldova. Moreover, the emigration generated over 18,000 children left behind by both or the only migrant parent.

The breakaway region of Transnistria, with about half of million inhabitants, remains out of control of Moldovan constitutional authorities.⁸ UN support is provided to people, including children in Transnistria, within the framework of a programme agreed upon by de facto authorities in Tiraspol, and UNICEF participate to the UN programme. However, data about the vulnerable children in the region are not available or not trustworthy and UNICEF capacity to implement its entire programme is limited.

Increasingly ageing society, coupled with intense outmigration and brain drain associated with that, is creating pressures on the public finance system, particularly pension and health, negatively affecting the competitiveness of the country. There are wide rural-urban inequalities affecting all aspects of life and access to services.⁹

1.1.4. Children, youth and families

A large number of vulnerable children is at risk in Moldova because of child poverty, the poor quality of education and healthcare services and limited effectiveness or absence of cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation mechanisms.

Some 20,000 children were separated from their family in 2018 alone. 90% of these children are children left behind by both or the only migrant parent. While the number of institutionalized children decreased six-fold over the past decade, a quarter of those still in institutions are children with disabilities.¹⁰

On the other hand, results of PISA tests in 2018 show that the formal education system in Moldova does not fully provide the skills that young people need to transition to gainful adulthood. PISA tests show that about 50% of students in (lower and upper) secondary school do not meet a minimum proficiency level in literacy and math. Moreover, youth unemployment (15-24 years old) and youth inactivity is affecting about 60 per cent of young people, generating a very large number of young NEET, whereas young women are the largest cohort in this category.¹¹ In this context, Moldova lacks an effective and operative coordination mechanism for youth legislation, policies and interventions across different sectors and organizations, while the share of youth expenditures on all levels is largely insignificant.

However, inclusive education is considered the forefront of UNICEF Moldova Country Programme. Several studies and evaluations showed considerable progresses in the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the main education system and provided recommendations regarding system strengthening and change of social norms towards enrolment of children with disabilities and those with special educational needs in regular schools.¹²

In 2020, because of the COVID-19 pandemic, around 434,000 students in all academic institutions and at all levels were asked to stay at home, and schools were mandated to provide distance learning. This remote learning proved difficult for about 16,000 students (4.8 per cent of the total), and 3,000 teachers (10.6 per cent of the total) did not have access to ICT technology (a laptop or tablet and access to the internet). This made it impossible to organise lessons, deliver and receive instruction, monitor or assess learning. The most affected families with school children have been those living in areas with lower internet connectivity rates (74.5 per cent in rural areas versus 86.1 per cent in urban areas), families with lower levels of education (a 64.7 per cent internet connection rate among people with incomplete secondary education, compared with 94 per cent among those with higher education), and low-income households (56.7 per cent internet connectivity among those with a monthly income under 3,000 lei,

8 UNICEF/UNICEF Moldova, 2019. Light Situation Analysis addressing social inclusion of vulnerable groups, violence against children and youth empowerment and participation. Update of the situation of children and youth in the Republic of Moldova.

9 Ibid.

10 UNICEF Moldova Annual Report 2019.

11 Ibid.

12 UNICEF, *Incluziunea copiilor cu dizabilități în sistemul de învățământ studiu sociologic*, Studiu realizat în cadrul proiectului „Promotion of inclusive education at local level through changing attitudes towards children with disabilities” implementat de IDIS Viitorul în parteneriat cu UNICEF Moldova, 2018; UNICEF, *Knowledge, attitudes and practices in early childhood development and care*, 2018; UNICEF, 2019, Joint evaluation of the implementation of the Programme for development of inclusive education 2011 - 2020, including application of child-friendly school's standards

versus 96.5 per cent in households with over 6,000 lei). School closures were especially harmful for children with special educational needs. More than 7,000 of these children and 1,400 children with disabilities were put at a higher risk of being excluded from the education process because they require – in addition to trained teachers and support staff and adapted teaching methods – access to special assistive technologies and devices, and continued access to rehabilitation programmes that have also been in short supply during the pandemic.¹³

Violence against children and youth, including sexual abuse and severe physical violence, is a significant issue that has been aggravated by the pandemic. The 2019 Violence Against Children and Youth Survey indicates that children in the Republic of Moldova suffer substantial rates of sexual, physical and emotional violence. Some 14 per cent of girls and 5 per cent of boys in the survey were subjected to sexual violence before the age of 18 years, and 26 per cent of girls and 35 per cent of boys before the same age were subjected to physical violence. Only 4 per cent of girls and 1 per cent of boys received the necessary services as victims of sexual violence.¹⁴

Several legislative amendments have been adopted in 2018, 2019 and 2020 including a Decree on Regional Services for Children Victims and Witnesses of Crimes, while also specific legislation on cyber protection of children was enacted in order to improve children safety and the respect of child rights in the judiciary.¹⁵

There were 1,304 child survivors of crimes in 2019, an increase of 16.4 per cent in comparison with 2014. Sexual crimes made victims of 363 children (27.8 per cent of the crimes), including 110 victims of rape. The reported sexual offences involving children increased steadily, from 184 in 2014 to 309 in 2019 (a 67.9 per cent increase).¹⁶ This is rather good news, showing an increased awareness regarding crimes against children, but the large number of children victims of crimes needs special attention at all levels.

1.1.5. The youth sector

The youth sector and youth work are underappreciated and misunderstood by the influential actors outside the sector and especially at local level. Local participatory structures (youth councils, pupils' councils, youth CSOs or youth wings of political parties) are not present or accessible in all districts or to most vulnerable adolescents and have limited resources. The framework for the provision of youth services is underdeveloped, and capacities for provision of youth services are limited, while accreditation and efficiency mechanisms are currently lacking. Adolescent's parent's parental abilities are limited. There is low awareness of existing youth services and opportunities.¹⁷

1.2. Country Programme components and goals

The planned impact of UNICEF Moldova Country programme is that all children in Moldova, especially the most vulnerable, enjoy their rights to education, health, adequate standard of living and participation within a child friendly legal environment, and are protected from abandonment, neglect, discrimination, exploitation and violence.

The programme result structure consists of two outcomes supported by nine outputs. The two outcomes are linked and mutually reinforcing. They comprehensively address system strengthening and changes in social norms and behaviours. Achieving simultaneous results under the two outcomes is a prerequisite for substantially addressing key child deprivations and the realisation of child rights.

Outcome 1 focusses on achieving Equitable Child-Sensitive Systems and Services through five Outputs: preventing family separation, discrimination and violence against children (Output 1); instituting procedures and practices in the justice system that protect and reintegrate children in contact with the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ UNICEF Moldova Annual Reports 2018, 2019, 2020.

¹⁶ UNICEF Moldova Annual Report 2020

¹⁷ UNICEF Moldova, 2019. Light Situation Analysis, op. cit.

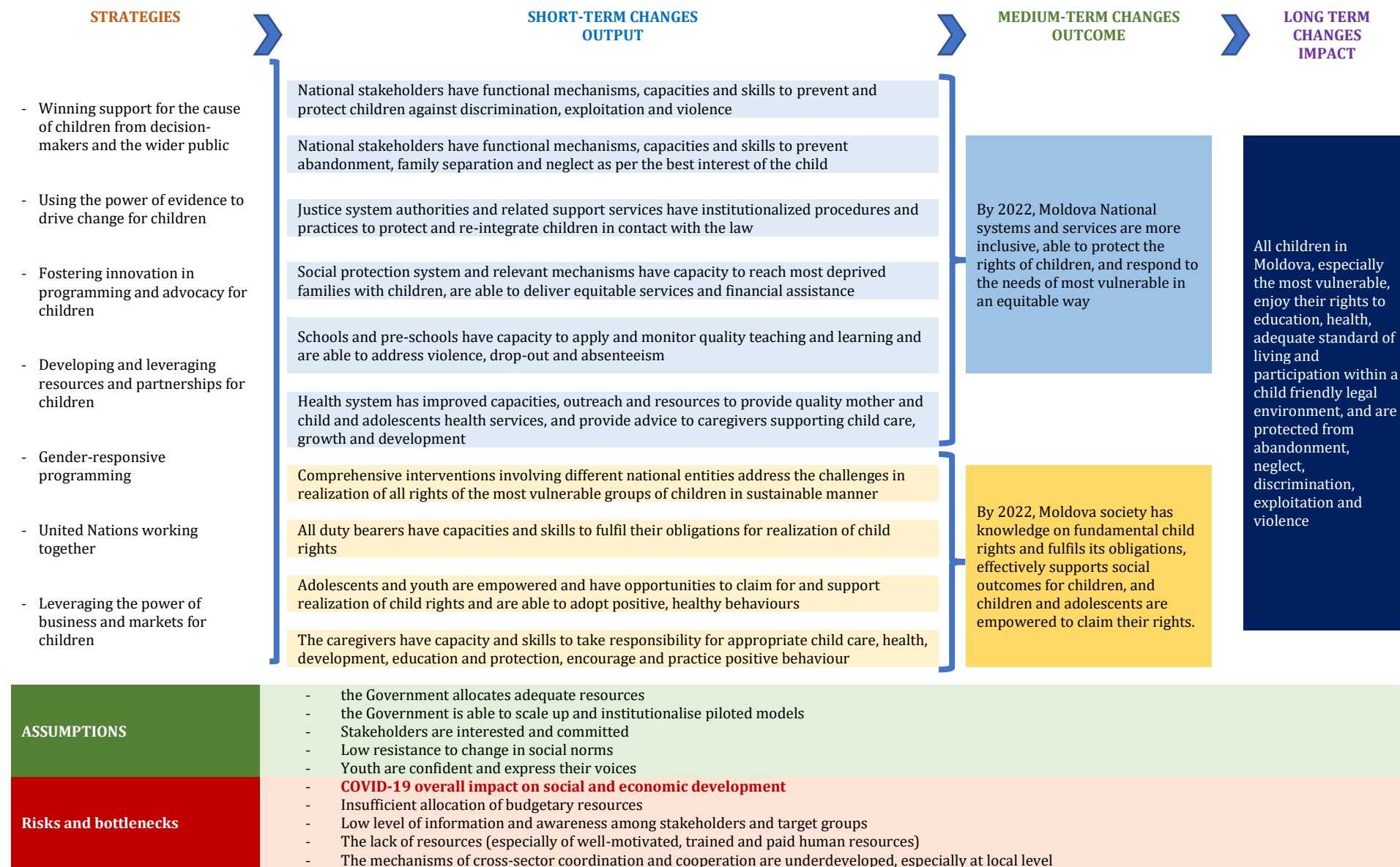
law (Output 2); making schools and pre-schools ready to enrol most vulnerable children, and building their capacity to apply and monitor quality teaching and learning, and address violence, drop-out and absenteeism (Output 3); quality mother, child and adolescent health services, ensuring child survival, growth and development (Output 4); and an equitable social protection system seeking to reach most deprived families with children and alleviate child poverty (Output 5).

Outcome 2 focusses on Social Change for Child Rights through four outputs aiming at improved capacities and skills of duty-bearers, enabling them to perform their obligations in the realisation of child rights (Output 6); caregivers' engagement in the realisation of child rights, seeking to improve their capacity and skills to take responsibility for appropriate child care, health, development, education and protection, including encouraging and practicing positive behaviour (Output 7); improved adolescent' awareness and participation, including in supporting the realisation of child rights (Output 8); and social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups of children¹⁸ seeking concerted sustainable action by all systems and duty bearers in addressing the realisation of all rights of the child (Output 9).

Moreover, the Country Programme included in 2020 two outputs ((a) COVID-19 limit h2h transmission and (b) protect individuals from exposure, COVID-19 prevent and address secondary impact of the outbreak, under Outcome 1 – Equitable child sensitive systems and services) and implemented activities in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring a swift and sensitive answer to the emerging and urgent needs of children.

¹⁸ Disability, Roma, children left behind, children from poor families, the poorest areas of country

Figure 1. Theory of Change of UNICEF Moldova Country Programme



1.3. The Objectives, Purpose and Scope of the evaluation

The objective of the Multi-Country programme Evaluation (MCPE) is to conduct a formative multi-country evaluation serving both accountability and learning purposes. This **MCPE aims to look back and assess the relevance, coherence and impact achieved throughout the implementation of the country programmes (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 has already commenced or will commence soon in all four countries.

In line with the ToR, 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, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine.
- To 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.
- To draw lessons from the previous CPD implementation in order to make the best use of UNICEF's change strategies in each country covered by the evaluation and in the region as a whole, while considering current circumstances.

In the framework of the MCPE, the present report focuses on the CP of UNICEF in Moldova. The evaluation is built on evidence collected from interventions implemented in the country, especially in the last 3 years and a half (under the current CPD), but also, to a more limited extent, in the years before. Specific activities carried out to set aside the negative consequences of the current pandemic crisis were taken into account to the extent they are part of the results chains in areas selected.

Therefore, the scope of this Country Programme Evaluation is the following:¹⁹

- Temporal scope: 2018-June 2021, meaning it covers the current Country Programme (2018-2022) to date. However, when relevant to the observed impact, the temporal scope of the evaluation is extended to the previous years and the previous CPD.
- Geographical scope: All areas in Moldova where UNICEF works, even in cases where the initiatives have started as pilots, because they are implemented with the intention to scale-nationally
- Portfolio scope: All of the portfolio components, cross-cutting issues such as gender, and inter-sectoral support involving gender and communication.
- Organizational scope: The CO and wider provision of technical support and oversight from UNICEF's Europe and Central Asia Regional Office, when relevant, UNICEF's headquarters.
- Excluded: The evaluation will not provide a detailed assessment of all CP components. However, in order to provide lessons learned and UNICEF practices and strategies in achieving impact for children at scale, a more in-depth impact assessment has been undertaken for three selected areas: (a) inclusive education, (b) justice for children and (c) youth engagement, focusing on youth friendly health services.

The primary users of this Country Programme evaluation are intended to be the UNICEF CO and ECARO. Secondary users of the evaluation are the Government of the Republic of Moldova, UN agencies and development partners present in Moldova. The evaluation report aims to build on the agreements made between them and to assist prioritization and establishing strategies for the future, as the parties move together into the next planning and programme cycle.

¹⁹ According to the ToR.

2. Methodology

2.1. Evaluation framework: criteria and questions

The evaluation focusses on the CPD and its Theory of Change (ToC). The Evaluation Matrix was developed (Annex 4) during the Inception Phase, as the core analytical framework against which data was gathered and analysed. 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 done at 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 ToR provided the opportunity to each CO to add up to two questions, no additional evaluation questions were proposed by the COs during the Inception Phase.

The evaluation matrix is built on an overall approach linking evaluation criteria and level. In order to provide conclusions and lessons learned on UNICEF practices and strategies in achieving impact for children at scale, a more in-depth impact assessment has been undertaken for three selected areas: inclusive education; justice for children; youth engagement, focusing on youth friendly health services. The assessments at area level will contribute to findings and conclusions as examples (case studies) of results-at-scale achieved (or not/less than expected). The selected areas have been selected based on the initial analysis of the evaluation team and in consultation with the CO. From one perspective, the evaluation questions related to how UNICEF contributed to change for children at scale can be best answered using specific theory-based impact evaluation methods, as described below. But these methods are best applied to selected case, rather than to very complex and heterogenous programmes. On the other hand, the areas have been selected to represent different types of results achieved by UNICEF, with different levels of change for children at scale generated by UNICEF to be analysed.

The evaluation utilized a **formative approach** to the evaluation to look back and assess the relevance, coherence and impact achieved throughout implementation of the Country Programme in the country, to identify good practices, and draw lessons and forward-looking recommendations that can inform the 2023-20227 CP planning process, which will commence during the last quarter of 2021.

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

2.2. Data collection and analysis methods

The team engaged with UNICEF ECARO, UNICEF Moldova, 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 7); (b) key stakeholder interviews, and a survey 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. Primary data was collected from a variety of stakeholders, including government officials, UNICEF staff, civil society organizations and development partners (see the list of interviewed stakeholders in Annex 5). In total 31 individual

interviews were conducted remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions. The interviews have been conducted by the international and national consultants, working in pairs or individually. The interviews were guided by checklists to support consistency of data collection across the team and varied stakeholders. But for each interview the questions have been tailored as appropriate to valorise best the position and knowledge of the interviewee. In line with the ethical consideration presented below the evaluation team ensures the confidentiality of the interviewees, without connecting the evidence and opinions expressed during meetings with the identity of the stakeholder. The positive and open approach of almost all the respondents was quite striking and much appreciated.

The list of key informants invited to interviews was agreed with the ECARO and CO at the end of the inception stage to ensure that the most important stakeholders are involved in the evaluation process. The aim of the sampling strategy was to cover the country programme in a general manner and the three selected impact areas mentioned above and to include different types of key informants (UNICEF staff, representatives of the government, representatives of UNICEF agencies and other development agencies, representatives of academia, services providers and implementing partners) in the list of interviewees for each area. Following from the programme design and focus of its activities, it was decided to spend the majority of the time with stakeholders at national level, and much less time in the regions, because so many of the planned results are at policy level.

As per the Terms of References 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 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 have been organised with CO staff. The workshops aimed at (1) familiarizing the evaluation team with the CP and identifying and selecting the impact areas to be assessed more in-depth, (2) presenting the inception report, discussing key issues to be addressed by the evaluation and planning data collection in cooperation with the CO and (3) presenting and validating findings and discussing preliminary recommendations.

The analysis method is presented in the evaluation matrix. A **theory-based approach** was applied for the Country Programme Evaluation (CPE), based on the explicit sectoral theories of change (ToCs) developed by the UNICEF Country Office in Moldova (and reconstructed by the evaluation team) for the CP and selected impact areas.²⁰ In Annex 2 we included a brief presentation of the methodology for Process Tracing, the theory-based evaluation method used for the selected areas. Another essential theory-based evaluation 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”. Therefore, the Realist Evaluation focuses on how, why and in what contexts an intervention leads to particular outcome.

Finally, other important evaluation approaches utilized for the evaluation are **stakeholders analysis** and **social network analysis** for evaluation of UNICEF Moldova CO coherence, added value and cooperation with stakeholders in order to enhance the results pursued; **systems-based evaluation principles**: holism, non-summativity, participation of stakeholders, equifinality and multifinality approaches were used through the evaluation, as UNICEF’s interventions are not evaluated in a vacuum, but in a complex context that have been taken into account.

²⁰ Theory-based approaches to evaluation use an explicit theory of change to draw conclusions about whether and how an intervention contributed to observed results. Theory-based approaches are a “logic of enquiry,” which complement and can be used in combination with most of the evaluation designs and data collection techniques. A theory of change explains how an intervention is expected to produce its results. The theory of change can be used to test, that is to evaluate – with evidence – the assumed causal chain of results with what is observed to have happened, checking each link and assumption in the process to verify the expected theory. For details see [Better Evaluation](https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/cee/tbae-aeat/tbae-aeat02-eng.asp) and Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat at: <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/cee/tbae-aeat/tbae-aeat02-eng.asp>

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 Country Office which provided feedback, comments and questions through the report drafting process. One meeting has been organised with the staff of the CO to validate and discuss recommendations in detail. A focus group for findings, conclusions and recommendations validation was organised with the Country Office after the first presentation of the evaluation report.

2.3. Limitations

The main challenge facing the evaluation arose from the spread and complexity of UNICEF's objectives and its strategies in Moldova during a period of socio-economic and political instability. Overall, the changes that UNICEF seeks to make are mostly long-term and countrywide and, in many cases, three and a half years (the period covered by the present CPE for the programme 2018-2022) is not a long enough period to allow for impact for children at scale. Moreover, the evaluated period overlapped with the COVID-19 pandemic (since March 2020) and a change of political regime (in 2020-2021). For this reason, the impact assessments also analysis UNICEF interventions started before the current Country Programme and continued within its framework.

However, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the sustainability of UNICEF results, as assessed in this report, is at risk and the evaluation team is not able to confidently or clearly predict to what extent the strategies of upstream policy work will ultimately benefit children in the country, or the benefits already achieved will last given the social and economic crisis generated by the pandemic.

In almost all areas, UNICEF was promoting further alignment of government policies with international best practices and standards. These kinds of changes are dependent on high-level decisions and it was not always possible for the evaluation team to meet state officials at this level to determine how they see UNICEF's contribution. Those officials that the evaluation team were able to meet were open, exceeding expectations.

Assessing UNICEF's contribution to results for children, at scale, was another difficult area. The programme has devoted considerable attention to the question of causality, in other words, who or what is responsible for changes at different levels of policymaking or implementation of new policy. These considerations were summarized in the ToC adopted for each main sector in the UNICEF programme; they helped UNICEF staff assess the possible pathways to successful implementation of quality services or child rights. However, in many cases not only UNICEF but also several other donors or development agencies have played a significant role in supporting the Government. Apportioning the amount of influence of each main player was not easy but the evaluation attempted to do this, as will be seen in examples of UNICEF's work provided in this report.

The evaluation team faced a few limitations at the design and evaluation phase of the Country Programme.

- Non-systematic documentation of the theory of change for some programme areas which was addressed by development, testing and validation of an indicative ToC to serve as framework for evaluation. However, in the case of Process Tracing, not all desirable evidence was available. For example, UNICEF claims contributing to increased capacity of teachers for inclusive education and increased capacity of medical staff for youth friendly services and trainings have been organised with UNICEF support both by public institutions and implementing partners form the civil society. However, we miss the evidence on the level of competences developed by participants due to these trainings.
- As the data collection phase was delivered in July and August 2021, during the holidays season, not all key informants were available or reachable at the time of evaluation, however a

sufficiently high number of interviews have been conducted to allow evaluators to respond to the question 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 as a whole. The evaluation team was not subject to any conflicts of interest and confirmed that they were able to carry out the evaluation without any undue interference. Along the data collection, analysis and reporting, in order to ensure the integrity of evaluation, special attention was paid by evaluators towards 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), particularly as concerns: the harms and benefits, informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, payment and compensation, conflict of interests.

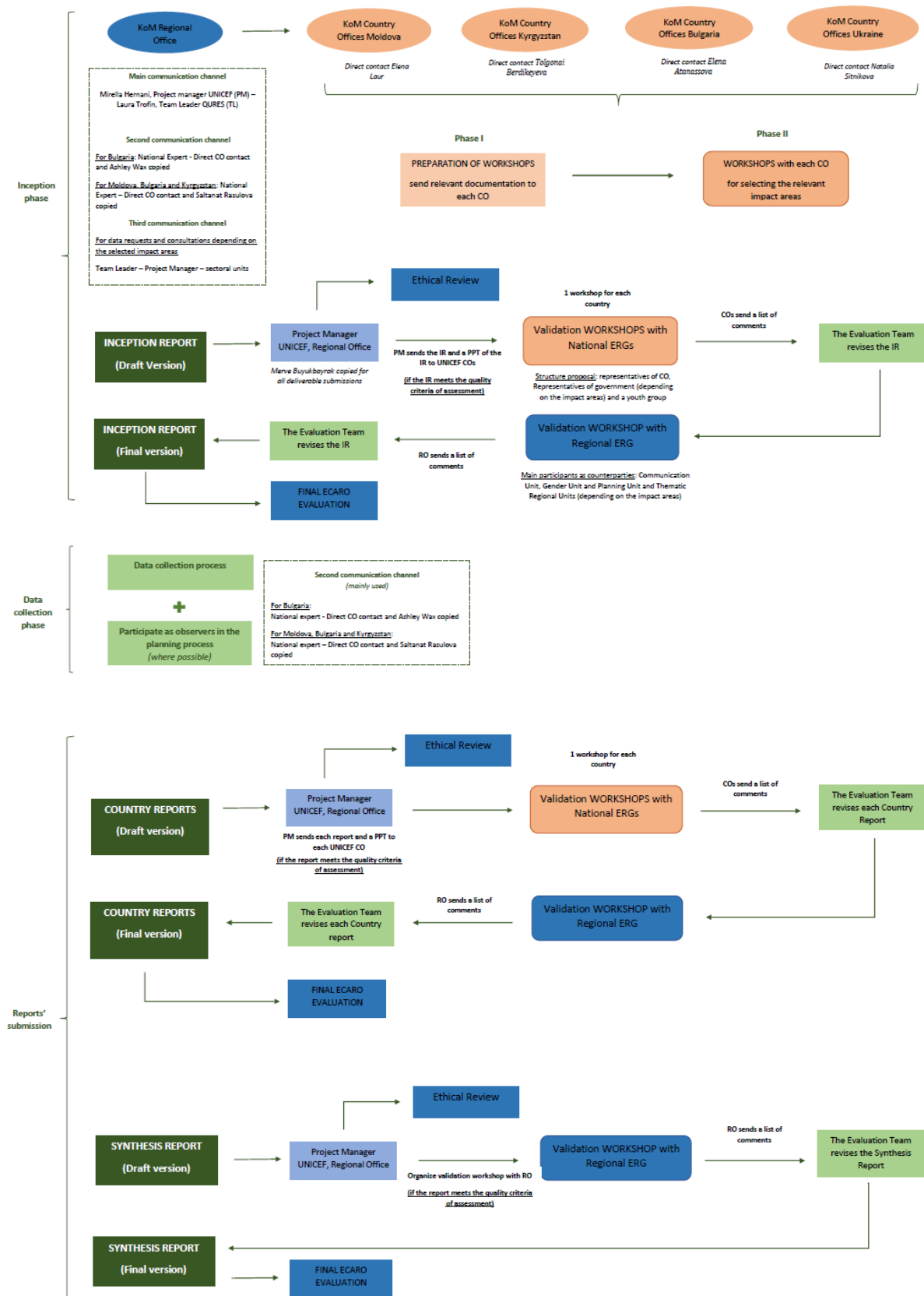
The main ethical issue that emerged during planning the evaluation was the need for anonymity and confidentiality for government officials interviewed. The evaluation team ensured the consent of key informants to be interviewed and give the experts conducting interviews gave formal assurance that comments made during interviews would be anonymous. Hence none of the statements mentioned in this report are attributable to individuals or particular government departments. On the other hand, as no children have been directly involved in the evaluation, no formal letter of consent on the collected data was needed.

2.5. Management of the evaluation

Alongside UNICEF evaluation managers at ECARO, the evaluation team maintained close contact with the CO representatives and staff and UNICEF ECA Regional Advisors. The interviews with ECARO advisors greatly helped the evaluation team develop its analysis.

The team presented its findings to an Evaluation Reference Group (ERG) consisting of the Government, UN agency, donor, and public agency and COs representatives. 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 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 UNICEF Country Programme is supported by extensive research and a good use of data. The updated information about all children in Moldova gives UNICEF its capacity to take into account the most vulnerable ones, to plan and implement activities for them. We have not identified groups of vulnerable children that are not considered in the program implementation.

UNICEF builds its programme on extensive evidence and lessons learned both from implementing previous interventions, as well as from needs assessments and studies conducted within the scope of the current CP. All stakeholders consulted through interviews at the data collection phase stated that: **there is a high level of adequacy of the CP and its implementation strategies to the changing needs of vulnerable children, adolescents, and their families.**

The Situation Analysis of Children (SitAn) in Moldova was finalised in 2017²¹ and it was supplemented by a range of other studies and evaluations. They took stock of the evolving needs of the children, with a special attention to the most vulnerable. **These studies and evaluations informed specific activities of the country office, especially its advocacy, during the implementation of the Country Programme.** The most important of these research documents are:

- *Feasibility Study on the opportunities and concerns related to accession by the Republic of Moldova to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure*, 2018;
- *Cash-Based Social Protection for Children in the Republic of Moldova*, 2018;
- *The Review of assessment and evaluation in education in the Republic of Moldova*, UNICEF Moldova, 2018;
- *The mid-term evaluation of the Education Development Strategy for 2014-2020 'Education 2020'*, 2018;
- *Bullying among adolescents from the Republic of Moldova*, 2019;
- *Review of assessment and evaluation in education in the Republic of Moldova*, 2019;
- *Comprehensive Assessment of the Education Sector in the Republic of Moldova*, 2019;
- *Joint evaluation of implementation of the Programme for Development of Inclusive Education 2011–2020, including application of child-friendly school's standards*, 2019;
- *Mid-term Evaluation of Implementation of the Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020 and its Action Plan for 2016-2020 in the Republic of Moldova*, 2019;
- *Light Situation Analysis addressing social inclusion of vulnerable groups, violence against children and youth empowerment and participation*, 2019;
- *Comprehensive Youth Sector Analysis*, 2020;
- *The study on the treatment of children in conflict with the law in Transnistria region, with focus on A.S. Makarenko" school for children in conflict with the law*, 2020;
- *Study on the Legal Framework and Special Hearing Practices of Children Victims or Witnesses of Crimes in the Republic of Moldova*, 2020;
- *The study on the profile of out-of-school children and adolescents*, 2020;
- *Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Remittances and Coping Mechanisms of Families with Children in Moldova*, 2020;
- *Report on the Evaluation of National Indicators on Children in Contact with the Law*, 2021.

The Country Programme document identified specific bottlenecks related to social norms that are effectively hindering the results and impact of the programme implementation. As a result,

²¹ Arends, Dennis; Ianachevici, Mariana; Nemerenco, Ala; Turcan, Arina, "Children in the Republic of Moldova: Situation Analysis 2016", UNICEF, Chisinau, 2017.

the programme dedicated Outcome 2 to changing attitudes and behaviours, not only the system and allocated more resources (financial, human resources, energy overall) to communication for development and changing behaviours, working with parents and with young people. Research concerning social norms in different sectors has been also conducted, including:

- *Knowledge, attitudes and practices in early childhood development and care*, 2018;
- *The Perceptions of General Population and Specialists on Children Offenders and Children Victims and Witnesses of Crimes – Providing quantitative and qualitative information to serve as baseline for the 2018-2022 Country Programme indicators*, 2018;
- *The Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in the Educational System – Sociological Study*, 2018.

The documentary evidence and interviews show that the generated evidence used by UNICEF Moldova to plan interventions and implementation strategies in order to address most of the important pressing needs of the children in the country, especially of the vulnerable children. UNICEF, thus, supported policy and institutional development and services provision for the benefit of these children. The programme of UNICEF Moldova and the advocacy activities addressed the needs of children victims of violence neglect and exploitation (especially in Chişinău and its metropolitan area, about one quarter of the Moldovan population), children with special educational needs and with disabilities, children in residential institutions, children in conflict with the law and in probation programmes, pregnant adolescents and young mothers, pregnant women and children with HIV/AIDS, most at risk adolescents and especially vulnerable adolescents (MARA and EVA), children from poor households.

UNICEF adapted its programme focus in implementation during 2020, when the focus was shifted to understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As showed in section 3.1.4, dedicated to the response to major changes and crisis, there is a large appreciation of how quickly and professionally UNICEF reacted to newly identified needs and requests for support from the key governmental partners in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

UNICEF integrated equity in all aspects of programming and implementation, including policy and advocacy. As already mentioned, the needs of the most vulnerable children have been addressed in order to narrow the equity gaps between children. Gender equality is integrated in programme planning and implementation in most of its components. Dedicated gender sensitive approaches are implemented in the fields of health and youth. However, complex intersectionality or compounded discrimination/inequalities are addressed but in a limited way. For example, the situation of Roma girls, with low rates of participation to secondary education and often discriminated, is directly addressed only in one project in a small number of municipalities.

The CP has been strongly focusing on the principles of equity, gender and human rights. A human rights-based approach has been applied to achieve sustainable progress in programme results with an emphasis on participation and non-discrimination principles. The equity principle implies understating and addressing the root causes of inequality, so that children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential without discrimination. The CP 2018-2022 focuses on realizing UNICEF's equity and gender equality agenda in the country complementing the efforts of the Government to provide equitable access of disadvantaged children to healthcare, education, social services and to justice.

Gender has been integrated into programming, and a number of good practices have been identified by this evaluation and are, also, put forward by the Gender Programmatic Review carried out in 2021. The SitAn 2017 and the light SitAn 2019 underline the persistence of gender inequalities in Moldova, hindering the development of the country and restricting the ability of disadvantaged girls and women to fully achieve their human capabilities. However, **the Country Programme did not formulate specific outputs related to equity and gender equality.** UNICEF Moldova undertook a gender analysis for each area of its work and some implementation activities are gender responsive.

UNICEF Moldova continued to strive for disaggregated data in its work with the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in order to enable adapted policies to for additional information on gender, age, geographical and other differences. In an effort to further strengthen the availability of gender and age disaggregated data on violence, exploitation and abuse of children, UNICEF advocated for amending the MHLSP Annual Statistical Report with following disaggregation on victims of violence available in 2019: place of residence, sex, age group and disability. The same type of advocacy has been conducted since 2021 with the Ministry of Justice in order to improve data (including gender disaggregated data) about children in conflict with the law.

The evidence from UNICEF reports and sectoral evaluations, as well as interviews, shows that UNICEF Moldova mainstreamed gender in areas such as:

- **Health:**
 - o capacity building activities have been implemented for medical staff (doctors and nurses) in working with pregnant women and other patients remotely and during COVID-19 pandemic.
 - o New Antenatal Care Standards and Neonatal Protocols were developed with UNICEF support and also validated and endorsed in the Transnistrian region.
 - o UNICEF organized jointly with MHLSP and WHO the Breastfeeding Caravan.
- **Youth:**
 - o In the case of Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHC) outreach activities have been conducted to address and attract boys, as in 2018 70% of beneficiaries in YFHC were girls.
 - o The campaign [Youth of Moldova for #GlobalGoals](#) supported by UNICEF included a focus on girls, youth with disabilities, young people from rural areas and the Roma population.

However, **integration** of gender equality is not visible in other area:

- **Child protection:** programmatic activities on preventing institutionalization and deinstitutionalization, and the support for official mechanisms for the protection of children from violence, abuse and neglect have not been purposely organised to address gender inequality.
- **Justice for children:** the development of the Barnahus-type centre for children victims and witnesses of crime and the educational probation programme for children and young people have not been purposely organised to address gender inequality.
- **Inclusive education:** activities have been focused on the integration of all children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and children with disabilities (CwD), and activities were not focused gender dimension, although access of Roma girls to education remains problematic in Moldova, according to the SitAn and other research data.
- **Social protection:** activities have been focused on increasing the protection for families with children and on raising the capacity of Local Public Authorities (LPAs), irrespective of gender.

In these areas UNICEF activities addressed the main vulnerabilities: violence, institutionalisation, the deviant behaviour and conflict with the law, the limited access to education or poverty and the interstition of these vulnerabilities with the gender dimension and inequalities generated by gender have been considered secondary. Interviews with UNICEF CO specialists in the mentioned areas and with implementing partners show that, in most cases, the expectation is that addressing the main vulnerabilities and sources of discrimination will directly contribute also to gender equality.

Overall gender equality is well included in the programme planning and implementation, but complex intersectionality or compounded discrimination/inequalities remain addressed to in a limited way. For example, gender stereotypes are stronger in rural areas and the limitations in accessing education and other services makes girls in rural areas particularly vulnerable²², there is no specific programme component or project targeting girls in rural areas. Roma girls are also particularly vulnerable according to studies, with limited clear data available on the gender-ethnicity intersection,

²² Light Situation Analysis addressing social inclusion of vulnerable groups, violence against children and youth empowerment and participation, 2019.

but there are very few initiatives of UNICEF Moldova targeting Roma girls with tailored measures, starting with better data collection.

3.1.3. 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?

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

UNICEF country programme implementation contributed to the implementation of national strategies addressing the needs of the vulnerable children in Moldova. Moreover, during the programme implementation, UNICEF actively participated to the development of new policy strategic documents aiming at improving the situation of all children in the country, including the most vulnerable ones. Using the power of evidence about the most vulnerable children and advocating for evidence-based policies, UNICEF contributed to relevant national priorities for children rights and wellbeing. In this way, UNICEF ensured its relevance to both changes in national needs and rights of the beneficiaries especially of the most vulnerable and in national priorities.

UNICEF Moldova carefully aligned the Country Programme 2018-2022 with national strategic documents and with the needs of the most vulnerable children. Therefore, the Country Programme is consistent with the country priorities enshrined in the National Development Strategy (NDS) “Moldova 2020” and sector strategic documents in the area of education, health, social protection and justice as well as cross-cutting national strategies and programmes on human rights, Roma inclusion, inclusive education and HIV/AIDS. Relevant national policy documents are specified in the Results Matrix of the CPC document.

All collected data show that during programme implementation UNICEF Moldova kept true to the planning (and only added additional planned outputs to respond to COVID-19 crisis), therefore the planned alignment with national priorities was followed by proper implementation. Interviewed stakeholders were not able to identify any area in the activities of UNICEF that have not been aligned with national policies. The constant communication and the mechanism of coordination between UNICEF and the Government of Republic of Moldova is considered an important guarantee for this alignment.

Table 1. Consistency between the national priorities and CPD 2018-2022

Strategic documents	Main national objectives and priorities	CPD 2018-2022 planned results	Vulnerable children targeted
National Development Strategy “Moldova 2020”	1. Aligning the education system to labour market needs in order to enhance labour productivity and increase employment in the economy.	Output 3: Quality, inclusive education within a violence free school environment	Children with SEN and CwD
	7. Increasing the quality and efficiency of justice and fighting corruption in order to ensure an equitable access to public goods for all citizens.	Output 2: Justice for Children	Children in contact and in conflict with the law
Justice Sector Reform Strategy 2011-2016	Objective 6: Ensure effective enforcement of human rights practices and legal policies		
National Strategy for Migration and Asylum 2011-2020	Objective 3. Combating and diminishing brain drain, emigration of youth, women, and protecting children left behind by migrating parents	Output 1: Preventing family separation, discrimination and violence against children	Children left behind by migrating parents
Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020	Objective 1: Ensuring the necessary conditions for raising and education of children in family environment	Output 6: Duty-bearers’ obligations for realization of child rights	Children in risk of separation from family
	Objective 2: Preventing and combating violence, neglect and exploitation of children, and promoting non-violent practices in raising and education of children	Output 7: Caregivers’ engagement in realization of child rights	
Action Plan to support Roma population in the Republic of Moldova for 2016-2020	Education: Promoting efficient and inclusive educational system based on principles of equity, non-discrimination and respect for diversity that will help integrate Roma people (focus on enrolment of Roma girls in preschool, school and pre-university; compulsory schooling for Roma children 6-18 and reduction of absenteeism and early school leaving).	Output 3: Quality, inclusive education within a violence free school environment	Roma children and young people
	Labour and social protection: improved employability of Roma population (linked with education, focus on youth)	Output 5: Equitable Social Protection System	
	Housing and Community development: increasing quality of life	Output 6: Duty-bearers’ obligations for realization of child rights Output 9: Social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups	
	Health: Improving health status of Roma population and insuring non-discriminatory access health services.	Output 4: Quality mother, child and adolescents’ health services	
	Participation of Roma in decision-making process and combating discrimination: Improving the participation of Roma.	Output 8: Adolescents’ awareness and participation	
Consolidated Strategy for Education Development 2011-2020	Priority direction 6.1 – Ensure Sustainable Development of Education System Priority direction 6.2 – Expand access to Quality Early Education Priority direction 6.3 – Create and develop Child Friendly Schools Network Priority direction 6.4 – Education and support to Children in Difficulty	Output 3: Quality, inclusive education within a violence free school environment	n/a – all children are targeted
	Programme for the Development of Inclusive Education 2011-2020		Children with SEN and CwD
Intersectoral strategy for the development of parenting skills and competencies for the years 2016-2022		Output 7: Caregivers’ engagement in realization of child rights	n/a – all children are targeted

National Health Policy 2007-2021 and National Strategy on Public Health 2014-2020	1. To increase life expectancy at birth and extend the healthy life time; 2. To ensure quality of life and closing of gaps between all social layers as far as healthcare is concerned; 3. To strengthen the cross-sector partnership as far as the strengthening of population health is concerned; 4. To increase people’s responsibility towards their own health.	Output 4: Quality mother, child and adolescent health services Output 6: Duty-bearers’ obligations for realization of child rights	n/a – all children are targeted
National Programme on sexual and reproductive health and rights 2017-2021			Adolescents, especially adolescent girls
National Programme on Food and Nutrition 2014-2020	2. Increase by 2020 of the exclusive breastfeeding rate (at 6 months to up to 60% and the median duration of breastfeeding up to 4 months. 3. By 2020, to create nutritional health promoting environment in 80% of educational institutions, 70% of hospitals, and 30% of working places. 4. By 2020, to reduce (compared to 2014): a) consumption of saturated fats and sugar by 3% and 5% accordingly; b) consumption of trans fatty acids to less than 1% as fraction of total energy consumption; c) Consumption of sodium/salt by 30% (less than 8g/day); d) zero increase in obesity prevalence among children and adults. 5. Reorient health system in order to address prevention and control on NCDs related to diet, under nutrition and micronutrient deficiencies through people-centred primary health care services oriented towards universal health coverage. 6. By 2020, to increase the level of knowledge related to healthy nutrition in general population up to 50%. 7. To strengthen surveillance, monitoring, evaluation and research in the field of nutritional health, nutritional status and influencing determinants. 8. By January 01, 2017, to achieve the level of urinary iodine excretion of 100-200 µg/l in children of ages 7-12 and 150-250 µg/l in pregnant women and to maintain it sustainable		n/a – all children are targeted
Strategy on health, development and wellbeing of children and adolescents 2015-2020	1. Ensuring a healthy start to life for all children. 2. Ensuring healthy growth and development of babies during infancy, early childhood and preschool age. 3. Ensuring healthy transition from childhood to adulthood for all adolescents.		n/a – all children are targeted
National Immunization Programme 2016-2020			n/a – all children are targeted
Programme on Health promotion 2016-2020			n/a – all children are targeted
National Programme on HIV prevention and control 2016-2020			Children with HIV

As most national strategies have been planned until 2020, in the year 2020 the development of new strategic documents (strategies and action plans) was initiated by the Government. Although a new regulation on the development of public policy documents (Government Decision 386/2020) delayed the process of developing and adopting these new strategic documents, **UNICEF remained close to the government supporting the drafting and consultation processes for:**

- the National Child Protection Programme 2021–2025 and its Action Plan 2021–2025;
- the new Education Sector Strategy 2021–2030 and medium-term Implementation Programme 2021–2025;
- the National Health Strategy 2020-2030, the National Immunization Programme 2021-2025;
- the National Programme on HIV/STI Prevention and Control 2021-2025,
- the National Programme on Non-Communicable Diseases 2021-2025.

Moreover, UNICEF **continued to support the National Bureau of Statistic (NBS)** to develop its capacity. As a result, the statistical publication “Children of Moldova” continued to be improved and issued every year and **new data and disaggregated information are available to inform decisions of UNICEF, the Government and all other stakeholders about children needs and the best approach to respond to these needs.**

Interviews with Government officials, UNICEF representatives and other stakeholders show that, with very few and limited exception, UNICEF Moldova aligned with country priorities and addressed key development issues. The identified exceptions, where UNICEF work is not fully aligned with national priorities and needs, in the areas where case studies have been conducted for this evaluation:

- in the area of justice for children, UNICEF focused its work on (i) the Barnahus-type centre(s) for children victims and witness of crimes, (ii) the educational probation programme and (iii) children with deviant behaviour under the age of criminal liability. However, less attention in UNICEF work has been given to children in penitentiaries (excepting the region of Transnistria) and to children released from the penitentiary who need complex reintegration services in a dedicated centre;
- in the area of youth empowerment and participation, UNICEF focused its work on participatory bodies (as the youth councils) and youth friendly health services, but less on the development of youth work and youth specific services in youth centres;
- in the area of child protection, UNICEF is less focused on homeless children.

Data collected from the cited studies and interviews show that **cases when/where UNICEF Moldova decided not to take action in response to the needs of children and adolescents and national priorities are areas where other development organisations/agencies are active.** For example:

- in the case of children released from the penitentiary, GIZ is supporting the National Probation Inspectorate;
- in the case of youth centre, UNFPA is supporting the MECR and LPAs in the development of youth work and specific services for youth people.

UNICEF Moldova also allocated resources (financial, human resources, information) to modelling and pilot projects implemented in partnership with Local Public Authorities (LPAs), with a clear intent to perfect its intervention and to work and advocate for rolling-out and scaling-up afterwards. This approach was in line with the decentralisation process in the country (and also proved useful in the context of the political instability, allowing for the continuation of projects despite multiple changes of the government). However, although these projects had good results at local level, scaling-up is found to be a slow and complex process. For example, there are a lot of strategic plans and local instruments developed in Chişinău and in the district (raion) of Sîngerei promoting cross-sectoral cooperation for inclusive education, social and child protection. These have been scaled-up to a limited extent until 2021, but UNICEF CO continues to advocate for them. Moreover, in 2020 a new project, supported by the European Union, will contribute to the development of two regions (Cahul and Ungheni). The project offers the possibility to further model the cross-sectoral cooperation for services dedicated to children and to continue the advocacy for scaling-up the proposed instruments.

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

UNICEF Moldova implemented an integrated approach to prioritizing the well-being of children during crisis and political change. UNICEF maintained, thus, its relevance in the context of the rapid change in needs, as in the case of new needs determined by COVID-19, and continued to the public policies aiming to generate impact for all children. UNICEF also adapted its implementation strategies in order to maintain its relevance and ensure its impact during a period of constant political change.

Two types of shifts influenced the context of the Country Programme implementation in Moldova:

- 1) The political instability with frequent changes of government and several elections influenced the dialogue with the most important central institutions and represented an important bottleneck for advocacy activities and work for policy development, with a risk of abandonment of the main priorities promoted/supported by UNICEF.
- 2) The COVID-19 pandemic generated a significant social and economic negative impact, especially for the most vulnerable children and important challenges for the key respondent institutions.

Concerning the response to the political instability, analysed documents and interviews show two main elements of this contextual factor for UNICEF work:

- Officially, the priorities of the Government of the Republic of Moldova, although the leadership changed several times, were not changed in relation to the rights of the children and the dialogue and cooperation between the Government and UNICEF remained opened.
- Changes in the leadership of the government and, in some case, the reorganisation of Ministries, delayed the results of all advocacy efforts by UNICEF, as they naturally generate a period of adjustment for the new decision makers, period when important policy decisions cannot be made.

UNICEF responded to the political instability using four different and complementary approaches:

- **Perseverance with the advocacy work**, as new leadership in the Government and Ministries generally meant countless meetings and other activities in order to inform new decision makers about UNICEF approach and projects and to gain their support.
- **The intensification of the work with Local public Authorities (LPAs)**, with two purposes: (a) to generate results of modelling projects at local level to be easy to communicate, convincing and readily used in the advocacy work with any new policy maker at central level and (b) to test approaches to empower LPAs to play a more important and autonomous role in the realization of child rights, as decentralisations continued to represent an objective for most of the governments.
- **The intensification of the communication activities, especially targeting young people**, promoting social mobilisation for child rights through strengthened engagement with adolescents and youth in addressing harmful practices and beliefs and promoting key human rights values. This is a set of activities that is considered helpful also in keeping governmental priorities in lines with these values.
- **Close work with important institutions less affected by political changes**, because they play mainly a technical role in the system. Although the leadership of these institutions may change often in the context of political instability, their work is less affected by the changes and supporting them has important results in reaching objectives related to capacity building within the systems and services for children. Among the institutions that benefited of UNICEF support and continued to contribute to system strengthening are: the National Bureau of Statistic (NBS), the Republican Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance (RCAP), the National Probation Inspectorate.

Concerning the response to COVID-19, UNICEF Moldova mobilised fast to support the Government to ensure basic safety to front-line workers. UNICEF utilised different opportunities to ensure the largest possible coverage of its support:

- **Using its global supply networks with the support of the UNICEF Supply Division**, supported the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for front-line workers and the capacity-building (training) of service providers in infection prevention and control and communication and community engagement.
- **Through local procurement**, additional PPE (coveralls, gowns and thermal scanners) was procured for border police staff.
- **As part of the EU4Moldova programme**, additional PPE, purchased from EU funds, were provided to the primary healthcare centres in Ungheni and Cahul districts, as part of the Solidarity for Health initiative.
- WASH supplies have been provided to 2,600 schools and kindergartens for the first 3 months of the 2020-2021 school year, as well as to 41 youth-friendly health centres nationwide, providing primary health-care services for at-risk adolescents and youth; 12 maternity hospitals providing perinatal care services to mothers and new-borns; the Municipal Paediatric Hospital for Contagious Diseases; 12 residential schools and institutions for children, including those with disabilities; and 225 vulnerable families benefiting from early-intervention services for young children with developmental delays and disabilities **with USAID financial support**.

Although the COVID-19 outbreak demanded a change in strategy from advocacy to services and equipment provision, UNICEF continued its advocacy and capacity building activities. These activities remained important in order to ensure an effective and sustainable response from the key respondent institutions.

UNICEF Moldova mobilised fast to better understand the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on children and several studies have been conducted in 2020, including a study on the impact of COVID-19 on Remittances and Coping Mechanisms of Families with Children in Moldova and a study on the profile of out-of-school children and adolescents as the gross enrolment ratio decreased by one percentage point in primary and three-quarters of a percentage point in lower secondary education.

Specific technical assistance and capacity building activities have been also implemented:

- In the field of child protection: UNICEF provided technical assistance to the MHLSP to develop a technical manual for working with children during the pandemic, for use by local authorities, service providers, individual specialists and caregivers and supported the online training for 10,474 managerial and didactical staff (81.4%) on positive parenting for early childhood development (ECD) during the pandemic and recovery period. Moreover, the children helpline was intensively promoted in order to address the risks of VAC in the pandemic.
- In the field of education: UNICEF supported MECR with a methodology for organizing education during quarantine, special regulations for the 2020–2021 school year (returning to school regulations), and students' and parents' guides on safe behaviour during COVID-19. This methodological support was backed up with online training of 8,351 managerial and teaching staff in general and boarding schools, and 12,945 preschool managerial and didactical staff plus 18,650 non-didactical staff.
- In the fields of health, immunization and ECD, after the lockdown, UNICEF supported MHLSP to:
 - o catch up with routine vaccination through a series of **capacity-building activities for family doctors and nurses on restarting routine vaccination and assuring safety in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and through communication activities** targeting caregivers and the general population;
 - o continue to **supervise child development and growth and make the early detection of developmental delays** in the context of COVID-19, ensuring the safety of families and health providers through the training of 300 family doctors and nurses.
 - o based on the results of the COVID-19 vaccine introduction readiness assessment, a national vaccination plan against COVID 19 was developed by national stakeholders with the joint technical support of WHO and UNICEF. In this context, a [live stream](#) on the

importance of vaccination with the participation of a paediatrician and an epidemiologist reached more than 14,500 people.

UNICEF also supported **public awareness campaigns** in the context of the pandemic. More specifically, three campaigns were implemented jointly with the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, WHO and the ministry of health: Stay Home, Be Safe and Take Care. Leaflets, posters, stickers, billboards, public service announcements and guidelines for various target audiences were produced at every stage of the pandemic's evolution, as well as two songs for children and young people. One of the songs went viral, reaching over **3.7 million people**.

An unexpected contribution of UNICEF for the response to the social and economic challenges generated by the pandemic came for the implementation of one of the recommendations from 2019 simulation exercise – to increase the inclusion of children from 0.5 to 0.75 in the calculation of Social Aid (Ajutor Social) payments to households with children. The recommendation was followed by the MHLSP as a mitigation measure to COVID-19 and data show that households receiving this aid are coping slightly better to the crisis compared to non-beneficiaries.²³

Therefore, answering the challenges of COVID-19 and its effects, UNICEF Moldova mobilised fast to support the Government to ensure basic safety to front-line workers. In line with the needs that have been identified through the diagnostic activities²⁴, UNICEF Moldova has adapted its interventions in: a) education, by facilitating online learning through development of remote learning platforms and their content, purchase and distribute IT equipment for families that did not have access to the online learning system and for families with children with disabilities, b) in health, by conducting youth-friendly activities within WASH area and providing support and hygiene supplies for families with children with disabilities and for women victims of domestic violence²⁵. Moreover, although the COVID-19 outbreak demanded a change in strategy from advocacy to services and equipment provision, **UNICEF continued its advocacy and capacity building activities**, in order to ensure an effective and sustainable response from the key respondent institutions.

According to the Real-Time Assessment of UNICEF's ongoing Response to COVID19 in Europe and Central Asia, further work is needed in the following areas: support for Roma children and their families in education and health areas, skill-building for the personal working in the sector of mental health and dealing with post-Covid19 anxiety and stress and further logistic support for vulnerable children who do not have access to the online learning system.

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 UNSDCF and SDGs in any given country?

UNICEF's programme interventions in Moldova are in direct alignment with UNICEF's regional and global priorities, including the UNICEF Strategic Plan (2018-2021), the Global SDG indicators and the UNSDCF for Moldova.

UNICEF Moldova Country Programme has been prepared and implemented in line with the UNICEF's global and regional strategies, as well as SDGs and the partnership framework for SDGs for Moldova.

The country Programme pays special attention to the Goal Area 3 – Every Child Protected from Violence and Exploitation and Goal Area 4 – Equity: Every Child Has a Fair Chance in Life, corresponding to the

²³ UNICEF, Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Remittances and Coping Mechanisms of Families with Children in Moldova, 2020.

²⁴ Assessment of impact of Covid19 on students learning, mapping social service workforce responding to the Covid19 emergency, assessment of socioeconomic impact on families with children, assessment of impact on remittances and coping mechanisms of families with children in Moldova, behavior tracking analyses based on the data gathered through U-report platform

²⁵ UNICEF, Real-Time Assessment of UNICEF's ongoing Response to COVID19 in Europe and Central Asia, 2021, p.34

regional priority on child protection. In relation to these goal areas, several outcomes are planned. On the other hand, numerous activities have been implemented in line with Goal Area 1– Every Child Survives and Thrives and Goal Area – Every Child Learns.

Strategically, the CP was designed based on 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 eight out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals: 1 (No Poverty), 2 (End Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing), 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Somehow less covered with planned activities, although with a corresponding Country Programme Outcome and some intervention implemented, is the regional priority on adolescent participation.²⁶

²⁶ See in this regard Annex 1 as well.

Table 2. Consistency between the UNICEF global and regional strategies, UNSDCF and SDGs and CPD 2018-2022

UNICEF Global goals	UNICEF regional priorities	SDG	UNSDCF for Moldova	CPD 2018-2022 planned results
Goal Area 1– Every Child Survives and Thrives Result areas: 1 (Improve nutritional status of boys and girls), 2 (Maternal and new-born care), 3 (Immunisation), 4 (Preventable illnesses) 5 (Gender-responsive adolescent health and nutrition)	Improve access to quality health services, and help vulnerable families care for their children in homes that are safe and stimulating <i>By 2021: Every country in the Region has 95 per cent of its children at national level, and at least 80 per cent in every district, vaccinated with diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP 3) or the Penta vaccine, which protects children against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), hepatitis B and Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib).</i>	Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all, at all ages <i>target 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, including effective, quality and essential medicines and vaccines for all</i> Secondary goal relevant: Goal 2. End hunger , achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	Outcome 4: The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, demand and benefit from gender-sensitive and human rights-based, inclusive, effective and equitable quality education, health and social policies and services	Output 4: Quality mother, child and adolescents health services
Goal Area 2 – Every Child Learns Result areas: 1 (Out-of-school children) 2 (Learning outcomes) 4 (Skills development)	Include all children in quality education and support their learning <i>By 2021, 700,000 girls and boys who would have otherwise been out of school are enrolled in high quality, inclusive pre-primary, primary and secondary education.</i>	Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all <i>target 4.1: By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes</i>		Output 3: Quality, inclusive education within a violence free school environment
Goal Area 3 – Every Child Protected from Violence and Exploitation Result areas: 1 (Violence) 3 (Access to justice)	Improve social protection and social-work systems to protect children from violence and prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families <i>By 2021, zero children in institutional care in the Region</i>	Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels <i>target 16.2: end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.</i> Secondary goal relevant: Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls		Output 1: Preventing family separation, discrimination and violence against children Output 2: Justice for Children Output 6: Duty-bearers' obligations for realization of child rights Output 7: Caregivers' engagement in realization of child rights
Goal Area 4 – Equity: Every Child Has a Fair Chance in Life Result areas: 1 (Gender equality) 2 (Development of cognitive, language, social- and emotional skills of children [ECD])	Monitor and work to end child poverty by making sure more children and families get help through social protection support such as child benefits.	Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere Secondary goals relevant: Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries Goal 2. End hunger , achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture	Outcome 2: The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, have access to enhanced livelihood opportunities, decent work and productive employment, generated by sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth	Output 5: Equitable Social Protection System Output 9: Social inclusion of the most vulnerable groups Output 6: Duty-bearers' obligations for realization of child rights

3 (Adolescent empowerment and engagement) 4 (Child poverty)				Output 7: Caregivers' engagement in realization of child rights
	Equip adolescents to reach their potential and take their place in society. <i>By 2021, 20 million adolescents in the Region, including the most vulnerable, have a chance to be connected, engaged and empowered</i>	Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels <i>target 16.7: ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels</i> Secondary goals relevant: Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development	Outcome 1: The people of Moldova, in particular the most vulnerable, demand and benefit from democratic, transparent and accountable governance, gender-sensitive, human rights- and evidence-based public policies, equitable services, and efficient, effective and responsive public institutions	Output 8: Adolescents awareness and participation

Moreover, supporting the country efforts to meet SDGs, in 2020, UNICEF, jointly with UNFPA and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office, supported the National Youth Council of Moldova in organizing a national campaign, [Youth of Moldova for #GlobalGoals](#), to provide young people with adequate skills and conditions to contribute to societal development, monitor the implementation of the SDGs and make youth voices heard by decision-makers. The campaign reached out to more than 1,000 young people, resulted in the development of a robust youth report highlighting major problems for them.

UNICEF also reports that, a successful game-based approach was introduced and piloted as an instrument to raise awareness on the SDGs and child rights among youth and children. UNICEF, together with local partners, developed a toolkit, Dialogica, which through 'brain games' enables local youth organizations and youth workers to engage young people in SDG dialogue.

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 Moldova and other public institutions and ensured that governmental authorities developed ownership over the work where UNICEF support is provided. This partnership represents a precondition for UNICEF relevance and impact. UNICEF works well with local authorities and civil society organisations implementing projects and delivering services at community level. Results of local level projects are used in advocacy, for scaling up nationally, in partnership with UN agencies, other development partners, academia and the civil society. Overall, UNICEF partnership network forms a strong community and the dialogue among different partners and stakeholders in different sectors is facilitated by UNICEF. Thus, UNICEF supports a nationwide partnership for the rights of the children: the National Council for Child Rights Protection (NCCRP).

All collected data, from documents and interviews, show that UNICEF CO kept its partnerships, with public institutions and CSOs, during the constant political changes and was also successful in building new and effective partnerships.

Stakeholder analysis shows there are eight main types of partnerships sustained by UNICEF Moldova:

- 1) **The partnership with the Government of the Republic of Moldova and the line Ministries**, guided by the mechanism of agreed working programmes. This partnership is sustained by intensive advocacy and technical assistance provided by UNICEF to the governmental authorities. It is very important to underline that UNICEF is striving to generate systemic change by encouraging the governmental authorities to develop ownership over the work where UNICEF support is provided. This is directly ensured when strategies or legal provisions advocated by UNICEF are adopted by the Government and/or the Parliament. UNICEF made efforts for ownership development considering other systemic changes, like the evidence-based decision-making processes and capacity building activities. For example, most of the studies, methodologies and training curricula developed by UNICEF are published under the logo of the Ministry in charge, as well.
- 2) **The partnership with Local Public Authorities (LPAs)** for modelling and pilot projects. The focus in this type of partnership has been on raising the capacity of these authorities, including (but not limited to) (a) raising their capacity to organise cross-sectoral multi-disciplinary cooperation of local institutions to address the needs of the most vulnerable children and (b) raising their capacity for financing/budgeting the activities for children in a more efficient way.

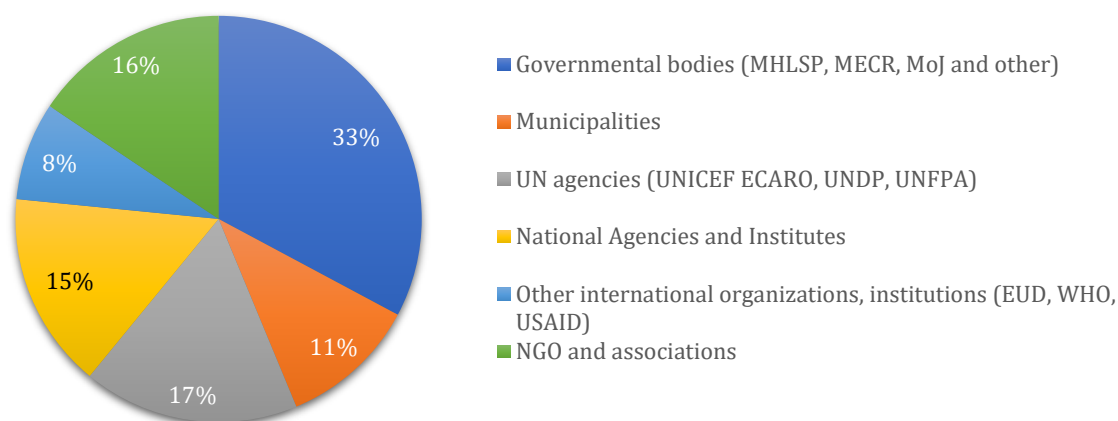
In this case, creating LPAs ownership for the activities supported by UNICEF, but for which they are responsible, seems to be less of a focus, but from collected data it is not yet clear whether this very ownership and the sustainability of results is ensured.

- 3) **The partnership with implementing partners** from the civil society, implementing activities, especially providing technical assistance, capacity building activities and services. In this case UNICEF Moldova uses competitive calls for partners that generated a good combination of long-term partnerships and new effective partnerships. Most of the long-term partners are kept and their contribution is highly appreciated, but new partners also proved to be extremely valuable. For example, a new partnership of UNICEF with the Association for Participative Criminal Justice (APCJ) led to piloting (2018-2019) and institutionalisation (since December 2019) of a new educational probation programme for children and young people in conflict with the law.
- 4) **The support for a nationwide partnership for the rights of the children**, through the support for the National Council for Child Rights Protection (NCCRP) chaired by the Prime Minister and its Technical Working Groups. With UNICEF support the NCCRP's Technical Working Group reviewed 25 draft legal documents and UNICEF convened three regional roundtables of the District Councils for Child Rights Protection. In anticipation of the next UN CRC Periodic Review due in 2022, support was provided to NCCRP in scrutinizing CRC implementation at country level. UNICEF has also compiled the CRC concise concluding observations and distributed these to the NCCRP and other stakeholders to advocate implementation and evaluation.
- 5) **The partnership with public institutions** with an important technical role in the effectiveness of the systems and services dedicated to the children (i.e. NBS, the RCPA, the National Probation Inspectorate). Similar to the LPAs focus in this type of partnership has been in raising their capacity.
- 6) **The partnership with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and academia**, for more effective advocacy. This group of partners include some of the implementing partners, but also other organisations and the basis of the partnership relation is necessarily a formal partnership agreement and does not refer to delivering services or technical assistance, but only to advocacy activities. Although UNICEF organised national and local events to bring together stakeholders interested by a specific subject (i.e. UNICEF participate to organizing the Annual National Conference on Inclusive Education), **most of the advocacy work is undertaken in partnership with current and older implementing partners.**
- 7) **UN agencies** are allies in advocacy and partners in implementation for several initiatives of UNICEF Moldova. Among other things, UNICEF activities in Transnistria are implemented within the framework of a UN programme with the participation of several UN agencies.
- 8) **Other international organisations** are allies in advocacy, donors and partners in implementation for several initiatives of UNICEF Moldova. For example, the development of the Youth Friendly Health Centres network in Moldova was supported by several organisations, including UN agencies (UNEPFA and WHO), the World Bank and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

According to the social network analysis based on the survey with the CO staff, the the main institutions with whom the CO collaborates are: governmental bodies (represented mainly by ministries), UN agencies, CSOs²⁷ and national agencies and institutes. As the below figure shows, from the institutions that have been chosen by respondents, the most connections are established between UNICEF CO and ministries (36%).

²⁷ Such as: CCF, CNTM, Health for Youth association, Nova Association, ODIMM, Probono, Republican Center for Pedagogical Assistance, TEKEDU.

Figure 3 Type of institutions/organizations indicated as important partners by Moldova CO respondents



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

The Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection from Moldova has been identified most often as an important partner in the development of COs activities, followed by Ministry of Education and Research. The importance of the partnership is also visible in the social media activity of the governmental partners of UNICEF Moldova. The Ministry of Education and Research mentioned its cooperation with UNICEF 20 times in posts on Facebook in the period October 2020-September 2021. In the field of education, the Republican Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance, also publishes information about the partnership with UNICEF on social media. Other important partners that support UNICEF online via social media are the Institute of Mother and Child, in the field of health, the Ministry of Justice and the Ombudsman of the Republic of Moldova.

Municipalities are also important partners for UNICEF CO, most nominalized LPAs being Cahul and Ungheni. The data shows that UN Agencies are key partners in the development of the CO's work. The links identified between the CO and UNDP are most frequent. Based on the number of respondents that have nominated a particular partner institution, a similar type of collaboration, has been observed in the case of Voinicel Early Intervention Center.

According to UNICEF staff members, the primary benefit of the partnerships is the access to decision makers (27% of the analyzed case), followed by receiving information for solving problems (26%) and access to target groups, others than decision makers (18%).

Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in the Republic of Moldova

Regarding the characteristics of the overall partnership network developed by UNICEF CO in Moldova, the data analysis shows the existence of a relatively strong community, with various connections between actors in different clusters formed around each department of the CO. The network is not formed only by clusters of interactions, but that the identified clusters are interconnected through the connections established between their members.

Data collected show that UNICEF has developed less the partnership with governmental institutions and civil society organisations in the field of youth and partially in the field of justice for children (where many partnerships are effective, but the one with the Ministry of Justice is less so).²⁸

Although the partnership with media and the private sector has been planned and small steps have been made, these types of partnerships are less effective and sustainable at this moment. This may be related to the level of development of the CSR culture in the Moldovan business community, the gatekeeping habits of media outlets in the country or to the limited capacity of the CO to manages additional partnerships while already working with a large range and number of partners, but additional analyses are needed to fully understand how these new partnerships could be further developed.

²⁸ See findings about the limited strategic focus on justice for children at the Ministry of Justice, under the evaluation of impact.

3.2.3. 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?

UNICEF Moldova used its comparative advantages related to its well-recognised role to uphold the rights of all children, its technical competences and capacity to provide all partners with relevant data on the situation of children and children needs, its leadership in communication, community engagement and advocacy for children rights. These advantages are necessary in UNICEF work towards its envisaged short-, medium- and long-term results for children in the country. However, as presented extensively in the section dedicated to impact, these advantages are not always sufficient to generate impact.

Four perspectives on UNICEF comparative advantage have been identified.

- 1) From the perspective of the governmental authorities (Ministries), **UNICEF is the most reliable source of information and technical assistance/advice on the situation, needs and solutions for children.** The fact that UNICEF has a very clear mandate and target group, a clear strategic approach and a proven record of successful technical assistance and advocacy for key policies for children, makes UNICEF the 'go-to' organisation where governmental authorities (Ministries) are looking for support, ideas or feedback in their work.

Achieved results based on this comparative advantage are related to the development of national strategic documents (the National Child Protection Programme 2021–2025 and its Action Plan 2021–2025; the new Education Sector Strategy 2021–2030 and medium-term Implementation Programme 2021–2025; the National Health Strategy 2020–2030, the National Immunization Programme 2021–2025; the National Programme on HIV/STI Prevention and Control 2021–2025; the National Programme on Non-Communicable Diseases 2021–2025) and ***the adoption of legal provisions*** (Law 112/2020, Law 299/2018)

- 2) From the perspective of the public institutions, other than the government, UNICEF has the advantage of its strategic, yet focus approach for child rights. In practice this means that **UNICEF is trusted as the best, reliable and constant provider of capacity building, but also as a facilitator of effective work with other institutions.** This is a very important advantage to be underlined, as the limited inter-institutional cooperation is considered an important bottleneck for the realisation of child rights in Moldova and UNICEF contributes to the development of effective cooperation mechanisms for inter-sectoral policies, as early childhood development.

Achieved results based on this comparative advantage are related to capacity building (a large number of persons trained, the overall development of the institutional capacity for the realization of child rights in Sîngerei district, etc.) and **successful implemented projects that have been scaled-up and/or institutionalised** (i.e. the Association for Participative Criminal Justice and the National Probation Inspectorate underlined that UNICEF expertise and activities in the field of justice for children have been instrumental in the piloting and institutionalisation of the education probation programme, because UNICEF was able to implement synergic activities that supported the success of the pilot project.).

- 3) From the perspective of the CSOs and implementing partners, UNICEF is a unique type of partner, because it also doubles as a donor for many CSOs that lack other type of funding. UNICEF does not define itself as a donor and it is not perceived by CSOs just as a donor, providing resources and transferring responsibilities, risk management and consequences to grantees. **UNICEF has comparative advantages in the eyes of CSOs because it is a resourceful, knowledgeable/expert and adaptable partner.** This advantage was very well visible in 2020, when many activities needed to be adapted and short-term targets needed to be changed in response to COVID-19 crisis. However, the comparative advantage is not only related to coping

with the crisis, but also to the development of pilot projects that have been institutionalised or scaled-up (as in the case of the youth friendly health services or the educational probation programme).

- 4) From the perspective of other development partners, including UN agencies UNICEF has a **brand advantage**, is better recognized by the public than most of the other development partners and has therefore a perceived advantage when conducting communication campaigns and fundraising for UNICEF projects and the response to the crisis (COVID-19 pandemic).

Moreover, development partners, including UN agencies, identified UNICEF as a **less bureaucratic organisation compared to other UN bodies**, which facilitate quick and efficient response to emerging needs, an advantage that proved instrumental in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, UNICEF comparative advantages – related to (a) its normative well recognised role to uphold the rights of all children, (b) its technical competences and the capacity to provide all partners with relevant data on the situation of children and children needs, (c) its leadership in communication, community engagement and advocacy for children rights based on its brand recognition – are necessary for results for children in Moldova. Interviews and previous evaluations of UNICEF activities show how these comparative advantages have been used in different contexts to generate the expected results and the previous paragraphs only present some examples. On the other hand, the evaluation of coherence and impact show that these comparative advantages can be sufficient to generate impact, and, in some areas, they have been very well used by the CO. In other areas, external factors, as well as the natural need for long term interventions are limiting the impact, as presented in the section dedicated to impact.

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

There is no evidence of substantial changes in the approach to strategic partnerships during the implementation of the current Country Programme (2018-2021) and compared to the previous programme, by UNICEF Moldova CO, with one exception: the strengthened relation with Local Public Authorities (LPAs).

UNICEF Moldova started focusing more on the partnership with LPAs, modelling and implementing pilot projects especially for better cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination, but also stressing on capacity building of local institutions (subordinated to the Ministries or LPAs), providing direct services to children. The intention is to perfect these interventions and afterwards to advocate for rolling-out and scaling-up of the activities by local and national institutions. This approach was in line with the decentralisation process in the country (and also proved useful in the context of the political instability).

On the other hand, out of the 39 CSOs that have been implementation partners of UNICEF Moldova since 2014, 12 organisations (about one third) are long term partners, with partnership agreements starting in 2015, 2016 or 2017. 13 organisations (another third of the partners) are new partners for the CO since 2018 and 2019 and seven organisations are new partners since 2020, most of them involved in the response to COVID-19 crisis. In the case of the implementation partners the change is not strategic, the type of partners and the relationship with partners is not changed, but the existing data show that UNICEF Moldova is open to work with new partners.

3.3. Impact

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

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

UNICEF Moldova contribute to the results at-scale for children, achieving many its expected results under the two planned outcomes of the Country Programme. Evidence based advocacy, supported by partners, technical assistances provided to ministries and other central institutions, as well as the successful scaling-up of some initiatives initially implemented at community level (for example, in the fields of youth health or inclusive education) are strategies used to generate the impact. The mechanisms supporting UNICEF success confirm some of the assumptions of the Theory of Change. However, a large number of bottlenecks and emerging risks limited UNICEF impact. Most of them have been anticipated and activities to cope with them have been implemented, but they have been only partly effective.

Positive changes regarding equitable child sensitive systems and services in Moldova (impact of Programme Outcome 1)

Moldova Country Programme aims at supporting the building of equitable child sensitive systems for the realisation of all child rights, including the rights to education, health, an adequate standard of living, and participation. The CPD Theory of Change underlines that “improved intersectoral cooperation in health, development, education and social protection will support a more comprehensive system of priority family-focused and child-centred services”. The outcome formulated to reach the objective is: “by 2022, Moldova National systems and services are more inclusive, able to protect the rights of children, and respond to the needs of most vulnerable in an equitable way.”

Important progress has been made, especially in the field of inclusive education, access to health, justice for children, deinstitutionalisation of children in state care and, more recently, social protection and they are visible in the programme indicators reported by UNICEF Moldova. We elaborate these progresses and UNICEF’s contribution to them in this section, below. However, because of several bottlenecks, presented in the following section, the systems and services are not yet fully able to protect the rights of children, and respond to their needs, as showed by the data presented below. On the other hand, the situation of the most vulnerable children improved and, despite the challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, the perspectives are good.

Impact on access to education

The gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education increased at 94.2% in 2020, surpassing UNICEF target, fixed at 88%. This makes Moldova one of the countries with the highest pre-school enrolment rates among countries in the CEE-CIS region and represents a remarkable achievement especially because it shows an impact for children despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic affected access to school and school participation. Approximately 434,000 students were affected by school closure, with 16,000 students (5% of total) and 3,000 teachers (11% of total) without access to ICT technology. The most affected were children in rural areas, coming from poor households, and having less educated parents. Moreover, over 7,000 children with special education needs and 1,400 children with disabilities were at a higher risk of being excluded from education.²⁹ This determined UNICEF to support the initiation of the study on the profile of out-of-school children and adolescents. Statistical data published by the NSB show that the gross enrolment rate in education continued to rise, despite the pandemic, due to efforts of the Government, UNICEF, partners and other stakeholders.

²⁹ Information provided by UNICEF ECARO.

The results can be associated both with (a) the long term commitment and advocacy of UNICEF for the improved accessibility, inclusiveness and quality of early childhood education³⁰, and with (b) UNICEF support for the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MECR) and school institutions to cope with and respond to COVID-19³¹. UNICEF presented MECR a methodology for organizing education during quarantine, special regulations for the 2020–2021 school year, guidance on reopening kindergartens after the peak of the outbreak, students' and parents' guides on safe behaviour during COVID-19. All these supported the education system during the pandemic and contributed to the observed results.

However, Moldova continues to deal with out-of-school rates that are higher than the regional averages across age groups.³² The lower secondary education completion rate was in 2020 at 84.1%, below the target for 2020, fixed at 87%. Moreover, PISA tests show that about 50% of students in (lower and upper) secondary school do not meet a minimum proficiency level. This can explain why the NEET rates were 27.4% at the end of 2019, compared to the EU average³³ of 10.1%. These data indicate that **education does not adequately prepare young people with the skills for professional and social life fully.**

*The access to education of the most marginalised and vulnerable children is analysed as the case study on UNICEF's impact on **inclusive education** in Moldova, presented below and in Annex 2.* The case study shows that significant progresses have been made, with UNICEF support, in this specific area and the share of children with disabilities who attend general educational institutions increased by 10% in the last years and reached 93% in 2018. However, most of these children do not graduate from school, due to several bottlenecks including: lack of infrastructure, lack of trained teachers, and the absence of adapted teaching materials.³⁴

Case study on UNICEF contribution to inclusive education

For the assessment of UNICEF Moldova contribution in the area of inclusive education a detailed Process Tracing analysis is presented in the Annex 2. The analysis shows that UNICEF undertook and supported a large number of activities in the field of inclusive education, and we are highly confident these activities have short term results for the directly targeted professionals and contributed to raised capacity of schools and teachers to receive and to work with children with SNE and CwD. Evidence also shows that UNICEF involvement – advocacy and the constant support for dialogue among all stakeholders in the field, as well as extensive technical assistance – determined improved legislation in the field of inclusive education. Existent evaluations assess the legal framework as sufficient and as representing a good foundation for the integration of all children with SNE and CwD in mainstream education³⁵.

However, medium term and long-term results are still limited at the level of the legal framework, the capacity of some of the teaching staff and the integration of children with mild disabilities. Although UNICEF supported communication campaigns for attitudinal change, they proved to be insufficient for a significant impact regarding the access to mainstream schools of children with severe disabilities and a better acceptance of these children at the level of both the general public (especially parents) and teachers.

³⁰ Government of the Republic of Moldova, UNICEF, "Comprehensive Assessment of the Education Sector in the Republic of Moldova", 2019. Trofin, Laura; Gremalschi, Anatol; Cojocaru, Viorica; Lonean, Irina; Velea, Simona; Lefter, Mădălina; Strat, Vasile, "Joint evaluation of implementation of the Programme for Development of Inclusive Education 2011–2020, including application of child-friendly school's standards – Evaluation Report", UNICEF Moldova, Chisinau, 2019. Interviews also support this finding.

³¹ Interviews with key stakeholders in the education system provided information on the instrumental contribution of UNICEF in response to the challenges generated by the pandemic for the schools and the education system.

³² Ibid.

³³ Data recorded by Eurostat.

³⁴ Information provided by UNICEF ECARO.

³⁵ Government of the Republic of Moldova, UNICEF, "Comprehensive Assessment of the Education Sector in the Republic of Moldova", 2019. Trofin, Laura; Gremalschi, Anatol; Cojocaru, Viorica; Lonean, Irina; Velea, Simona; Lefter, Mădălina; Strat, Vasile, "Joint evaluation of implementation of the Programme for Development of Inclusive Education 2011–2020, including application of child-friendly school's standards – Evaluation Report", UNICEF Moldova, Chisinau, 2019. Interviews also support this finding.

Existing evidence also shows that children with severe disabilities and children with HIV/AIDS remain highly discriminated and schools remain largely inaccessible to them.

The most important bottlenecks identified regarding the limited or missing impact are related to:

- difficulties in hiring qualified staff, especially in preschool education, resulting from: the small number of specialized staff available; the large turnover, especially, of the support teaching staff; the regulation of the number of support teaching staff depending on the number of children with SEN, determining instability of employment for the support teaching staff and lack of motivation to fill the position among the qualified young professionals, low salaries for the specialized staff;
- lack of digital skills among teachers, but also among support teaching staff;
- insufficient or poor intersectoral cooperation in the education, health and social protection sectors regarding non-educational support services for CwD, such as personal assistance, but also the identification and early referral of cases of severe disability. There is a lack of clear and effective case reporting mechanisms, that should facilitate early interventions in sensitive periods for the recovery of children with disabilities.
- financial allocations for inclusive education are not calculated on the basis of the number of children with SEN³⁶ and their individual needs are not taken into account.

Impact on child protection

A significant package of amendments for the national legislation was adopted in 2020 (Law 112/2020) with UNICEF support in technical assistance. All available evidence, including the interviews with representatives of Moldova Government, support the finding that UNICEF technical assistance was instrumental in determining the adopted content of the law. The law improves regulation on custody of children left behind by migrant parents, tutorship/guardianship for children without parental care, adoption, abduction, legal representation, social services and protection of child victims of violence. The new legislation will improve the protection of children left behind and without care, as well as the efficiency of alternative care.

Moreover, Moldova registered important results concerning the **deinstitutionalization of children**. At the end of 2019, there were 1100 children in residential institutions, which is 36.6% less compared to 2014³⁷. Moreover in 2020, the proportion of new children entering residential institutions was reported by UNICEF at 2.9% (surpassing the target fixed at 6.4%) and representing an important impact of the Government and UNICEF work on **prevention of institutionalization of children**. This work consisted in the development of community level services, fully supported by UNICEF in selected (pilot) communities and advocated by UNICEF for scaling-up.

The *Mid-term Evaluation of the Implementation of the Child Protection Strategy 2014 – 2020 and Action Plan*, covering the period 2016 – mid of 2019³⁸ reports significant increase in the capacity to identify cases of violence, neglect and abuse of children by developing and strengthening the cross-sectoral mechanism of combating violence, along with conducting national information and awareness campaigns for attitude change. This is also visible in UNICEF's indicators on the number of cases of violence reported by children through official mechanisms, including the children hotline supported by UNICEF with technical assistance and administrated by the Moldovan authorities. There is also progress in the percentage of children victims of violence, neglect and exploitation whose cases have been closed and UNICEF supported the development of the Barnahus style centre for children victims and witnesses of crime, contributing, thus, to the results in the area. Thus, UNICEF technical assistance provided to several Government institutions and services provided by UNICEF and its implementing partner in the Barnahus style centre for children victims and witnesses of crime are important elements contributing to the observed changes, as presented in the case study below, dedicated to UNICEF contribution to justice for children in Moldova.

³⁶ The allocation is a fix percentage from the total budget allocation for education in each district.

³⁷ NBS, *Children of Moldova. Statistical Publication*, 2020.

³⁸ Mid-term Evaluation of Implementation of the Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020 and its Action Plan for 2016-2020 in the Republic of Moldova, 2019

However, the *Light Situation Analysis* conducted in 2019, shows that **children in Moldova still suffer from high rates of sexual, physical and emotional violence** and limited progress has been achieved in this field. The legislation is fairly comprehensive, but the institutional and methodological framework in the field of child protection is “characterized by fragmentation, lack of preventive approach and lack of overall vision to addressing the VAC across all sectors.”³⁹ The SitAn also concluded that “gender stereotypes, patriarchal attitudes and associated gender-based discrimination and violence are prevalent throughout Moldova and gender gap persists.”⁴⁰ UNICEF Moldova addresses these bottlenecks in its advocacy, especially in front of the Ministry of Justice and in its communication for development and behaviour change.

Impact on justice for children

There are undeniable improvements in the legislation and legal practice concerning children in contact and in conflict with the law in Moldova, including

- changes of the Criminal Code,
- the adoption of a law on children with deviant behaviour providing for services, rather than restrictive measures,
- the opening of a Barnahus-type centre for children victims and witness of crimes allowing for their interviewing but also the provision of other needed services,
- the development of a governmental plan to open three regional Barnahus-type centres in the country,
- the development and quick institutionalization of an educational probation programme for children and young people. However, much more is needed for visible impact for children in Moldova.

Data reported by UNICEF and provided by several studies in the field show that some legal amendments are still needed, and, most importantly, that the attitude and behaviour of professionals in law-enforcement and the judiciary throwers children need to be substantially improved. The case study shows the bottlenecks still remaining for the development of a child friendly justice in Moldova are related with sector specific issues (especially the systemic resistance to change) and to more general issues, related to social norms, stigma against children affected by violence (either as victims, witnesses or aggressors) and the social tolerance to violence against children.

For the assessment of UNICEF Moldova contribution in the area of justice for children, a detailed Process Tracing analysis is presented in Annex 2.

Case study on UNICEF contribution to justice for children

We find that UNICEF had impact in its initiatives to improve the legislation, but there is limited impact on the capacity of the law enforcement and the judiciary system and the actual access of most of the children to improved services in the judiciary.

The analysis shows that UNICEF undertook and supported a large number of activities in the field of justice for children and these activities have good short term results for the directly targeted children. Evidence also shows that UNICEF involvement determined improved legislation or prevented the legal framework (i.e. the law regarding children with deviant behaviour – child offenders under the legal age for criminal liability) to be adopted without respecting the fundamental rights and interests of the child. The Ministry of Justice recognises the importance on UNICEF recommendations in shaping the legislation for children in conflict with the law.

However, medium term and long-term results are still limited at the level of the legal framework, the capacity of the law enforcement and the judiciary system and the actual access of most of the children to improved services.

³⁹ Light Situation Analysis addressing social inclusion of vulnerable groups, violence against children and youth empowerment and participation, 2019

⁴⁰ Ibid.

The most important bottleneck identified regarding the limited or missing impact are related to:

- the lack of strategic focus on making the judiciary better and friendlier for children. Although the issue may be taken into account in the future Child Protection Programme, a special attention of the Ministry of Justice on the issue should have been visible in the strategy for ensuring independence and integrity in the justice sector;
- the low level of interest of the professionals in law-enforcement and judiciary to participate in improving the situation of children in contact with the law and in conflict with the law;
- other bottleneck specific to the judiciary system, influencing the resistance to change in the system.

There is a low interest of the law-enforcement and judiciary specialist for the improvement of services for children on the findings of the 2018 study measuring the perceptions of judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and society members towards successful social reintegration of children in conflict with law and children victims/witnesses of crimes⁴¹ The study also explores how respondents see the factors needed for the social reintegration of children. The specialists mentioned that the success of reintegration of children in conflict with the law depends on the severity of committed offense, the psychological profile of the child and the involvement of the family in the child rehabilitation. Referring to the services for the successful reintegration of child victims and witnesses, judges have first of all mentioned family counselling, while prosecutors, lawyers and police officers have stated that psychological counselling for children is required in the first place. How the law-enforcement and the judiciary are approaching and working with the children seems to be less important for the interviewed specialists and this opinion explains the low level of interest of the judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers to participate in improving the situation of children in contact with the law and in conflict with the law. This also can contribute to the lack of strategic focus and the low capacity of the system to provide child friendly services.

Impact on maternal, child and adolescents' health

The national statistics and the indicators reported by UNICEF show **progress concerning access to health services and the health of children in general until 2020, but the larger picture shows healthcare remains problematic for children and pregnant women in Moldova:**

- The number of health providers providing home-visiting services, having adequate skills related to early detection and intervention for children with developmental risk, delay or disabilities increased from 8 in 2017 to 26 in 2020 and the number of home visits increased, but only with about 3% between 2014 and 2019⁴²
- The share of births among women aged 10-19 years in the total number of births has decreased from 4.9% in 2016 to 4.5% in 2019. Also, the share of abortions has decreased from 7.4% in 2014 to 5.7% in 2019.⁴³ Thus, although on a positive trend, the fertility rate among adolescents remains very high.
- Despite a significant progress in reducing infant and under five mortality rates, both indicators remain twice higher than in other countries in the region. Generally, the morbidity of children in the first year of life reveals decreasing trends of incidence of diseases⁴⁴, but it also remains higher compared to the region.
- Although the vaccination rates in Moldova are high, the country continues to face a worrying trend of mistrust in vaccines⁴⁵.

⁴¹ The perception on the social reintegration varies according to the committed offence and the profession of the respondent, but usually respondents rated high or very high the chances for the successful social reintegration of children victim or witness of crimes and of children liable for misdemeanors. They rated as about average the chances for the successful social reintegration of children liable for crimes against property and low or very low the chances for the successful social reintegration of children liable for violent crimes, murder or sexual criminal assault.

⁴² NBS, *Children of Moldova. Statistical Publication*, 2020.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ 2018 Vaccine Confidence Project, LSHTM.

UNICEF contributed to all the observed results for children in the health sector. UNICEF developed the Child Care and Development Standards that include universal progressive home visiting for children aged 0-3 and guidelines for nurses on applying universal-progressive home-visiting were developed with UNICEF approved by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection. UNICEF also ensured the procurement of around 1.5 million doses of vaccines per year through UNICEF Supply Division. Moreover, UNICEF provided trainings to healthcare specialists, rising their capacity to provide quality services that contributed to the improved results for children at scale, visible in the national statistics.

Unfortunately, **37% of households with children have a lesser access to health services since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic**. Many hospitals were overwhelmed, and families were afraid of sending children to the doctors/hospitals fearing that they would get infected by the coronavirus.⁴⁶

The contribution of UNICEF Moldova to the progresses in maternal, child and adolescents' health is highly appreciated by stakeholders and includes capacity building activities, especially trainings, seminars and workshops, technical assistance on standards and tools used by the medical staff and studies, especially in the area of vaccination, to support improved policies.

Case study on UNICEF contribution in the area of adolescents and youth participation and health

For the assessment of UNICEF Moldova contribution in the area of adolescents and youth participation and health, a detailed Process Tracing analysis is presented in the Annex 2. Using Process Tracing each claim was analysed and, based on the available evidence, the level of confidence in the claim truthfulness was assessed.

The analysis allows us to be more confident about the addressability of the services and their positive impact on youth empowerment, but a bit less so about the quality of the services and their coverage, especially for young people from rural areas.

UNICEF promoted the legal framework and recommended the funding mechanism with the support of a cost analysis used in the evidence-based advocacy. UNICEF also contributed to a large extent to communication, designing and providing assistance for the implementation of communication and outreach campaigns. This increased the addressability (the number of users) of Youth Friendly Health Centres. UNICEF's partners implemented activities for capacity building of YFHC to increase their accessibility.

UNICEF support appears as being instrumental in the promotion of the YFHS and their part in the 'youth sector ecosystem' as UNICEF is among the few organisations with capacity and attention to both (i) adolescents and youth health and (ii) youth empowerment and participation.

Although existing evidence allows a positive and optimistic assessment of youth friendly health services impact and UNICEF contribution to thesis impact, the most important bottlenecks identified still need to be taken into account in the future management of youth access to dedicated health services:

- systemic bottlenecks of the healthcare system, including the traditional (non-transparent) doctor-patient relationship represents another set of limitations to youth participation and quality of youth friendly services;
- the large turnover of medical staff affects the sustainability of all capacity building activities;
- tokenism, the meaningless involvement of young people in order to formally check their participation.

Two main risks, not yet addressed, have been also identified:

- COVID-19 pandemic affected mainly the addressability, but also the accessibility of YFHS in 2020. The risk disengagement of young people and health professionals for the future, caused by the pandemic, is still present and should be managed with increased outreach, capacity and quality development and trust building activities.

⁴⁶ UNICEF, Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Remittances and Coping Mechanisms of Families with Children in Moldova, 2020.

- The opportunity to improve the financing framework bears a risk of decreasing much needed funding, in the context of changes at the level of the National Health Insurance Company, that shows less support to YFHC compared to previous years. Effective advocacy activates can mitigate this risk.

Impact on social protection

In Moldova, the share of households with children from poorest quintile(s) receiving social payments (social assistance or child benefits) remains at 29.2%, below the 2020 target established by UNICEF at 40%, despite a slight increase of the proportion of expenditures dedicated to social support services and benefits for children.⁴⁷ In this context, UNICEF continued to advocate with Local Public Authorities (LPAs) to establish community level support services involving day care, family support and family-based placement services, including a minimum social services package.⁴⁸

The assessment of COVID-19 impact in Moldova shows that on average, Moldovan households with children have lost 15% of their income. However, households receiving remittances have experienced a slightly higher decrease in household income than non-receiving households (-17% vs -13%), as remittances have fallen by -25% on average. They are, however, more resilient than non-receiving households⁴⁹ and even from 2019 UNICEF recommended to increase the weighting of children from 0.5 to 0.75 in the calculation of Social Aid (Ajutor Social) payments to households with children⁵⁰. The recommendation was followed, according to interviews, by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social protection (MHLSP) as a mitigation measure to COVID-19, contributing thus to better social protection for children.

Positive social changes for child rights in Moldova (impact of Programme Outcome 2)

Moldova Country Programme also aims at supporting and advocating for social mobilisation that leads to social change for the realisation of child rights. The outcome formulated to reach the objective is: “by 2022, Moldovan society has better knowledge about child rights and progressively fulfils its obligations, effectively supporting social outcomes for children, and the empowerment of the most vulnerable children and adolescents to claim their rights.” According to the theory of change, to reach the objective and meet the outcome targets, progress must be made concerning:

- the capacity and skills of duty bearers and childcarers;
- the empowerment and participation of young people;
- institutional capacity, especially for multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary work needed by the most vulnerable children.

Data show important progress in the realization of child rights in Moldova, including children with disability (CwD) and young people, showing thus UNICEF impact. However, in most cases the impact is limited to a small number of communities, where modelling / pilot projects have been implemented by UNICEF in partnership with LPAs and CSOs or by other organisations. Most of the analysis available concerning child rights realization in different sectors (health, education, social, judiciary etc.) show that the lack of cross-sectoral cooperation represents an important bottleneck for the realization of child right.

⁴⁷ Light Situation Analysis addressing social inclusion of vulnerable groups, violence against children and youth empowerment and participation, 2019.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ UNICEF, Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on Remittances and Coping Mechanisms of Families with Children in Moldova, 2020

⁵⁰ Resulted from the 2018/2019 simulation exercise on Public Finance Management, also including the training of train 155 Local Public Authorities (LPAs) from 50 municipalities from three districts: Chisinau, Nisporeni and Singerei.

Impact on duty bearer's engagement in child rights, including cross-sectoral cooperation for the realization of child rights

Overall, we can observe progress concerning duty bearers' capacities and skills to fulfil their obligations for realization of child rights in all fields: child protection, education, health, social protection, law-enforcement and judiciary, but this progress and UNICEF contribution to it is limited. Pilot activities at local level, implemented by UNICEF in partnership with LPAs and CSOs had results for children in the targeted communities, especially for CwD and children left behind by migrant parents. However, the impact of these pilot activities is visible only in the targeted communities.

According to the Mid-term Evaluation of Implementation of the Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020 and its Action Plan for 2016-2020 in the Republic of Moldova, the key areas of intervention in which progress is still lagging behind refer to:

- strengthening the **institutional capacity** at the local level to prevent the separation of child from family;
- **coordinating** the deinstitutionalization process across the Government;
- **developing the specialized services available at the local level** (including services for the aggressors);
- **strengthening the monitoring and evaluation capacity** both at central and district levels.⁵¹

Impact on caregivers' childcare capacities and skills

The impact concerning caregivers' capacities and skills was built on the results of the previous Country Programme. The major provisions of the cross-sectoral Strategy on Positive Parenting, approved by the Government in 2016 and the core findings of the 2018 Study on Early Childhood Development Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Parents were used for developing the Program on Modelling of Parental Educators implemented in five regions of the country, covering 70 preschools.⁵² As in the case of duty bearers' capacity, the capacity of caregivers increased in the targeted communities, where UNICEF, LPAs and CSOs implemented activities, but the impact is not present at national level.

Although the Strategy on Positive Parenting was adopted – due to UNICEF advocacy and technical assistance – and activities have been undertaken by the Government, UNICEF and CSOs for its implementation, the cross-sectoral National Action Plan on Positive Parenting and institutionalization of parenting interventions into existing systems was not approved due to political instability in Moldova. This hindered the impact of the strategy at national level.

Impact on empowering adolescents

U-Report shows a considerable increase of the percentage of adolescents who indicate that their views were taken seriously in decisions made at home, school and in their community: 63% of young people say they are listened to and taken seriously at home (compared to 34% in 2012), 40% at school (15% in 2012), 11% in their community (5% in 2012). Progress has been made in the creation of participatory structures for young people (Students and Youth Councils) and their empowerment in some communities. However, SitAn 2019 underlines that “Moldova lacks an effective and operative coordination mechanism for youth legislation, policies and interventions across different sectors and

⁵¹ Mid-term Evaluation of Implementation of the Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020 and its Action Plan for 2016-2020 in the Republic of Moldova, 2019

⁵² The Program was implemented by CNETIF CSO which carried out over 700 parental education activities. The facilitators of these activities were 210 parental educators-preschool managers, methodologists, educators and nurses. 140 community educators and nurses benefitted from on-the-job mentoring.

Moreover, in 2020, online training was organized for 10,474 managerial and didactical staff (81.4% of total) on positive parenting for early childhood development (ECD) during the pandemic and recovery period.

organisations, while the share of youth expenditures on all levels is largely insignificant. The youth sector is underappreciated and misunderstood by the influential actors outside the sector.”⁵³

The Comprehensive Youth Sector Analysis conducted in 2020 shows there is an adequate legal and strategic framework of the youth sector (Youth Strategy, Action Plan and Law). But the youth policy continues to be approached as a sectoral policy, despite its inter-sectoral character and UNICEF advocacy. In this context, the analysis highlights that “youth’ is largely treated as a homogeneous group without distinguishing specific groups according to age, sex, place of residence, ethnicity, gender identity”⁵⁴

This finding is supported by interviews conducted for this evaluation. Overall, available data and information show that young people have limited access and opportunities to participate in the public sphere and limited capacity to do so. This is related to:

- the low level of awareness on the importance of children, adolescents and young people participation to decisions concerning their lives;
- limited and short-term funding from public and private sources available for CSO working with young people, considering that project-based funding is not appropriate for organising long term service provision for young people to rise their capacity
- the small number of youth workers trained and poor recognition of professional youth work/limited attractiveness of the profession
- low involvement / lack of involvement of the education system / schools in activities encouraging public participation of children, adolescents and young people
- absence of local or district level youth strategies and the overall poor implementation of the national Youth Strategy
- tokenism and political use of youth activities that are diminishing young peoples’ trust in youth centres and youth NGOs.

This situation leads to a large number of young people, who are not members of the formal participation bodies, that are unaware of the possibilities for participation and the bodies existing at the local and national levels. Moreover, existing data show that the level and quality of youth participation varies very much between municipalities and districts.⁵⁵ UNICEF Moldova advocated successfully for improved youth policies, implemented U-Report to allow for a better consultation of young people in policy development and supported numerous youth engagement and participation activities, in partnership with youth organisations, including UP-SHIFT. However, the above presented limitations and bottlenecks persist, and they are not directly taken into account by UNICEF activities. Although activities directly involving young people and the advocacy for youth policy have direct results, they are not able to generate increased capacity of the youth sector (youth organisations, youth workers, young centers) to further outreach and mobilize the participate of vulnerable young people. Moreover, activities implemented at local level and activities for raising awareness about the importance of child and youth participation are necessary, but this type of activities have not been implemented enough to generate the needed systemic change.

3.3.1.2. Conditions and factors influencing the impact of UNICEF’s Country Programme

Data collected show mostly bottlenecks hindering the impact of UNICEF’s Country Programme in Moldova. However, the summary of the strategies used by UNICEF Moldova, presented in Annex 1 shows that the CO also enjoyed some supporting factors:

- **Authorities support for cooperation**, based especially on **external factors** (specific to the country/government):
 - o long term commitment of the country for human rights;
 - o the Agreement with EU emphasising the strategic policy development;

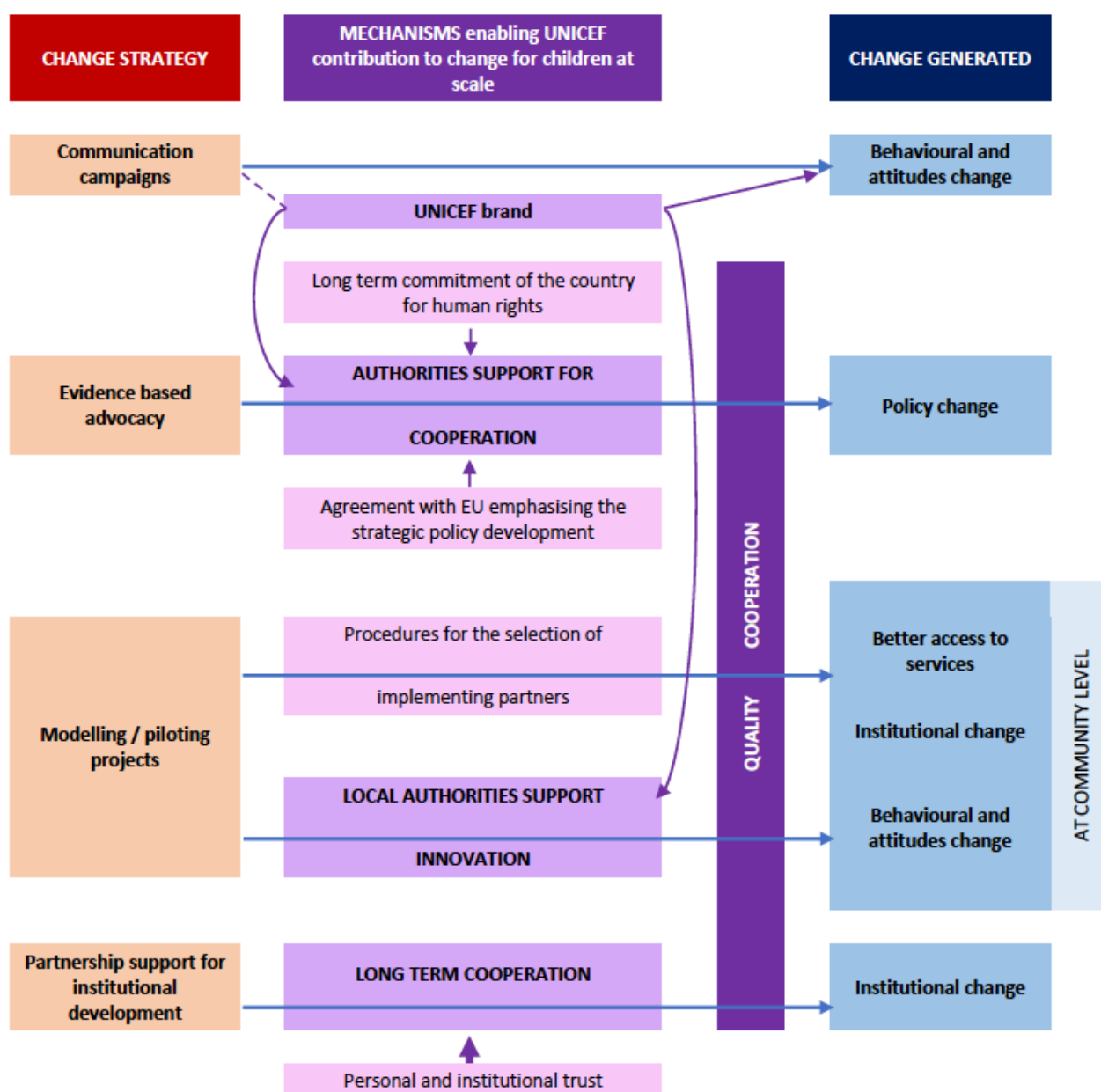
⁵³ Light Situation Analysis addressing social inclusion of vulnerable groups, violence against children and youth empowerment and participation, 2019.

⁵⁴ Comprehensive Youth Sector Analysis, 2020

⁵⁵ Ibid.

- **The quality of cooperation and partnerships**, based especially on **internal factors** (specific to UNICEF CO):
 - o UNICEF's emphasis on building effective partnerships with central authorities and the long term, consistent and perseverant intervention supported in each area of UNICEF work;
 - o UNICEF's emphasis on building effective partnerships with LPAs in order to implement modelling/pilot projects;
 - o The use of rigorous and competitive partnership selection processes in order to select implementing partners;
- **UNICEF brand recognition in the country**, supporting both:
 - o Effective partnerships and the cooperation with public authorities;
 - o The effectiveness of communication campaigns.

Figure 5. Summary of mechanisms enabling UNICEF contribution to change for children at scale



The CP ToC is based on a few assumptions about the supporting factors for UNICEF's impact:

- the Government allocates adequate resources
- the Government is able to scale up and institutionalise piloted models
- Stakeholders are interested and committed
- Low resistance to change in social norms
- Youth are confident and express their voices

Most of these assumptions proved to be correct. Despite the constant political change in the country until 2021, UNICEF enjoyed the Government's support and some of the piloted models have been institutionalized. Fund allocation is not always provided, yet, but interviews, UNICEF's reports and some government documents show there is work in progress concerning the budgetary allocations.

As underlined, stakeholders' interest, commitment and participation to UNICEF initiatives, as partners, is a key supporting factor for UNICEF. Moreover, although not yet visible with concern to all UNICEF initiative, children and young people are expressing their voices, supporting UNICEF and contributing to its impact. This is apparent from all the interviews with UNICEF and civil society organisation representatives and, to a lesser degree, from the interviews with government representatives.

On the other hand, the assumption related to the low resistance to change in social norms proved not to be correct. The evaluation did not collect enough evidence to explain why this assumption was not well assessed.

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

The impact of UNICEF Moldova is hindered by important bottlenecks related to the political and institutional instability and continuous civil service turnover; the limited capacity for service provision for the realisation of child rights by the at central and local level; the limited policy coordination and cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation. Most of these bottlenecks are systemic and related to the entire public administration, not only to child rights protection and services, therefore most of UNICEF activities to countering them or coping with them are only partially successful. Moreover, UNICEF mobilised resources and provided needed information for decision making in the administration of the COVID-19 generated crisis, supporting the Government to manage the risk and related bottlenecks.

Bottlenecks and risks are included in the Country Programme documents, with most attention given in the Strategic Note from March 2017. Critical identified risks are:

- political and economic instability;
- escalation of the internal conflict in the Transnistrian region and/or spill over of the conflict in Ukraine;
- economic stagnation and, in connection, deepening poverty;
- increased migration (brain drain and the lack of qualified civil servants in connection with the emigration);
- lack of financing for services for children;
- stagnation of reforms;
- potential environmental emergencies affecting the agricultural sector (a key sector for Moldova economy);
- lack of data for evidence-based planning and policy making for the realization of child rights.

Risk mitigation measures planned in the Country Programme documents are rather vague:

- flexibility of the programme to shift from policy advocacy to service delivery (incl. in emergencies);
- effective financial management of resources;
- flexible allocation to most pressing needs;
- investment in innovations – materialized in modelling and pilot projects.

Interviews allowed the evaluation team to identify the most important bottlenecks and risks that affected the Country Programme implementation, in practice. There are three salient bottlenecks: (1) the political instability; (2) the limited cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation, in connection with the stagnation of some reforms to improve the situation and (3) the limited capacity for service provision for the realisation of child rights at central and local level; and two main categories of risks that seem to have affected UNICEF's work: (1) the risks related to losing the capacity already developed because of the high turnover of civil servants and specialists involved in providing services for children and (2) the risks related to COVID-19.

Therefore, the bottlenecks and risks have been well anticipated, although some of the risks (escalation of the internal conflict in the Transnistrian region and/or spill over of the conflict in Ukraine and deepening poverty) did not materialised.

Answering the evaluation question on how UNICEF has been able to respond to the shifts caused by crisis or major socio-economic and political changes shows how UNICEF dealt with the political instability and the risks related to COVID-19, under section 3.1.4. The implemented strategies and activities proved to be in line with the mitigation measures planned in the Country Programme documents, although the initial planning was rather vague and unclear.

For the bottlenecks related to the limited cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation for the realisation of child rights, there are three types of activities identified in UNICEF's work:

- 1) **The support for national policy coordination**, materialised in:
 - the support for the National Council for Child Rights Protection (NCCRP) chaired by the Prime Minister.
 - UNICEF support for a large number of strategic documents targeting children developed in 2020 and 2021. Because UNICEF is involved in virtually all strategic planning processes important for children in Moldova, UNICEF involvement itself, as a constant present advocating for the rights of the most vulnerable children, helps to ensure national policy coordination.
- 2) **Specific advocacy for legal provisions strengthening** cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation for the realisation of child rights, as in the case of Law 112/2020, Law 299/2018, the Government Decision on the Framework Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Regional Centre for Integrated Assistance to Child Victims / Witnesses of Crime and Minimum Quality Standards etc.)
- 3) **Modelling and pilot projects implemented in partnership with Local Public Authorities** aiming at testing new methods and tools to support better cooperation. In this case, the impact of the strategy needs to be further documented, but results at local level are positive.

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

In this case there was no clear strategy of UNICEF to deal with the respective bottlenecks and risks. However, several partial strategies have been identified as successful:

- providing trainings of trainers and working with a pool of trainers at national level to be able to roll-out and replicate trainings where needed (as in the case of the initiative promoting inclusive education in kindergartens);
- providing first and foremost a well-designed curriculum and training materials that allow for training replication when needed (as in the case of the curricula for Medical University, Medical College and National Centre for Continuous Medical Education of Nurses that include home-visiting modules);
- using online training tools and methods, ensuring that the training is available for new staff whenever needed to the same level of quality as initially delivered (as in the case of the training for probation officers).

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

Data and information collected shows that UNICEF Country Programme in Moldova and the implementation work of the CO took into account differences between children and the needs of the most marginalised to a large extent. However, some groups of vulnerable children benefited less from the work of UNICEF. The table below represents a summary of the vulnerable and marginalised children benefiting from the Country Programme and those 'left behind'.

Table 3. The most marginalized and vulnerable children benefiting from UNICEF Moldova CP implementation

Outcome and outputs	More disadvantaged children benefiting	The mechanisms enabling the impact for these children	More disadvantaged children not benefiting	The mechanisms hindering the impact for these children
Outcome 1 – EQUITABLE CHILD SENSITIVE SYSTEMS AND SERVICES				
By 2022, Moldova National systems and services are more inclusive, able to protect the rights of children, and respond to the needs of most vulnerable in an equitable way				
Output 1 CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PROTECTION By 2022, national stakeholders will have functional mechanisms, capacities and skills to prevent and protect children against discrimination, exploitation and violence, and prevent abandonment, family separation and neglect to the best interest of the child.	Children victims of violence neglect and exploitation Children in residential institutions Children left behind by migrant parents, in risk of institutionalisation CwD in risk of institutionalisation	Legal improvements are key to improve child protection for all children in need	Children from rural areas and municipalities with low capacity to implement prevention mechanisms Roma children Homeless children	Besides strategic and legal provisions, UNICEF work was focused on modelling and pilot activities for capacity building at local level to improve child protection, therefore children from communities where LPA and other institutions did not benefit from capacity building activities remain at risk. Activities targeting Roma children continue to be limited to selected communities and not addressed in a systemic way towards the CP implementation. No specific activity of UNICEF was identified to answer the needs of homeless children
Output 2 JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN By 2022, justice system authorities and related support services will have institutionalized procedures and practices to protect and re-integrate children in contact with the law.	Children in a probation programme Children victims or witness to crime in Chişinău or near the capital (and in Bălţi district in the close future) Children with deviant behaviour (to a limited extent)	By definition, the activities in the area of justice for children target vulnerable children. Children in a probation programme can benefit from the results of the institutionalisation of the pilot educational probation programme, supported by UNICEF ⁵⁶ Children victims or witness to crime in Chişinău or near the capital (and in Bălţi district in the close future) can benefit from the Barnahus-type centres (existing in Chişinău and ready to be opened in Bălţi), developed with UNICEF support ⁵⁷	Children in penitentiary Children released from penitentiary and in need of a reintegration programme Children victims or witness to crime with no access to regional centres in Chişinău and Bălţi	For children in penitentiary and released from penitentiary and in need of a reintegration programme, it seems to be a deliberate decision of UNICEF not to get involved, as other development partners are active. The logic of intervention for the Barnahus-type centres for children victims or witness to crime is built around regional centres (and a third centre, besides the ones in Chişinău and Bălţi, is planned in Cahul). However, the limited accessibility of these centres is not addressed. Children with deviant behaviour are the subject to the provisions of the Law 299/2018, however implementing mechanisms for the law have not been yet approved (in August 2021).
Output 3 QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL By 2022, schools and pre-schools will have capacity to apply and monitor quality teaching and learning and are	Children with SEN CwD	See case study on UNICEF contribution in the area of justice for children in Annex 2	Children with severe disabilities Roma children, especially girls	Activities for the development of inclusive education have focused especially on extending the coverage of inclusive education and increasing the percentage of children with SEN and CwD in the mainstream institutions (at school and pre-school level). Less attention has been paid, by UNICEF and partners (public institutions and CSOs) to the

⁵⁶ See case study on UNICEF contribution in the area of justice for children in Annex 2

⁵⁷ Ibid.

able to address violence, drop-out and absenteeism.				fewer children with greatest and most difficult to approach needs. The continuous bottlenecks related to the presence and competences of supporting teaching staff has a greater impact on the inclusion of children that are more difficult to include: the children with severe disabilities. Activities targeting Roma children continue to be limited to selected communities and not addressed in a systemic way towards the CP implementation.
Output 4 MATERNAL, CHILD AND ADOLESCENTS' HEALTH By 2022, the health system will improve its capacity to provide quality maternal and new-born, child and adolescent health services, including outreach, and to advise caregivers supporting childcare, growth and development.	Pregnant adolescents Pregnant women and children with HIV/AIDS Most vulnerable MARA and EVA (to a limited extent)	UNICEF activities targeted specifically these categories of vulnerable children and young women. Outreach activities for the YFHC targeted specifically young boys/men (because data show that young girls/women represented 70% of beneficiaries of YFHC) and most vulnerable MARA and EVA. As a result the coverage of the MARA and EVA increased. ⁵⁸	Children, young people and pregnant women from poor families and from rural areas, far from urban established healthcare services	Although efforts have been made to increase access to healthcare services for children, young people and pregnant women from poor families and from rural areas, far from urban established healthcare services, bottlenecks that are specific to the healthcare system are still affecting the access of these categories to needed services. ⁵⁹
Output 5 SOCIAL PROTECTION By 2022, the social protection system and mechanisms will have the capacity to reach the most deprived families with children, will be able to deliver equitable services and financial assistance.	Children from poor households	By definition, the activities in the area of social protection target children from poor families and the families themselves.	Children in rural areas and municipalities with low capacity to implement social protection services.	Beside strategic and legal provisions, UNICEF work was focused on modelling and pilot activities for capacity building at local level to improve child social protection, therefore children from communities where LPA and other institutions did not benefit from capacity building activities remain at risk.
COVID-19 PREVENT AND ADDRESS SECONDARY IMPACT OF THE OUTBREAK Humanitarian activities aimed to support the national response to limit the secondary impact of the crisis through capacity building, provision of essential supplies, services, and technical assistance, research and assessment.	Children at risk of being victims of violence	An online training was organized for 10,474 managerial and didactical staff (81.4%) on positive parenting for early childhood development (ECD) during the pandemic and recovery period, <i>with indirect expected results in raising children awareness and addressability to channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse</i>	Children with limited access to online education	16,000 students (5% of total) and 3,000 teachers (11% of total) have been identified without access to ICT technology and the most affected were children in rural areas, coming from poor households, and having less educated parents. However, these data were not available from the beginning and UNICEF focused on the initiation of the study on the profile of out-of-school children and adolescents, in order to further support the MECR to develop and implement dedicated interventions for these children.
Outcome 2 – SOCIAL CHANGE FOR CHILD RIGHTS				

⁵⁸ See case study on UNICEF contribution in the area of youth empowerment and health in Annex 2.

⁵⁹ See case study on UNICEF contribution in the area of youth empowerment and health in Annex 2.

By 2022, Moldova society will have knowledge on fundamental child rights and fulfil its obligations, effectively support social outcomes for children, and children and adolescents will be empowered to claim their rights.				
Output 6 DUTY BEARER'S ENGAGEMENT IN CHILD RIGHTS By 2022, all duty bearers have capacities and skills to fulfil their obligations for realization of child rights.	Vulnerable pregnant women and mothers Children victims of violence CwD	Activities targeting duty bearers in relation with vulnerable pregnant women and mothers, children victims of violence and CwD have been identified.	Children offenders and victims of crimes	Although UNICEF implemented activities targeting specialists in the law-enforcement and judiciary fields, the attitudes and decisions of these specialists continue to favour a coercive approach for children in conflict with the law.
			Children from rural areas and municipalities with low capacity to implement child protection activities	Besides strategic and legal provisions, UNICEF work was focused on modelling and pilot activities for capacity building at local level to improve child protection, therefore children from communities where LPA and other institutions did not benefit from capacity building activities remain at risk.
Output 7 CAREGIVERS' CHILD CARE CAPACITIES AND SKILLS AND Output 9 COMMUNITY LEVEL MODELING	n/a Increased benefits for CwD	Activities are designed to target all children		
Output 8 EMPOWERING ADOLESCENTS By 2022, all adolescents and youth will be empowered and have opportunities to claim for and support realization of child rights and will be able to adopt positive, healthy behaviours	n/a	Activities for youth empowerment are designed to target all adolescent and young people, but don't take into consideration the most vulnerable ones	All vulnerable adolescents and especially: - young people from ethnic minorities - young people with disabilities - young people from rural areas - young boys	As in the case of the national youth policy, UNICEF activities in the youth field are treating 'youth' as a homogeneous group without distinguishing specific groups according to age, sex, place of residence, ethnicity, gender identity ⁶⁰ Although available data show that girls participate to a significant larger extent to empowering and enabling activities, there were no activities identified targeting young boys (except for the outreach activities for YFHC)

⁶⁰ Comprehensive Youth Sector Analysis, 2020.

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

There is a general agreement among stakeholders that achieved results of UNICEF's Country Programme are sustainable. This is supported by the conclusions of most studies and evaluations in specific areas (education, health, youth etc.).

However, the sustainability is affected by the significant risks generated by COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic and social impact for the most vulnerable. We did not identify other important risks for the sustainability of the Country Programme results. For all areas of impact identified the trend was positive until 2020, allowing for high confidence that results will be sustained. **Concerning the impact of COVID-19, the extent of this risk for the future remains to be measured, but the consistent work of UNICEF in close cooperation with the Government and LPA to respond to the COVID-19 crisis allows for cautious optimism related to the sustainability of obtained results beyond 2021.**

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 CO utilised a wide range of strategies, as described in UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and all of them proved to be effective, especially when combined.

The summary of the strategies used by UNICEF Kyrgyzstan is presented in Annex 1 The change strategies most often used are:

- **Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children**, especially by influencing domestic planning, financing and the delivery of services for children, using, as a rule, **two main tools**:
 - o **technical assistance support provided to key institutions (and duty bearers)**, for example the National Council for Child Rights Protection, the Republican Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance, healthcare providers.
 - o **the help and cooperation of implementing partners.**
- **Using the power of evidence to drive change for children** by providing evaluation and research in policy making 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.

The development of the National Child Protection Programme 2021–2025 and its Action Plan 2021–2025, the new Education Sector Strategy 2021–2030 and medium-term Implementation Programme 2021–2025, the National Health Strategy 2020-2030, the National Immunization Programme 2021-2025, the National Programme on HIV/STI Prevention and Control 2021-2025, the National Programme on Non-Communicable Diseases 2021-2025 are based on this strategy, as well as the drafting and adoption of Law 299/2018 or Law 112/2020.

- **Fostering innovation in programming and advocacy for children** by promoting modelling or pilot projects, most often in partnership with Local Public Authorities and local implementing partners.

One of the most important models is the one of cross-sector engagement in children's issues at local level, further supported in the District of Sîngerei, initiated before 2018. Several other piloting projects have been initiated at local level and started generating results for children in the selected communities (e.i.: Strengthened Gender Action in Cahul and Ungheni districts, also known as the EVA Project, the ECD centres piloted in Sîngerei and Călărași districts etc.)

Moreover, at national level, in the area of justice for children, pilot initiatives have been supported for children victims and witnesses of crime (Barnahus-type centres) and for children in conflict with the law (the educational probation programme) and both initiatives have been successfully institutionalized within the judiciary.

- **Winning support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public** through communication for development and behaviour change, but also through advocacy activities and trainings with a twofold objective: developing competences/capacities and influencing attitudes and behaviours, among duty bearers, caregivers, but also among children and adolescents.

The case studies conducted using process tracing 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 Moldova in selected areas of impact

Area of impact	Posterior level of confidence that the claims about UNICEF contribution to the impact is true	Strategies used – in (chrono)logical order
Youth empowerment and health	We can be cautiously confident that UNICEF contributed in a substantial manner to the establishment, development, quality, accessibility, addressability and sustainability of youth friendly health services and, in this way, it also contributed to empowering young people to participate to decision making concerning their life, including the very private and serious aspects related to their health. The analysis allows us to be more confident about the addressability of the services and their positive impact on youth empowerment, but a bit less so about the quality of the services and their coverage, especially for young people from rural areas.	1. Fostering innovation in programming and advocacy for children <i>1.1. Implementing modelling/piloting projects</i> 2. Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children <i>2.1. Technical assistance to key institutions</i> <i>2.2. Training provided by implementing partners</i> 3. Winning support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public <i>3.1. Outreach campaigns</i>
Justice for children	We can only be more confident than not that UNICEF contributed to the overall improvement of the situation of children victims, witnesses and perpetrators of crimes, in contact with the judiciary (including police response, legal investigations, probation). The analysis shows that UNICEF undertook and supported a large number of activities in the field of justice for children and we are highly confident or even reasonably certain these activities have short term results for the directly targeted children. Evidence also shows that UNICEF involvement determined improved legislation or prevented the legal framework (i.e. the law regarding children with deviant behaviour – child offenders under the legal age for criminal liability) to be adopted without respecting the fundamental rights and interests of the child.	1. Fostering innovation in programming and advocacy for children <i>1.1. Implementing modelling/piloting projects</i> 2. Using the power of evidence to drive change for children <i>2.1. Advocacy for strategic and legal provisions</i> 3. Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children <i>3.1. Technical assistance to key institutions</i> 4. Winning support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public <i>4.1. Winning support from the specialists</i> No campaign to gain support from the wider public
Inclusive education	We can only be more confident than not that UNICEF contributed to the overall improvement of the inclusion of children with SNE and CwD in the mainstream education institutions. The analysis shows that UNICEF undertook and supported a large number of activities in the field inclusive education, and we are highly confident these activities have short term results for the directly targeted professionals and contributed to raised capacity of schools and teachers to receive and to work with children with SNE and CwD. Evidence also shows that UNICEF involvement determined improved legislation in the field.	1. Using the power of evidence to drive change for children <i>1.1. Advocacy for strategic and legal provisions</i> 2. Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children <i>2.1. Technical assistance to key institutions</i> <i>2.2. Training provided by implementing partners</i> 3. Winning support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public <i>3.1. Winning support from the specialists</i> <i>3.2. Winning support from the wider public – older campaigns</i>

Four main lessons can be learned from the three cases:

- Innovative approach, based on modelling/piloting projects can be successfully scaled up if/when followed by intensive support for institutional development.
- Adopting strategic and legal provisions is key for the change and, in some areas, the advocacy is an indispensable step for further change. However, this evidence-based advocacy is not generating change for children at scale directly, because most of the existing bottlenecks are not legal, but institutional and related to practice.

- Therefore, developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for institutional change in the interest of the child is a key strategy for effective contributions by UNICEF.
- The strategy of winning support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public needs to (almost) always be applied, using separate tools, targeting both the decision-makers and specialist and the wider public. Generating the demand for quality services for children, adolescents and young people, caregivers and the general public is a key step in changing social norms and generating sustainable impact for children.

4. Conclusions, lessons learned and forward-looking recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

The Country Programme 2018-2022 has been implemented, until 2021, under challenging conditions determined by the complex needs of children in Moldova, the institutional and political instability that affected the country since 2013, the restrictions and effects of COVID-19 pandemic. This context remains sensitive and unpredictable, and UNICEF Moldova needs to take it into consideration when planning for the future.

UNICEF capacity to address children long-lasting and changing needs

The evaluation shows that UNICEF Moldova has successfully addressed most of the important pressing needs of the children in the country, especially the vulnerable children, and supported policy and institutional development for the benefit of these children. The programme of UNICEF Moldova and the advocacy activities addressed the needs of children victims of violence neglect and exploitation (especially in Chişinău and its metropolitan area, about one quarter of the Moldavian population), children with special educational needs and with disabilities, children in residential institutions, children in conflict with the law and in probation programmes, pregnant adolescents and young mothers, pregnant women and children with HIV/AIDS, most at risk adolescents and especially vulnerable adolescents (MARA and EVA), children from poor households.

Data analysis and research role in UNICEF work is essential for two key reasons. On one hand, data analysis and research inform UNICEF CO on the needs of the children and the effectiveness of existing measures addressing these needs, as well as supports the CO in making decisions (during programme planning and implementation) related to priorities and effective strategies. On the other hand, evidence generation is the most important tool used for advocacy in the dialogue between UNICEF and the Government of the Republic of Moldova. These reports are very effective in guiding UNICEF towards designing and implementing interventions addressing the most vulnerable children, thus focusing their work on most pressing needs.

However, the evidence-based advocacy needs to be complemented by other strategies in order to improve policies and the realization of children rights in Moldova. The most important complementary strategy to evidence-based advocacy is the work with partners. Therefore, the ability of UNICEF to leverage different partners advantages is essential for advocacy and the impact for children at scale due to improved policies.

On the other hand, despite good identification of needs, there is a small number of groups of vulnerable and marginalised children less covered by UNICEF work: Roma children (especially girls), homeless children, children with severe disabilities. In these cases, the lack of impact on these groups of vulnerable and marginalised children is generated by the lack or limited number of UNICEF activities targeting them directly. Groups of vulnerable children covered only within the limits of modelling projects are: children from rural areas and municipalities with low capacity to implement prevention mechanisms, children victims or witness to crime with no access to regional centres in Chişinău and Bălţi. This limited impact of UNICEF concerning these groups of children is directly linked with the lessons learned concerning the impact of locally implemented pilot or modelling projects (presented below).

UNICEF contribution to gender equality and addressing social norms contrary to gender equality and other child rights

A special note needs to be made concerning UNICEF relevance and impact in addressing gender equality. UNICEF Moldova exhibits many good practices for the integration of gender equality in its activities in the area of health and youth empowerment and engagement could be transferred to other Country Offices. Still, moving towards achieving the gender transformative approaches there is a need to focus more on addressing persistent intersectionality or compounded discrimination/inequalities especially gender-ethnicity, gender-place of residence, gender-disability and the gender dimension of justice for

children. For example, gender stereotypes are stronger in rural⁶¹ areas and the limitations in accessing tertiary education and other services makes girls in rural areas particularly vulnerable, there is no specific programme component or project targeting girls in rural areas. Roma girls are also particularly vulnerable according to studies, with limited clear data available on the gender-ethnicity intersection, but there are very few initiatives of UNICEF Moldova targeting Roma girls with tailored measures, starting with better data collection.

UNICEF work with partners

UNICEF Moldova works effectively with a range of different partners to make change for children and their families in the country and successfully used its comparative advantages related to its expertise, strategic focus and adaptability to build and sustain effective partnership for children rights and well-being with the Government of the Republic of Moldova, other key public institutions at central level (like the Ombudsperson for the Rights of the Child) and at local level, international organisations and partners and civil society organisations.

The Country Office kept its partnerships, with public institutions and CSOs, during the constant political changes and was also successful in building new and effective partnerships and in integrating them in a strong network of support for advocacy, communication for development and system strengthening activities. In this context, the authorities' commitment for human rights and openness to cooperation with UNICEF, despite the frequent changes of government, was an important factor supporting UNICEF results. Moreover, the quality of cooperation and partnerships built by UNICEF CO, as we concluded when presenting the assessment under the coherence evaluation criterion, was very important in supporting the impact of UNICEF Country Programme.

Thus, the evaluation shows that UNICEF work with partners is very important and valuable. However, except for the partnership with the Government, the work with the other partners is not included in the CPD as a strategic element. Taking into account the value of the partnership, an explicit integration of the strategic approach to partnerships in the Country Programme Document and the theory of change of the programme is advisable and a recommendation concerning it is included in this evaluation. In the current programming period the partnerships with the EU, GPE Secretariat, USAID, ADA, UNDP, UNW, UNFPA, international NGOs are mentioned in the Strategy Note and this supports UNICEF work with and for a large number of children in the country, including the most vulnerable

UNICEF impact and limitations

In this context, in most of the areas where UNICEF Moldova works, available evidence shows important progress in the realization of child rights in Moldova. The most important results for children of UNICEF and of the Government of the Republic of Moldova with UNICEF support are: the adoption of important legal provisions strengthening the legal framework ensuring child rights (Law 112/2020); improved impact of child benefits and Social Aid on child poverty; improved gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education; increased proportion of vulnerable pregnant mothers using social protection mechanisms; increased number of CwD supported through cross-sectoral coordination mechanism in targeted districts; considerable increase of the percentage of adolescents who indicate that their views were taken seriously in decisions made at home, school and in their community (from U-Report); increased addressability to Youth Friendly Health Services; increased availability of better services for children in contact and in conflict with the law. Limited, but positive results have been achieved concerning the improvements in the legislation and legal practice concerning children in contact and in conflict with the law in Moldova and the percentage of caregivers who accept children with disabilities in regular pre-schools and schools.

UNICEF Moldova made important contributions to the progress observed and presented, representing positive changes in the life of children at scale in Moldova. A comprehensive account

⁶¹ Diana Cheianu-Andrei, Iurie Perevoznic, Angelina Zaporozjan-Pîrgari [et al.], "Men and gender equality in the Republic of Moldova"; Women's Law Center, Center for Investigation and Consultation "SocioPolis". – Chişinău, 2015, <https://promundoglobal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/IMAGES-Moldova-English-web.pdf>. Also: "Violence against women, stereotypes and gender pay gap at the centre of the dialogue between the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Republic of Moldova" <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/Pages/NewsDetail.aspx?NewsID=25587&LangID=E>

of UNICEF contribution to the reported impact is presented in Annex 1 and specific detailed examples are analysed as part of the process tracing case studies for three areas: (1) inclusive education, (2) justice for children and (3) adolescents and youth participation and health. The case studies are briefly summarised below in this report section and presented in detail in Annex 2.

For all outputs envisaged by the Country Programme, UNICEF strategies that generated an impact for institutional change are:

- advocacy for policy development and change regarding national strategies and the legal framework
- technical assistance to key institutions for child rights and services: the National Council for Child Rights Protection, the Ombudsperson for Child Rights, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection etc.
- support for training of the duty bearers in the fields of education, health, law-enforcement and judiciary, child protection, including training for decision and local policy makers in the LPA.

At local level, in selected districts and municipalities, where modelling and pilot projects have been implemented, namely in Sîngerei and Cișinău (and to a lesser extent Călărași, Criuleni and Rîșcani), a more significant impact was generated in the fields of inclusive and quality education, multidisciplinary/cross-sectoral work, especially for early childhood development and early intervention for children with disabilities, but also in respect to general improvements in the LPA approach to child and social protection and financing these areas. Recently, UNICEF started working in Cahul and Ungheni (within the project EU4Moldova Focal Regions, financed by EU) and a similar impact is expected in these regions as well.

To a certain extent, UNICEF also contributed to behavioural changes of duty bearers, caregivers (parents) and the general public. In the case of duty bearers, this contribution to behavioural changes was possible only due to the large number of trainings and events (seminars, workshops, round tables, and conferences) organised by UNICEF, and in this respect advocacy and communication for behaviour change had a synergic impact.

However, in many sectors social norms are still not favorable to child rights, like in the case of integration of children with disabilities in mainstream education or the reintegration of young people in conflict with the law, the attitude of professionals and the wider public remains detrimental to systemic change.

UNICEF response to COVID-19

UNICEF continued to pay attention to the needs of children in Moldova during the Country Programme implementation in 2020 and 2021, when the focus partly was shifted to understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Answering the challenges of COVID-19 and its effects, UNICEF Moldova mobilised fast to support the Government** to ensure basic safety to front-line workers. Stakeholders appreciated as instrumental and undoubtedly impactful UNICEF contribution to the response to COVID-19.

Moreover, although the COVID-19 outbreak demanded a change in strategy from advocacy to services and equipment provision, **UNICEF continued its advocacy and capacity building activities**, in order to ensure an effective and sustainable response from the key respondent institutions. Therefore, specific technical assistance and capacity building activities have been also implemented in the field of child protection, education, health, immunization and ECD. In this context, **UNICEF's results under the Country Programme are sustainable, but significant sustainability risks are still generated by COVID-19 pandemic.**

4.2. Lessons learned

The **impact of UNICEF Moldova is hindered by important horizontal bottlenecks and risks**, identified by the CO and stakeholders: (a) the political and institutional instability, (b) the limited cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation, (c) the limited capacity for service provision for the realisation of child rights at central and local level, (d) the continuous loss of institutional capacity

already developed because of the high turnover of civil servants and specialist involved in providing services for children.

One of the key lessons learned is that **adopting strategic and legal provisions is key for the change and, in some areas, the advocacy is an indispensable step for further change. However, this evidence-based advocacy is not directly generating change for children at scale, because most of the existing bottlenecks are not legal, but institutional and related to practice.** Moreover, an important lesson learned is that sector specific bottlenecks are also important limitations for the impact at national scale, for all vulnerable children in the country. Among these sectorial bottlenecks: the systemic problems of the healthcare system (including general quality issues in healthcare institutions and the corruption, limiting access to healthcare services for the vulnerable and marginalized children), systemic problems of the judiciary (including effective limitation of judiciary independence and resistance to change in the system).

Another lesson learned in connection with the institutional and practical bottlenecks, hindering UNICEF impact, is **the importance of ensuring budgeting mechanisms for all policies proposed or reformed.** Usually, a policy is advocated and it is often piloted or modelled before scaling-up. Results from pilot or modelling activities are used in the advocacy for scaling up. This is the case in the work of UNICEF Moldova concerning inclusive education or the Barnahus type centres for children in contact with the judiciary. However, budget limitations can represent one of the causes for limited capacity at local level for policy implementation and it is often both an issue related to the political will and the technical budgetary planning mechanisms. These latter mechanisms need to be addressed from the beginning, as in was successfully done in the case of youth friendly health services.

On the other hand, political instability and the multiple central government reforms made advocacy for national policies a complicated and slow endeavour. In this context, UNICEF Moldova developed partnerships with local public authorities. It focussed on addressing multiple bottlenecks identified at local level, including the alienation of local governments from decision-making processes, various misconceptions about the decentralization process and limited understanding by local public authorities of public finance mechanisms. **Several local initiatives have been implemented and their results and lessons organised for advocacy with the key message that sub-national decision-making arena is a critical point of change,** and local governments need enhanced communication on the benefits of decentralization, as well as increased attention to their capacity-building needs. **Political stabilization since the beginning of 2021 brings the opportunity to obtain results in national reforms addressing the bottlenecks identified at local level and valorising UNICEF experience in working with local public authorities since 2018.**

Considering the political and institutional instability in Moldova between 2013 and 2019, a key role in the success of UNICEF was cooperating with the government's middle management (Heads of Directorates positions in line Ministries) and of the institutions like the Republican Centre for Psycho-pedagogical Assistance, the National Bureau of Statistics, the National Probation Inspectorate. UNICEF CO learned that the government's middle-management staff can substantially mitigate the adverse impact of high political turmoil on country office programme implementation and can generate a form of consensus, especially when it concerns activities which are less politically sensitive, related to institutional and staff capacity building or new uncontroversial programmes.

4.3. Recommendations

The recommendations apply to the overall strategy, thematic focus and balance of the programme. The aim is to propose an appropriate continuation and development based on the partnerships, teamwork and results of the 2018–2022 Country Programme – taking into account the challenges encountered.

All recommendations are addressed to UNICEF CO in Moldova and have been discussed with the CO team in October 2021.

Recommendation 1. To ensure impact and sustainability of pilot and modeling projects, for the current and future projects implemented at local level a clear exit strategy needs to be developed. In the case of future projects, the exit strategy should be developed in the planning stage of the intervention and together with partners.

The evaluation shows that sector specific bottlenecks (e.g., in the health sector or in the judiciary) and the limited capacity of institutions at local level represent the most important limitations to scaling-up UNICEF models successfully, sustainably and with national impact. Therefore, UNICEF should use exit strategies aiming at generating scaling-up nationally for the successful pilot or modelling projects. These strategies should include:

- a more thorough analysis of sector specific bottlenecks (for example in healthcare, education, judiciary, public administration);
- addressing bottlenecks related to institutional capacity and resources at national level and in all municipalities (not only in selected municipalities and districts) advocating for building activities, implemented by public institutions, targeting front-line professionals (educators, teachers, social assistants, health professionals) and parents/caregivers;
- addressing budgeting from the beginning of each model, following the good practice in the case of youth friendly health services and involving the Ministry of Finance as much as possible;
- gaining support from partners on models, including other UN agencies, international organisations/development partners and civil society to enhance the impact of advocacy and to contribute to the larger task of supporting institutional strengthening at local level, but at national scale;
- documenting and evaluating the pilot or monitored projects, as well as advocacy strategies to use and present the collected evidence and conclusions to the government.

The exit strategies need to be flexible and adapted if political and institutional changes require modifications of the plan for scaling-up.

Recommendation 2. Gender should be mainstreamed in all sectors of UNICEF work, ensuring that gender-transformative actions are planned and implemented, especially in the case of intersectoral vulnerabilities.

The CO should fully consider the recommendations from the Gender Programmatic Review conducted in 2021.

Specific gender needs and vulnerabilities of girls and women should be taken into account and, in this context, gender responsive actions should be planned targeting groups that have not been in the primary focus of UNICEF Moldova in the previous programme. Specific issues to be taken into account include the intersection of gender with other vulnerabilities:

- The participation to education (beyond primary education) of Roma girls;
- The risk of child marriage in traditional communities (especially Roma communities, but not exclusively);
- Protecting and addressing specific needs of girls and young women victims of crime, including girls and young women victims of violence, exploitation and traffic;
- Pregnant women from poor families and rural areas, far from urban established youth friendly healthcare services.

Recommendation 3. The future Country Programme should include both humanitarian and policy development elements addressing the long-term effects of COVID-19 pandemic on children, given the risks to sustainability generated by the pandemic and its social and economic effects.

The capacity of the CO to mobilise in emergency situations should be strengthened and embedded in the Country Programme.

The evaluation was not focused on the long-term impact of COVID-19 pandemic on children, but available information show that COVID-19 pandemic can generate negative effects related to: increased

risk of poverty (generated by lost employment of care givers), quality of learning (generated by improperly implemented on-line schooling), increased health risk among vulnerable children, suffering from chronic illnesses and that had limited access to health care during the pandemic.

Policies advocated in response to the new needs should take into account good practices experienced in other countries or at local level in ensuring improved quality of learning and access to education, developing more equitable learning outcomes, and enhancing the access to social protection. Moreover, engaging partners and developing strategies to leverage resources for children affected by the changes generate by COVID-19 pandemic should be integrated in the future strategies, based on good results of partnership engagement from the current country programme implementation.

Recommendation 4. Finalizing and adopting the advocacy and partnership strategy, articulating the strategic value of partnership for each group of organizations (UN agencies, the EU, other international organization, the civil society).

Partnerships proved instrumental in ensuring the success of the other strategies employed and lessons learned from previous challenges show that partnerships support UNICEF impact on policies for children and the most impactful activities are implemented in partnership. Planning partnerships in a long-term strategic way is, therefore, important to maintain UNICEF coherence and impact.

Recommendation 5. To address the needs of children with multiple vulnerabilities, advocacy and technical assistance is needed to strengthen integrated social responses and services, connecting different sectors that need to work together to ensure children access to basic and specialised services.

The evaluation shows that UNICEF work was less impactful for children with multiple vulnerabilities, and this is closely related to the persistent bottleneck related to limited cross-sectoral and inter-institutional cooperation and the limited capacity for social service provision at local level.

The sectoral and cross-sectoral practice at local level can only be achieved if clear processes enable effective collaboration between professionals and services, across social protection, health and education sectors. Moreover, evidence confirmed capacity gaps in the provision of social services at the local level. The sectoral and cross-sectoral practice at local level can only be achieved if social protection and social work is playing its role and, at the moment, this role is not clear enough for the local public authorities, other duty bearers and the caregivers (that should be able address their needs to social workers). Moreover, evidence show there is not enough capacity for service provision at local level.

This recommendation should be taken into account together with recommendation no. 2.

Recommendation 6. To address the limited impact of youth participation initiatives, UNICEF Country Office should develop initiatives supporting wide children and young people's participation to decision making.

The initiatives regarding policies, programmes and services should include raising awareness among the young people and the adults on the importance of youth participation in all spheres and sectors; education young people and adults (through parenting trainings) on the participation opportunities; develop new participation platforms and opportunities; continue building capacities of youth workers; strengthening the participatory mechanisms at all levels of decision-making and paying special attention to feedback mechanisms and outreach to youth with diverse backgrounds; strengthening the tools for participatory monitoring, revision and evaluation programmes and budgets for youth.

Recommendation 7. Continue and strengthen the evidence based innovative and diverse approaches in Communication for Development and Behaviour Change (C4D and C4BC). This recommendation is formulated considering the significant importance of social norms as hindering factors for the promotion of child rights in all communities and families. UNICEF focus should include capacity building for partners and state authorities to ensure systematic approach shifting from stand-alone donor-driven campaigns; evidence generation and social listening to inform C4D and C4BC strategies, interventions and messages; digital engagement, engagement of young people; as well as social mobilization and community engagement to contribute to knowledge building, uptake and demand of quality services, and changing harmful behaviours and social norms.

Recommendation 8. Introduce new internal monitoring tools to trace more clearly the change pathways from UNICEF activities to results for children. This will help UNICEF to better understand how results are generated and will support future impact evaluations.

Conducting Process Tracing analysis for this evaluation proved challenging, given the need to analyse a large body of evidence about the way in which UNICEF activities led to results: changed legislation, increased institutional capacity etc. Documenting the path from research and its conclusions and recommendations, to government policy decisions, including by keeping records of advocacy meetings and events, commitments made and draft policy documents will contribute to more effective learning from experience in future evaluations, showing what activities and strategies are more effective in determining policy change. Improving the registration of institutional memory and tracing advocacy activities (events, meetings with decision and policy makers and partners, the implementation of communication campaigns) in connection with policy decisions, declarations on policies or institutional changes could also allow for a better understanding of how policy change is happening.

Moreover, a consistent approach to trainings (for example using pre and post testing) and other capacity building activities targeting service providers, social workers or civil servants may help connecting the capacity building activities with observable institutional changes and will help UNICEF identify the best strategies and methods for capacity building.

5. Annexes

Annex 1. Summary analysis of UNICEF Moldova impact

The table below is mainly based on the reports of UNICEF Moldova CO.⁶²

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

Although most of the 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)
Winning support for the cause of children from decision-makers and the wider public	Communication
Using the power of evidence to drive change for children	Evidence based advocacy
Fostering innovation in programming and advocacy for children	Modelling/piloting
Developing and leveraging resources and partnerships for children	Resource mobilisation Partnership support
United Nations working together	UN partnership
Leveraging the power of business and markets for children	Business partnership

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
Outcome 1 5640/A0/05/501 EQUITABLE CHILD SENSITIVE SYSTEMS AND SERVICES By 2022, Moldova National systems and services are more inclusive, able to protect the rights of children, and respond	Percentage of districts that fully monitor, identify, assist and report on vulnerable children through the inter-sectoral mechanism to prevent and protect of children from violence, abuse, neglect, exploitation and trafficking (51289)	impact institutional change	- 0% (2016)	12% (18%)	- technical assistance for the National Council for Child Rights Protection (NCCRP) - UNICEF convened three regional roundtables of the District Councils for Child Rights Protection	Partnership support	UNICEF brand	-
	Impact of child benefits and Social Aid on child poverty (51316) measured in percentage points (p.p.) reduction of child poverty after receiving child benefits and Social Aid	impact – access to services / situation of children	2.0pp (2014)	4.4pp (3.0pp)	- UNICEF training modules on Public Finance Management (developed in 2018) were used to train 155 Local Public Authorities (LPAs) from 50 municipalities from three districts: Chisinau, Nisporeni and Singerei	Modelling / piloting Evidence based advocacy	Authorities support for cooperation	Poor children

⁶² Other sources used are mentioned in the table or notes.

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
to the needs of most vulnerable in an equitable way					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one of the recommendations from 2018/2019 simulation exercise – to increase the weighting of children from 0.5 to 0.75 in the calculation of Ajutor Social payments to households with children – was followed by the MHLSP as a mitigation measure to COVID-19 - a framework regulation on “social crèche” services proposed by UNICEF was also approved in 2018 	Partnership support		
	Gross enrolment ratio in pre-primary education (51313)	impact – access to services / situation of children	85% (2015)	93.9% (88%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF supported MECR with a methodology for organizing education during quarantine, special regulations for the 2020–2021 school year, and students’ and parents’ guides on safe behaviour during COVID-19 	Evidence based advocacy		n/a – the indicator and activities refer to all children
	Lower secondary education completion rate (51314)		84% (2015)	84.1% (87%)		Partnership support		
	Percentage of infants monitored in accordance with childcare growth and development standards, including home visiting (51315)	impact – access to services / situation of children	74% (2015)	75% (80%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF supported development of methodologies and trainings on home visiting - UNICEF supported the development of the Strategy on Positive Parenting an amendment to the Code of Education, article 55 to include activities on parental education was developed, and the Job Description for preschools’ personnel was adjusted to include parental education activities - UNICEF supported centres providing services to families with young children with disabilities 			The indicator refers to all children, but children with disabilities should benefit more
Output 1 5640/A0/05/501/001 OTP 1 - CHILDREN'S RIGHT TO PROTECTION By 2022, national stakeholders have functional mechanisms, capacities and skills to prevent and protect children against discrimination, exploitation and violence, and prevent abandonment, family separation and neglect as per the best interest of the child.	Municipalities that implement local inter-sectoral protocols for the protection of children from violence, abuse and neglect (23-01-L3-10)	impact - institutional change	20 (2017)	27 (27)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a Child Protection Strategy of the Chişinău Municipality (CPSCM) has been developed and approved by the authorities with UNICEF support - training and technical assistance in targeted municipalities 	Evidence based advocacy	The Agreement with EU emphasising the strategic policy development	-
	Percentage of gatekeeping commissions applying best interest of the child determination mechanism and case management tools (51248)	effectiveness	11% (4 commissions) (2015)	16.7% (36,1% - 13 commissions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - technical assistance for the new Child Protection Programme development (2021-2025) and the Action Plan for its implementation 	Partnership support		-
	Number of cases of violence reported by children through official mechanisms (51251) (Child Helpline)	impact – behaviour and attitudes change	11 (2016)	143 (30)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF donated technical equipment to strengthen the capacity and quality of the national child helpline - UNICEF supported awareness raising campaigns 	Resource mobilisation	UNICEF brand	Children victims of violence
	Proportion of new children entering residential care per year (51249)	impact – access to services /	10% (2015)	2.9% (6.4%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support for USAID and MHLSP for the ‘MEASURE’ evaluation - technical assistance for Law 112/2020 	Communication	Partnership support	Children in residential institutions

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
		situation of children					Quality of cooperation/ partnerships	Children left behind by migrant parents CwD
	Percentage of children victims of violence, neglect and exploitation whose cases have been closed (51250)	impact – access to services / situation of children	44% (1841/4 178 children) (2016)	67.3% (50%)	- Over 380 professionals in the judiciary trained on child rights and specific methods to work with children with UNICEF support			Children victims of violence, neglect and exploitation
	Sex and age disaggregated data on violence, exploitation and abuse of children are routinely collected, analysed and published and used to inform national planning processes (51384)	impact - institutional change	Score 1 (2017)	Score 2.5 (Score 2.5)	- technical assistance provided to the MHLSP and NBS	Evidence based advocacy		
Output 2 5640/A0/05/501/002 OTP 2 - JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN By 2022, justice system authorities and related support services have institutionalized procedures and practices to protect and re-integrate children in contact with the law.	Existence of procedures and services for children in contact with law that are applied and delivered in line with international norms (23-03-L3-03)	impact - institutional change	Score 1 (2017)	Score 2 (Score 2)	- The Barnahus type centre established in Chishinău by CNPAC with support from UNICEF. The centre had over 1,000 children beneficiaries in 2018-2020	Partnership support Modelling / piloting	Fundamental national commitment for human rights	Children victims and witness to crimes
	Percentage of districts with functioning inter-sectoral cooperation mechanism protecting children offenders (51244)	impact - institutional change	14% (5 distr.) (2015)	25% (25% - 9 districts)	- Law 299/2018 adopted with UNICEF support in drafting (<i>UNICEF used photos taken by children from the children prison (Goian Prison) – within a project for their integration - in the advocacy process</i>) - over 100 professionals in the judiciary trained on child rights and specific methods to work with children with UNICEF support - Pilot educational probation programme supported by UNICEF and probation staff trained - study on and support for works at “A.S. Makarenko” school for children in conflict with the law from the Transnistrian region	Evidence based advocacy Modelling / piloting		Child offenders Children with deviant behaviour
	Existence of publicly available routine administrative data generated by the systems on children involved in criminal and non-criminal cases (51245)	impact - institutional change	Score 1 (2016)	Score 2 (Score 2)	- Indicators under development by MoJ and NBS, with TA from UNICEF			
	Percentage of prosecutors applying diversion schemes toward children offenders (51241)	impact – behaviour and attitudes change	50% (2016)	22.4% (58%)	- In 2018 UNICEF supported the measurement of perception of judiciary professionals - Trainings and other advocacy events organised with UNICEF support by implementing partners	Partnership support		

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
	Number of cases involving children submitted for mediation (as generated by routine data collection system) (51242)	impact - institutional change	Score 1 (2016)	Score 1.5 (Score 1.5)	<i>No available data.</i>			Children victims and witness to crimes Child offenders
	Percentage of justice system staff at district level able to apply child friendly interviewing procedures for children victims and witnesses of crimes (51243)	impact - behaviour and attitudes change & institutional change	10% (2016)	25% (25%)	- Over 250 professionals (social and medical workers, police officers, teachers) from nine districts were trained with UNICEF support and are now able to properly document, refer, investigate and provide quality services for child victims/ witnesses of crimes	Partnership support	Fundamental national commitment for human rights UNICEF brand	
Output 3 5640/A0/05/501/003 OTP 3 - QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL By 2022, schools and pre-schools have capacity to apply and monitor quality teaching and learning and are able to address violence, drop-out and absenteeism.	System Strengthening - Early learning - Early learning policy and early learning programme including quality early learning curriculum and standards - score (1-4)	impact - policy change	Score 3 (2016)	Score 3 (Score 3)	- Methodologies developed with UNICEF support - Modelling and capacity building activities in Singerei district - In 2020, online training was organized for 10,474 managerial and didactical staff (81.4 per cent) on positive parenting for early childhood development (ECD) during the pandemic and recovery period - Proposals for funding schemes for preschools here	Evidence based advocacy Modelling / piloting Partnership support	Long term, consistent and perseverant intervention Quality of cooperation/ partnerships	Children with SEN CwD
	System Strengthening - Learning assessment - Existence of a well-functioning classroom assessment system, including for early grades - score (1-4)	impact - institutional change	Score 2 (2016)	Score 2.5 (Score 2.5)	- UNICEF supported the review of the evaluation and assessment in education, providing recommendation on the improvement of the system.			n/a - the indicator and activities refer to all children
	Availability of quality CFS/CFE standards that are consistent with Child Friendly Schools/education or similar models (51378)	impact - institutional change	Score 2.5 (2016)	Score 3 (Score 3)	- Implementation of Child Friendly School (CFS) standards and plans for standards implementation in piloted schools and rolling-out activities supported by UNICEF		Cooperation with LPA	
	Extent to which Education Management Information System (EMIS) provides quality and timely data (51382)	impact - institutional change	Score 2 (2016)	Score 2.5 (Score 2.5)	- Specific recommendations provided by studies in the field conducted by UNICEF (the comprehensive Education Sector Analysis and the evaluation of the Inclusive Education Programme) - UNICEF supports policy dialogue by co-organising the Annual National Conference on Inclusive Education	Evidence based advocacy	Quality of cooperation/ partnerships	
	Existence of curricula and support from educators, teachers and pre-school and school administrators that are inclusive of all children, including children with disabilities and Roma children (51381)	impact - institutional change	Score 2 (2016)	Score 2.5 (Score 2.5)	- UNICEF supported MEQR with a methodology for organizing education during quarantine, special regulations for the 2020-2021 school year, and students' and parents' guides on safe behaviour during COVID-19 - Methodologies developed and trainings conducted with UNICEF support for key staff in schools	Evidence based advocacy Modelling / piloting	Long term, consistent and perseverant intervention	Children with SEN CwD

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
	Education Sector Policy/Plan that includes holistic institutional capacity building to improve awareness, attitude and empowerment to address absenteeism, drop out and violence in and around schools (51372)	impact - policy change	Score 2.5 (2016)	Score 3 (Score 3)	- UNICEF supported the MECR to initiate the development of the new Education Sector Plan including the Education Strategy 2022–2030 and medium-term Programme/Action Plan 2022–2025. These are based on the evidence generated by the comprehensive education sector analysis conducted with the support of UNICEF and GPE. It also builds on the lessons learned from COVID-19 to create a more resilient education system, ready to ensure the continuity of learning in a changing environment	Partnership support	Quality of cooperation/ partnerships	Children with SEN CwD
	Existence of early learning policy and early learning programme including quality early learning curriculum and standards (51370)	impact - policy change	Score 3 (2016)	Score 3 (Score 3)				
Output 4 5640/A0/05/501/004 OTP 4 - MATERNAL, CHILD AND ADOLESCENTS' HEALTH By 2022, the health system has improved capacity to provide quality maternal and newborn, child and adolescent health services, including outreach, and to advise caregivers supporting child care, growth and development.	Health providers providing home-visiting services with adequate skills related to early detection and intervention for children with developmental risk, delay or disabilities (21-01-L3-04)	impact - institutional change & access to services	8 (2017)	26 (22)	- Child Care and Development Standards that include universal progressive home visiting for children aged 0-3 were developed with UNICEF support and approved by MHLSP - guidelines for nurses on applying universal-progressive home-visiting were developed with UNICEF support, approved, printed and disseminated among family doctors' nurses - the curricula for Medical University, Medical College and National Centre for Continuous Medical Education of Nurses that include home-visiting modules for pre-service and in-service trainings were also approved and implemented - over 500 nurses of family doctors acquired skills in delivering quality home-visiting services for children aged 0-3 y.o. and their families with UNICEF support	Evidence based advocacy Partnership support	Long term, consistent and perseverant intervention Quality of cooperation/ partnerships	Children with developmental risk, delay or disabilities
	Extent to which communication and social mobilization plan for routine and supplementary immunization is implemented by health providers (51409)	impact - institutional change	Score 1 (2016)	Score 2 (Score 2)	- ensuring the procurement of around 1.5 million doses through UNICEF Supply Division/year - an assessment of root causes of low coverage with immunization was conducted in 3 the most underperformed districts with UNICEF ECARO support. Three local action plans were developed, budgeted and validated with local and national stakeholders - capacity-building activities for family doctors and nurses on restarting routine vaccination and assuring safety in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic - with UNICEF support, an aLIVE live stream on the importance of vaccination with the participation of a paediatrician and an epidemiologist reached more than 14,500 people	Resource mobilisation Partnership support Communication UN partnership (with WHO)		n/a – the indicator and activities refer to all children

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
	Health Management Information System generates periodic reports with data disaggregated by age, sex (for relevant indicators) at national and sub-national level (51410)	impact institutional change	- Score 0 (2016)	Score 1 (Score 1.5)	- support to the MHLSP and NBS			
	Percentage of YFH Centres able to reach out and provide extended package of services to most vulnerable MARA and EVA (51407)	impact institutional change & access to services	- 13% (2016)	80% (20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF supported the strengthening capacities of volunteers and outreach workers of four Youth Friendly Health Centres to reach most at risk and especially vulnerable adolescent boys and girls with information related to health behavior and available health services tailored to their needs. Over 10,000 young people reached by outreach activities in 2018-2020 in 2018 the Government initiated the piloting of performance-based financing (PBF) for youth-friendly health services, developed with UNICEF Moldova support 	Evidence based advocacy Partnership support Communication	Long term, consistent and perseverant intervention Quality of cooperation/ partnerships	Most vulnerable MARA and EVA
Output 5 5640/A0/05/501/005 OTP 5 - SOCIAL PROTECTION By 2022, the social protection system and mechanisms have the capacity to reach the most deprived families with children, are able to deliver equitable services and financial assistance.	National government measurement of child poverty using multidimensional measures (25-01-L3-01)	impact institutional change	- Score 1 (2016)	Score 1.5 (Score 1.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NBS developed the thematic statistical publication "Children of Moldova" with UNICEF support. secondary data analysis of the Household Budget Survey, infographics, set of key core indicators etc. are publicly accessible on its webpage, the NCCRP and UNICEF Moldova websites and promoted through social media 	Evidence based advocacy	Long term, consistent and perseverant intervention	-
	Extent to which discrepancy in average childcare allowance levels for insured and uninsured beneficiaries is reduced (51284)	impact – access to services / situation of children	51% (2015)	22% (33%)	- one of the recommendations from 2018/2019 simulation exercise – to increase the weighting of children from 0.5 to 0.75 in the calculation of Ajutor Social payments to households with children – was followed by the MHLSP as a mitigation measure to COVID-19		Quality of cooperation/ partnerships	Poor children
	Share of HH with children from poorest quintile(s) receiving social payments (social assistance or child benefits) (51285)	impact – access to services / situation of children	32% (2016)	29.2% (40%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF training modules on Public Finance Management (developed in 2018) were used to train 155 Local Public Authorities (LPAs) from 50 municipalities from three districts: Chisinau, Nisporeni and Singerei a framework regulation on "social crèche" services proposed by UNICEF was also approved in 2018 	Modelling / piloting Partnership support	Partnership with LPA	
	Proportion of expenditures dedicated to social support services and benefits for children in targeted districts (51348)	impact institutional change	- Score 1 (2016)	Score 2 (Score 2)				
	Existence of strategies and mechanisms to increase inclusion of excluded children into social protection (51279)	impact - policy change	Score 1 (2016)	Score 1 (Score 1)	- Evaluation of the Child Protection Strategy (2014-2020) conducted with UNICEF support in 2019	Evidence based advocacy	The Agreement with EU emphasising the strategic	All categories of excluded children

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
					- Support was provided for the new Child Protection Programme development (2021-2025) and the Action Plan for its implementation		policy development UNICEF brand	
Output 6 – COVID-19 5640/A0/05/501/009 OTP 6 COVID-19 LIMIT H2H TRANSMISSION AND PROTECT INDIVIDUALS FROM EXPOSURE Humanitarian interventions to prevent human-to-human transmission of COVID-19 through infection prevention and control, and risk communication activities	Number of healthcare workers within health facilities and communities provided with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) with UNICEF support [COVIDSitRep]	effectiveness <u>indirect impact</u> - institutional change & access to services	0 (2016)	35,000 (35,000)	- UNICEF supported the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE) for front-line workers and the capacity-building of service providers in infection prevention and control and communication and community engagement	Resource mobilisation	Resources availability	n/a – the indicator and activities refer to all children
	Number of healthcare facility staff and community health workers trained in Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) with UNICEF support [COVIDSitRep]	effectiveness <u>indirect impact</u> - institutional change & access to services	0 (2019)	26,501 (30,000)	- UNICEF provided technical assistance to the MHLSP to develop a technical manual for working with children during the pandemic, for use by local authorities, service providers, individual specialists and caregivers - UNICEF continued to support the capacity-building of 300 family doctors and nurses on how to supervise child development and growth and make the early detection of developmental delays in the context of COVID-19 - UNICEF supported capacity building activities for medical staff (doctors, first, and nurses) in working with pregnant women and other patients remote and during COVID-19 pandemic			
Output 7 – COVID-19 5640/A0/05/501/010 OTP 7 - COVID-19 PREVENT AND ADDRESS SECONDARY IMPACT OF THE OUTBREAK Humanitarian activities aimed to support the national response to limit the secondary impact of the crisis through capacity building, provision of essential supplies, services, and technical assistance, research and assessment.	Number of children provided with teaching and learning materials to support home study in short term school closures with UNICEF support in the reporting year [COVID]	effectiveness <u>indirect impact</u> - access to services	0 (2019)	500 (500)	- UNICEF supported MECR with a methodology for organizing education during quarantine, special regulations for the 2020–2021 school year, and students' and parents' guides on safe behaviour during COVID-19. - online training of 8,351 managerial and teaching staff in general and boarding schools, and 12,945 preschool managerial and didactical staff plus 18,650 non-didactical staff	Evidence based advocacy Partnership support	Resources availability	
	Status of alternative care policies and programmes adapted to respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic [COVID] (93-01-L3-08)	impact - policy change	NO (2019)	NO (NO / YES for 2022)	- In the context of COVID-19, a rapid assessment report was produced by CCF Moldova in cooperation with the MHLSP, UNICEF and USAID funded Data for Impact project. It outlines the situation of the most affected families and children, the main challenges and bottlenecks in service provision and makes recommendations for the main stakeholders			
	Number of children and adults that have access to a safe and accessible channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse [COVIDSitRep]	impact – access to services / situation of children	4.000 (2019)	4,268 (4,500)	- online training was organized for 10,474 managerial and didactical staff (81.4 per cent) on positive parenting for early childhood development (ECD) during the pandemic and			

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
					recovery period, with indirect expected results in raising children awareness and addressability to channel to report sexual exploitation and abuse			
Outcome 2 5640/A0/05/502 SOCIAL CHANGE FOR CHILD RIGHTS By 2022, Moldova society has knowledge on fundamental child rights and fulfils its obligations, effectively supports social outcomes for children, and children and adolescents are empowered to claim their rights.	Percentage of caregivers who accept children with disabilities in regular pre-schools and schools (51288)	impact – behaviour and attitudes	pre-schools 19% schools 17% (2013)	pre-schools 24,5% (25%) schools 23% (23%)	- UNICEF works with PLA and schools to improve their capacity to work with other caregivers as well. Work has been focused on pilot districts and rolled-up based on advocacy by UNICEF	Modelling / piloting Partnership support	Partnership with LPA	CwD
	Proportion of vulnerable pregnant mothers using social protection mechanisms (51331)	impact – access to services / situation of children	0% (2016)	49% (20%)	No available information			Vulnerable pregnant mothers
	Percentage of caregivers applying positive parenting practices (51332)	impact – behaviour and attitudes	22% (2012)	26% (35%)	- the major provisions of the cross-sectoral Strategy on Positive Parenting, approved by the Government in 2016 and the core findings of the 2018 Study on Early Childhood Development Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Parents were used for developing the Program on Modelling of Parental Educators implemented in five regions of the country, covering 70 preschools. The Program was implemented by CNETIF CSO which carried out over 700 parental education activities. The facilitators of these activities were 210 parental educators-preschool managers, methodologists, educators and medical assistants. 140 community educators and medical assistants benefitted from on-the-job mentoring.	Evidence based advocacy Partnership support	Quality of cooperation/ partnerships	Children victims of violence
	Percentage of adolescents reporting that their views are listened and taken seriously (always, most of the time, and sometimes) at local (district)/central level) (51333)	impact – behaviour and attitudes	district level 38% central level 30% (2011)	district level 38% (45%) central level 45% (35%)	- In 2018 UNICEF Moldova piloted the implementation of a national curriculum on parenting of adolescents focusing on stimulating participation of adolescents in decision making processes, career orientation, non-violent communication and healthy-lifesty - In 2018 UNICEF Moldova, in partnership with National Youth Councils of Moldova (CNTM), developed youth-friendly guidelines for meaningful participation in school life and in community - Some 60 young people, members of LPAs and three pupils' councils were trained on strategic planning, efficient participation in school committees and decision making process, and	Modelling / piloting Communication	Partnership with LPA	n/a – the indicator and activities refer to all children

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
					local action plans to improve child participation in education and local decision making were developed			
	Proportion of children with disabilities supported through cross-sectoral coordination mechanism in targeted districts (51334)	impact – access to services / situation of children	0% (2017)	18% (18%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNICEF works with LPA and schools to improve their capacity to work with other caregivers as well. Work has been focused on pilot districts and rolled-up based on advocacy by UNICEF. - UNICEF supported centres providing services to families with young children with disabilities 	Modelling / piloting		CwD
Output 6 5640/A0/05/502/001 OTP 6 - DUTY BEARER'S ENGAGEMENT IN CHILD RIGHTS By 2022, all duty bearers have capacities and skills to fulfil their obligations for realization of child rights.	Number of endorsed EMRs with related activities included in 2020-2021 RWP, signed with the MHLSP and MECR (67623)	effectiveness	No EMR (2019)	Two EMRs (Two EMRs)	- UNICEF provided management tools for EMR	Evidence based advocacy	Quality of cooperation/ partnerships	-
	Proportion of prosecutors, police, judges and society members believing in successful social re-integration of children offenders and victims of crimes (51394)	impact – behaviour and attitudes	Score 1 (2017)	Score 2 (Score 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - study conducted with UNICEF support in 2018 - UNICEF supported several implementation partners for training and other activities (round tables, etc.) for prosecutors, police, judges and other professionals in the judiciary system 	Partnership support		Children offenders and victims of crimes
	Number of media able to report actively and ethically on child rights (51392)	impact – behaviour and attitudes	0 (2017)	2 (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in 2020, UNICEF implemented a media partnerships with The Centre for Investigative Journalism and the NGO Forum, who produced a number of media materials, including live talk shows, addressing the effects of COVID 19 on vulnerable women and children, but also to debunk myths and fake news - media partnerships have been implemented in line with planning in 2018 and 2019 	Communication		n/a – the indicator and activities refer to all children
	Number of businesses adopting Corporate Social Responsibility for child rights in their core business principles (51393)	impact – behaviour and attitudes	0 (2017)	2 (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in 2020 two public-private partnerships were initiated to support COVID-19-related communication for behaviour change - public-private partnerships have been implemented in line with planning in 2018 and 2019 	Business partnership		Depending on the CSR strategies
	Existence of domestic legislation and administrative guidance in accordance with the Concluding Observations of Committee on the Rights of the Child (51246)	impact – policy change	Score 0 (2017)	Score 2 (Score 2)	- in anticipation of the next UN CRC Periodic Review due in 2022, support was provided to NCCRP in scrutinizing CRC implementation at country level. UNICEF has also compiled the CRC concise concluding observations and distributed these to the NCCRP and other stakeholders to advocate implementation and evaluation	Partnership support		-
	The national coordinating mechanism on child rights protection ensures effective cross-sectoral coordination for the implementation of key child-related policies and strategies and addresses in	impact institutional change	Score 1 (2017)	Score 1.5 (Score 1.5)		UN partnership		

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantaged children benefiting
	timely manner emerging child rights issues (51389)							
Output 7 5640/A0/05/502/002 OTP 7 - CAREGIVERS' CHILD CARE CAPACITIES AND SKILLS By 2022, all caregivers have capacity and skills to take responsibility for a child care, health, development, education and protection, encourage and practice positive behavior.	Percentage of parents/caregivers having knowledge and skills to practice positive parenting with children 0-6 years of age (51375)	impact – behaviour and attitudes	Score 1 (2016)	Score 3 (Score 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - online training was organized for 10,474 managerial and didactical staff (81.4 per cent) on positive parenting for early childhood development (ECD) during the pandemic and recovery period (2020) - the major provisions of the cross-sectoral Strategy on Positive Parenting, approved by the Government in 2016 and the core findings of the 2018 Study on Early Childhood Development Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices of Parents were used for developing the Program on Modelling of Parental Educators implemented in five regions of the country, covering 70 preschools. The Program was implemented by CNETIF CSO which carried out over 700 parental education activities. The facilitators of these activities were 210 parental educators-preschool managers, methodologists, educators and medical assistants. 140 community educators and medical assistants benefitted from on-the-job mentoring. 	Partnership support	Quality of cooperation/partnerships	n/a – the indicator and activities refer to all children
	Extent to which school management committees at primary and secondary levels are actively involved and participate in the development of school improvement plans and monitoring of schools (51376)	impact – institutional change	Score 2 (2016)	Score 2 (Score 2)	- improvement plans implemented in pilot schools with UNICEF support based on self-school assessments in line with the Child Friendly School (CFS) standards	Modelling / piloting	Partnership with LPA	n/a – the indicator and activities refer to all children, but especially children with SEN and CwD
	Proportion of adolescents reporting that their parents or caregivers are the principal source of information about healthy life style and positive behaviours (51380)	impact – behaviour and attitudes	79% (2012)	80% (83%)	<i>See above the contribution on parenting</i>	Partnership support	Quality of cooperation/partnerships	n/a – the indicator and activities refer to all children
Output 8 5640/A0/05/502/003 OTP 8 - EMPOWERING ADOLESCENTS By 2022, all adolescents and youth are empowered and have opportunities to	Existence of a strengthened system for adolescent participation	impact – institutional change	Score 2 (2017)	Score 2.5 (Score 2.5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In 2018 UNICEF Moldova piloted the implementation of a national curriculum on parenting of adolescents focusing on stimulating participation of adolescents in decision making processes, career orientation, non-violent communication and healthy-lifestyle - In 2018 UNICEF Moldova, in partnership with National Youth Councils of Moldova (CNTM), developed youth-friendly guidelines for 	Modelling / piloting Communication	Partnership with LPA	n/a – the indicator and activities refer to all children

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
claim for and support realization of child rights and are able to adopt positive, healthy behaviours					<p>meaningful participation in school life and in community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some 60 young people, members of LPAs and three pupils' councils were trained on strategic planning, efficient participation in school committees and decision making process, and local action plans to improve child participation in education and local decision making were developed 			
	Number of innovative solutions proposed and implemented by adolescents and youth for effective child rights monitoring and addressing child right issues at local level in selected districts (51488)	effectiveness	0 (2017)	3 (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UPSHIFT implemented in 209 - in several communities and 2020 - online - Youth of Moldova for #GlobalGoals national campaign, by the National Youth Council of Moldova, supported by UNICEF, jointly with UNFPA and the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office - in 2019 			
	Percentage of adolescents who indicate that their views were taken seriously in decisions made at home, school and in their community (51401)	impact - behaviour and attitudes	at home 34% at school 15% in community 5% (2012)	at home 63% (40%) at school 40% (18%) in community 11% (10%)	<p><i>See above the contribution on parenting</i></p> <p><i>See above the contribution on youth participation</i></p>			
	Percentage of adolescents and youth actively participating in local decision-making processes via local youth structures and mechanisms in selected districts (51402)	impact - access to services / situation of children	3 (2017)	11 (11)				
	Number of UPSHIFT Pilots (67596)	effectiveness	7 (2019)	12 (28)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UPSHIFT implemented in 209 - in several communities and 2020 - online 			
	Positive changes in adolescents and youth healthy behaviours (smoking, alcohol abuse, substance consumption and STI prevention) (51489)	impact - behaviour and attitudes	Score 1 (2016)	Score 1.5 (Score 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The communication campaign "COOLtivam Sanatatea" implemented with UNICEF support <p><i>See also the outreach activities for the YFHC</i></p>	Communication		Adolescents with at risk behaviour.
	Students' participation in school management committees at primary and secondary levels in selected districts (Score 1-4, adjusted Global Standard Indicator) (51400)	impact - access to services / situation of children	Score 2 (2017)	Score 2.5 (Score 2)	No available information			n/a - the indicator and activities refer to all children

Outcome and outputs	Outcome and output indicators	Measurement of...	Baseline value (& year)	2020 value (& target)	UNICEF CO contribution	Strategies	Enabling factors	More disadvantage children benefiting
	Number of Youth Councils adequately financed and supported by local public authorities ensure meaningful adolescent participation in selected districts (51403)	impact – institutional change	0 (2017)	2 (3)	<i>No available information</i>			
	Number of U-reporters (67597)	effectiveness	6,000 (2019)	15,166 (25,000)	- UNICEF is the primary promoter of U-Report	Communication		
	Number of U-report polls shared with young people (67598)	effectiveness	20 (2019)	35 (24)				
Output 9 5640/A0/05/502/004 OTP 9 - COMMUNITY LEVEL MODELING By 2022, comprehensive models involving different national entities address the challenges in realization of all rights of the most vulnerable children in sustainable manner.	The system of determination of disability in children is in line with International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) framework to ensure social inclusion of the most vulnerable children through collaboration across the sectors	impact – policy change & institutional change	Score 1 (2017)	Score 2 (Score 2)	- UNICEF provided support to the National Council for Disability and Work Ability Assessment (NCDWAA) to revise and adjust criteria for determining the degree of disability in children, in line with International Classification of Functioning (ICF) piloted during 2019–2020	Evidence based advocacy		CwD
	ECD Centres that provide Integrated ECD services based on national standards in targeted districts (51383)	impact – institutional change	0 (2017)	5 (7)	- ECD centres supported by UNICEF	Modelling / piloting	Partnership with LPA	
	Number of targeted districts which identify and support children left behind by migrant parents (51386)	impact – institutional change	0 (2017)	3 (3)	- Modelling/pilot initiatives supported by UNICEF at local level include different approaches for children left behind by migrant parents			Children left behind by migrant parents
	Number of targeted districts with harmonized data collection systems that have disaggregated data to monitor the situation of vulnerable children (51388)	impact – institutional change	Score 1 (2017)	Score 1.5 (Score 2)	- UNICEF support the NBS and LPAs in developing measurements/indicators for evidence based decisions	Evidence based advocacy		All vulnerable children

Annex 2. Process Tracing – Case Studies

Methodology

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 structured 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 Moldova 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 evidences 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 evidences when documents are missing, also considering that evidences 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.

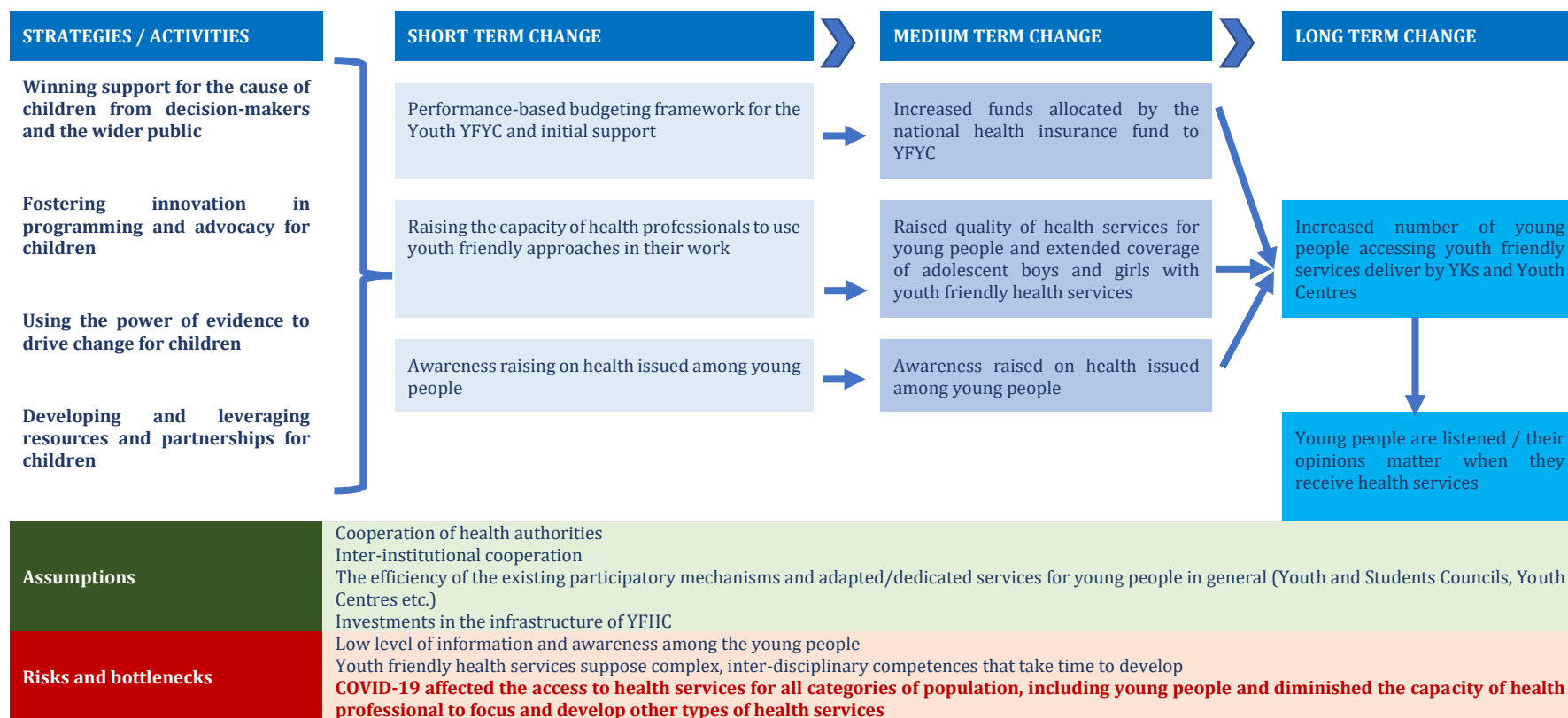
Assessment of UNICEF Moldova contribution in the area of adolescents and youth participation and health

The analysis in this section uses Process Tracing to measure UNICEF Moldova contribution in a selected area of impact, namely the participation and health of adolescents and youth. As underlined in the section dedicated to the methodology, we will present the **change claim chain**, as elaborated in the Inception Phase of the evaluation and immediately after. We will then present and analyse each claim in the logical chain presented and assess the level of confidence for each claim and globally.

Based on the initial research, the evaluation team formulated the following change claim chain (each claim numbered separately):

(1) UNICEF provided initial support and a performance-based budgeting framework for the Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHC) in Moldova, based on the result of a modelling/pilot project and (2) contributed to the raising the capacity of health professionals to use youth friendly approaches in their work. As a result, (3) the funds allocated by the national health insurance fund to YFHC increased substantially in a sustainable manner, (4) as well as the quality of their services and their coverage of adolescent boys and girls with youth friendly health services (YFHS). (5) UNICEF also contributed to the awareness raising on health issues among young people. The progresses in capacity of the YFHC and the health awareness of young people are leading to (6) an increased number of young people accessing youth friendly services delivered by Youth Centres (or Youth Clinics – YK) and (7) feeling that they are listened / their opinions matter when they receive health services.

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



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

Claim 1: UNICEF provided initial support and a performance-based budgeting framework for the Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHC) in Moldova, based on the result of a modelling/pilot project

a) Evidence

The evidence based on programme documents and reports provided by UNICEF and Neovita Centre shows that the establishment of the YFHS programme has been a gradual process, which began in 2002 with the creation of three pilot centres promoted in Moldova by UNICEF. This was followed by further capacity building and the founding of the first ten YFHCs in 2005. In 2007, these centres were integrated into the national healthcare system as part of primary health care (PHC). In 2008, a major success was achieved when the National Health Insurance Company (NHIC) started to reimburse YFHS.

In 2002, UNICEF Moldova in collaboration with the Râșcani Territorial Medical Association and the Chisinau LPA established the “Health for Youth” Association, which opened the Neovita Centre, one of the first YFHC. Since 2007, the Neovita Centre has been integrated into the public health system and functions as a resource centre for the network of youth-friendly health services.

In 2011, UNICEF initiated a process to scale-up YFHS to the national level in close partnership with Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection (MHLSP), National Resource Centre Neovita, Institute of Mother and Child Health / National Centre of Reproductive Health and Health for Youth NGO and funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Currently, the youth-friendly health services include 41 youth centres located in 35 districts. The Ministry of Health have been supported by several international agencies, including UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank, SDC and WHO.

The project implementation was informed by studies conducted by National and International agencies (UNICEF, WHO, Neovita YFHS Resource Centre, National Agency for Public Health etc), e.g. Healthy Behaviours among School aged Children (HBSC 2014), Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE 2017), Survey on Prevalence of non-communicable disease risk factors in Republic of Moldova (STEPS survey 2013), UNICEF Multi-country Study on Parenting of Adolescents (2017), Study on caregivers and adolescents’ perception and knowledge on parenting supported by UNICEF Moldova (2017) etc.

All these studies are publicly available and are heavily contributing to building the confidence that UNICEF provided instrumental initial support for the development of the YFHC network.

In 2018 the Government initiated the piloting of performance-based financing (PBF) for youth-friendly health services, developed with UNICEF Moldova support. UNICEF provided a handout documentation planning the pilot and providing the general guidance for the improved financing formula. Quantitative and qualitative indicators, comprising equity bonuses for underrepresented groups, and monitoring tools for the health services were approved. Gender dimensions focused on attracting boys to youth-friendly health services, as 70% of YFHC at that moment were girls. The pilot of the PBF mechanism was tested by Neovita at four of the services. The lessons learnt from the pilot were designed to inform decision-makers on further implementation of national level performance-based financing. Both the pilot design and the results of the pilot have been provided by UNICEF to support the claim.

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

Sensitivity– 0.9. The evaluators can be highly confident that UNICEF played an important role in the development of YGHs and enabled the government to apply performance-based financing (PBF), at least for the pilot in 2018 and 2018 of the performance indicators. Documents provided by UNICEF and Neovita Centre and all interviews with stakeholders in the field of health in Moldova underlined the critical importance of UNICEF contribution in the creation, scaling-up and capacity building of YFHC. For the pilot on performance-based financing (PBF), the plans provided by UNICEF and a resulting normative framework (Order no. 786/245-of MHLSP/NHIC from 22.06.2018) are available. Evidence on how the pilot in 2018 was used for the improvement of the services was not provided and could not be accessed by the evaluators, but reports from UNICEF and Neovita show that the performance indicators have been piloted at national level in 2019 and all interviews provided information about debates started in 2021 on reforming the financing systems.

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

Type I error probability– 0.25. Overall, the evaluators are confident that the evidence could not be observed if the claim is false. If the claim is false, this means that all documents and analysis provided by UNICEF, including the performance-based financing (PBF) framework have not been used by the MHLSP and by other stakeholder in the process of developing YFHC and their network. The large number of documents issued by third parties acknowledging UNICEF instrumental role and the unanimous acknowledgement of interviewed stakeholders allows us to be reasonably certain that the evidence on initial UNICEF support could not appear if the claim is false.

On the other hand, although UNICEF provided the performance-based budgeting framework for the YFHC statistics in line with the proposed performance indicators are provided for the four pilot centres, there is limited evidence to support that the pilot was implemented in complete accordance with the plan provided by UNICEF and that lessons have been learned for future development, as debates are organised in 2021 on the financing system and the future financing framework is still uncertain.

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 “UNICEF providing initial support and a performance-based budgeting framework for the Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHC) in Moldova, based on the result of a modelling/pilot project”, 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?	0.9
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 2: UNICEF contributed to the raising the capacity of health professionals to use youth friendly approaches in their work

a) Evidence

Documents and interviews show that UNICEF has been much more involved in the development of YFHC before 2018, when it benefited from funding from SDC and implemented complex activities. Since 2014, UNICEF focus was on increasing of the demand of YFHS among target groups (adolescent boys and girls, their families and caregivers, front line professionals) through strengthening of the quality of YFHS, cross-sectoral cooperation with Local Public Authorities, educational and social protection sectors at the district and local level and promotion of adolescent participation through volunteering and acting as promoter of the healthy life style, healthy seeking behaviours and advocacy at local and national level. After 2018 the activity was focusses even more on the communication for behaviour change (C4BC) in order to further increase the demand. UNICEF supported the development and implementation of C4BC Strategy for healthy behaviour among adolescent boys and girls. Capacity building of YFHC professionals was implemented in 5 target localities for better communication and support for implementation local Plan for promotion of healthy behaviours among boys and girls.

Before the current programme period, within the scaling-up and capacity building activities until 2017, UNICEF and “Health for Youth” Association cooperated for the training of health professionals in the YFHC and in 2012-2016 they also supported the State University of Medicine and Pharmacy to review its curricula to include needed competences for YFHS.

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

Sensitivity – 0.8. The evaluators can be confident that UNICEF contributed to the raising the capacity of health professionals to use youth friendly approaches in their work, in the light of the evidence provided. Both research reports and technical assistance offered by UNICEF has been used for capacity raising for YFHS. However, this contribution from UNICEF was generated directly mainly until 2014. Capacity building activities, especially for health professionals working with young people at risk and vulnerable

(MARA and EVA) have been continued by Neovita Centre every year. Neovita/“Health for Youth” Association representatives underlined in the interview the continuous collaboration and counselling from UNICEF.

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

Type I error probability – 0.35. Overall, the evaluators are cautiously confident that the evidence could not be observed if the claim is false. Although UNICEF involvement in the service development was, as already shown, instrumental, the contribution of UNICEF CO to capacity of health professionals to use youth friendly approaches in their work was diminished over time, therefore the confidence in the interview information on constant support provided from UNICEF to Neovita, for this very field of capacity for health professionals, needs to be considered with caution.

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 (0.35), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **cautiously confident (0.6956) the probability of the hypothesis of “UNICEF contributing to the raising the capacity of health professionals to use youth friendly approaches in their work”, 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?	0.8
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.35
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.6956

Claim 3: The funds allocated by the national health insurance fund to YFHC increased substantially in a sustainable manner

a) Evidence

The claim refers to a result of UNICEF and its partners work to rise the capacity for management (including performance-based management), the quality and the reach of the YFHC and services. Documents provided show that YFHC are funded as primary health services since 2008. Documents provided show that UNICEF, in strong collaboration with “Health for Youth” Association advocated for increasing funding of YFHS from National Health Insurance Company (NHIC), based on the results of the Cost analysis and exploratory cost-effectiveness of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services⁶³ conducted in 2012.

As a result, according to UNICEF, Health for Youth” Association, but also other stakeholders (WHO, MHLSP), allocation to YFHS increased constantly from 2012 until 2021, at the level recommended by findings of the Cost analysis study from 2012. Therefore, in the last nine years the budget allocated for YFHS increased more than four times, according to budgetary data, in proportion with the number of beneficiaries. However, financing is not yet reflecting performance in providing services to the young people at risk and vulnerable.

Several interviews mentioned that the budget increase is “an illusion” and only in direct proportionality with the increased number of young beneficiaries. Comparing the increases in the number of beneficiaries and in the budgetary allowance overall, we can observe, however, that the progression of the budgetary allowance is slightly steeper (between 2012 and 2019 the budget allocations increased 4.5 times, while the number of young beneficiaries increased 4 times). Moreover, other interviews pointed out to a scale issue related to fixed costs of YFHC, irrespective of the number of beneficiaries. Therefore, according to UNICEF calculations, only in 2018 the budgetary allocation completely covered the financing needs of the centres.

⁶³ Kempers, J., Ketting, E., & Lesco, G. (2014). Cost analysis and exploratory cost-effectiveness of youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services in the Republic of Moldova. *BMC Health Services Research*, 14(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.1186/1472-6963-14-316>

The advocacy is continued in 2021, but according to all interviews conducted on this issue, the leadership and strategy changes at the level of the National Health Insurance Company (NHIC) are affecting the advocacy and generate a sustainability risk.

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

Sensitivity – 0.9. The evaluators can be highly confident that funds allocated by the national health insurance fund to YFHC increased in a sustainable way. The increased budget between 2012 and 2021 is certain, as visible in the budgetary data registered by Neovita Resource Centre. Although there are sustainability risks presented, existing evidence, also based on previous experience, allows for high confidence that funding will be at least preserved for YFHC.

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 evaluators are cautiously confident that the evidence could not be observed if the claim is false. Although the increased between 2012 and 2021 cannot be false, the sustainability risk mentioned is difficult to assess and affects the confidence that the claim is not wrong concerning the sustainable funding growth. At the moment of the evaluation, as the advocacy process is ongoing, stakeholders presented the evaluators with very different views (and optimism/pessimism levels) concerning changes to be implemented by the NHIC, and this differences determine the evaluations to be cautions.

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 (0.3), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **confident (0.75) the probability of the hypothesis of “funds allocated by the national health insurance fund to YFHC increasing substantially in a sustainable manner”, 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?	0.9
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	0.75

Claim 4: The quality of their services and their coverage of adolescent boys and girls with youth friendly health services (YFHS) increased substantially in a sustainable manner

a) Evidence

Although capacity building activities have been implemented and the general level of capacity is improved, the quality and youth friendliness of health services provided by the YFHC varies from centre to centre and among doctors and nurses in the same centre, as well. This finding is supported by reports of Neovita Centre and UNICEF and all interviews conducted in the field of youth and usually motivated by the systemic bottlenecks of the healthcare system in Moldova, including the large turnover of medical staff and traditional doctor-patient relationship promoted by older doctors and managers in the system.

On the other hand, concerning the coverage of YFHC, evidence of activities implemented and results are more easily available in reports of UNICEF and Neovita. To strengthen YFHS capacities and improve planning and implementation of activities in communication and social mobilisation, guidelines on communication for development, including Guidelines on social mobilizations were developed by UNICEF and disseminated to YFHC. Therefore, in 2018-2020, UNICEF supported the strengthening capacities of volunteers and outreach workers of four Youth Friendly Health Centres to reach most at risk and especially vulnerable adolescent boys and girls with information related to health behavior and available health services tailored to their needs.

UNICEF validated reports mention that over 10,000 young people have been reached by outreach activities in 2018-2020, according to reports provided by UNICEF. Moreover, in 2020, UNICEF provided WASH supplies in the context of COVID-19 pandemic to 41 YFHC, supporting their capacity to continue services delivery during the pandemic.

As a result, by 2019, the YFHC coverage has increased progressively, reaching a coverage rate of 28.3% for the young population aged 10-24 in 2019 and 24.4% in 2020 – the period affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (compared to 16% in 2014). Therefore, in May 2020, 59% of young people in Moldova responding to U-Report say they would recommend the Youth Clinic online consultation. This is an improvement compared to 2016, when over 70% of young people in Moldova – participating to OECD survey – stated they don't need the youth friendly health services.⁶⁴

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

Sensitivity – 0.75. Although the increased coverage of services is certain, the heterogeneous quality of these services, mentioned by most of the sources consulted, only allows the evaluations to be confident about the increased quality and coverage of services, as coverage can be rapidly decreased in case of lack of services quality.

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

Type I error probability – 0.3. As in the case of claim 3, the evaluators are cautiously confident that the evidence could not be observed if the claim is false. Although the increased of services coverage cannot be false, the sustainability risk mentioned above is affecting the confidence.

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.75) 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 (0.7142) the probability of the hypothesis of “quality of YFHC services and their coverage of adolescent boys and girls increasing substantially in a sustainable manner”, 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?	0.75
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	0.7142

Claim 5: UNICEF contributed to the awareness raising on health issues among young people

a) Evidence

The communication campaign “COOLtivam Sanatatea” (“We COOLtivate health”) to promote healthy behaviors among adolescents was launched starting on April 2019 promoting videos related to seven topics that are under YFHS standards. The promotion of videos was done through YFHC, SDC and UNICEF and reached 404K population, acquired 6,3K likes and achieved 9,7K distributions. UNICEF highlights the importance of partnerships that doubled the number of reached population due to the fact that it was distributed in partnership with SDC and YFHCs. All evidence is available online and supported by social media statistics.

Moreover, since 2018 UNICEF Moldova piloted the implementation of a national curriculum on parenting of adolescents focusing on stimulating participation of adolescents in decision making processes, career orientation, non-violent communication and healthy-lifestyle. Further on, UNICEF reported that supported development and amendment of the parenting of adolescents’ curriculum. The parenting curriculum and the guidelines were developed and consulted with MECR and academia. The first phase of piloting of the parenting program started with a ToT of 26 professionals, which will be engaging 15 parents and the piloting continuation is planned.

Based on HBSC study from late 2018 and UNICEF indicator system, positive changes in adolescents and youth healthy behaviours (smoking, alcohol abuse, substance consumption and STI prevention) can be observed between 2016 and 2020, although the progress is limited. Unfortunately, behavior (such as smoking) persists among young people during the quarantine, while a slight worsening of the situation is observed, especially among male users, according to U-Report.

⁶⁴[https://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/Report Young Moldova Problems Values and Aspirations.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/dev/inclusivesocietiesanddevelopment/Report%20Young%20Moldova%20Problems%20Values%20and%20Aspirations.pdf)

On the other hand, Neovita Centre reports a very remarkable impact concerning youth health according to NBS: halving the suicide rate among adolescents, significant decrease in fertility rates and the number of abortions in adolescents; decrease of the number of new cases of sexually transmitted diseases in adolescents.

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

Sensitivity – 0.95. The number and diversity of communication activities reported by UNICEF, with clear online evidence present and remembered by interviewed stakeholders, allows the evaluation team to be confident that the claim is true. A higher level of confidence is not possible, because data on healthy behaviours among young people are not fully supporting findings related to the effectiveness of communication activities, although many improvements are visible.

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

Type I error probability – 0.2. Overall, the evaluators are confident that the evidence could not be observed if the claim is false. If the claim is false, this means that reported activities did not generated any level of awareness raising on health issued among young people, which is hard to imagine considering that the “COOLtivam Sanatatea” reached a number of person representing more than half of Moldova youth population.

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 (0.8260) the probability of the hypothesis of “UNICEF contributing to the awareness raising on health issued among young people”, being true given the evidence.**

Claim 5	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
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	0.8260

Claim 6: An increased number of young people accessing youth friendly health services deliver by Youth Centres (or Youth Klinics – YK)

a) Evidence

Neovita Resource Centre is reporting a constant increase of the number of young people accessing youth friendly health services deliver by YFYC. Data from the monitoring system implemented by Neovita show that 162,907 adolescent and youth aged 10-24 y.o. benefited from YFHS in 2017, 169,876 in 2018 and 181.800 in 2019 (compared to 96,240 in 2013).

Moreover, the access of most at risk and vulnerable young people (MARA and EVA) increased as well. They represented 21.5% of consultations in centres in 2019 (compared to 10,1% in 2014)

In 2020, the number of young people in centres decreased, but U-Report showed that the pandemic has important health effects on young people. Therefore, U-Report enabled the U-Partners feature. About 15 professionals from the National Network of Youth Clinics were trained on operating and providing services on this platform and about 1,000 young people and their parents received professional support and guidance from specialized experts.

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

Sensitivity: 0.95. The evaluators can be highly confident that the number of young people accessing youth friendly health services deliver by Youth Centres was increased overall. The high access to services reported in 2020, allows evaluators to have high trust that the addressability will remain high after the pandemic as well.

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

Type I error probability: 0.3. Overall, the evaluators are confident that the evidence could not be observed if the claim is false. If the claim is false, this means that 2020 will generate a trend of limited addressability to YFHC. Although data allows for certainty regarding the increased number of young beneficiaries of YFHC until 2019 – based on the detailed statistical data provided by the Neovita Resource Centre, the COVID-19 pandemic affected both accessibility and addressability, and the possibility of a constant low addressability after the pandemic is not insignificant.

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 (0.2), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **confident (0.8260) the probability of the hypothesis on the “increasing number of young people accessing youth friendly health services”, 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?	0.95
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	0.8260

Claim 7: Young people feel that they are listened / their opinions matter when they receive health services

e) Evidence

According to U-Report reports from other sources, there is an increased number of young people that their views were taken seriously in decisions made at home, school and in their community 63% young people report they are listened at home (compared to 34% in 2012), 40% report they are listened at school (compared to 15% in 2012) and 11% report they are listened in their community (compared to 5%) in 2012. However, one should take into account that U-Report is not based on a representative sample and more active, empowered and involved young people are usually answering to the U-Report polls.

Most of the people interviewed in the field of youth underlined that tokenism, the meaningless involvement of young people in order to formally check their participation, is an important bottleneck for the real engagement of young people in decision making. Systemic bottlenecks of the healthcare system, including the traditional (Sovietic) doctor-patient relationship represents another set of limitations to youth participation identified by interviewees.

Moreover, key evaluation documents in the field of youth: the Comprehensive Youth Sector Analysis (2020) and the Mid-Term Evaluation of the Youth Strategy (2018) don't emphasize the role of YFHC in promoting youth participation to key decisions concerning their life – respectively to decisions concerning their health. Although increasing, the accessibility of these services is not considered enough to support the participation of young people that are not yet empowered and involved in different activities.

On the other hand, these centres are among the structures of and for young people that evolved over time in the last ten year in Moldova and overall improved the 'youth sector ecosystem'. The 'ecosystem' includes activities and services the centres provide and the group of young people they report to, consolidating into more/less functional local/district, regional or national structures depending on the resources and opportunities available to them. We highlight here the Youth Centers, Youth Friendly Health Centers, Youth Resource Centers, Multifunctional Community Centers, Republican Center for Children and Youth (ARTICO), Media Center for Youth, Reintegration Centers for Youth, and others.

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

Sensitivity: 0.75. The evaluators can be confident that young people feel that they are listened their opinions matter when they receive health services. The fact that the U-Report is not representative, identified bottlenecks and the limited access to the 'youth sector ecosystem' for the most marginalized and vulnerable young people is limiting the confidence level, although quantitative data support the claim.

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

Type I evidence probability: 0.1. Overall, the evaluators are highly confident that the evidence could not be observed if the claim is false. If the claim is false, this means that YFHC are not actually delivering youth friendly services, but they are just a label without content. Although we already showed that quality of youth friendly services is heterogeneous, the evidence collected shows impact in terms of health improvement among young people and increased trust of young people in these services. Moreover, although participation is still low, all evidence show a positive trend in participation overall that could not be observed if the claim is false.

c) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.75) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.1), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **highly confident (0.8823) the probability of the hypothesis of “young people feeling that they are listened / their opinions matter when they receive health services”, 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?	0.75
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.1
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.8823

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 2 (*UNICEF contributed to the raising the capacity of health professionals to use youth friendly approaches in their work*) with a posterior of 0.6956. This means that **we can be cautiously confident that UNICEF contributed in a substantial manner to the establishment, development, quality, accessibility, addressability and sustainability of youth friendly health services and, in this way, it also contributed to empowering young people to participate to decision making concerning their live, including the very private and serious aspects related to their health.** The analysis allows us to be more confident about the addressability of the services and their positive impact on youth empowerment, but a bit less so about the quality of the services and their coverage, especially for young people from rural areas.

Claim	Prior level of confidence...	Posterior level of confidence...	Assessment...
	...that the claim is true		
1 UNICEF provided initial support and a performance-based budgeting framework for the Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHC) in Moldova, based on the result of a modelling/pilot project	0.5	0.7826	Confident
2 UNICEF contributed to the raising the capacity of health professionals to use youth friendly approaches in their work	0.5	0.6956	Cautiously confident
3 The funds allocated by the national health insurance fund to YFHC increased substantially in a sustainable manner	0.5	0.7500	Confident
4 The quality of their services and their coverage of adolescent boys and girls with youth friendly health services (YFHS) increased substantially in a sustainable manner	0.5	0.7142	Confident
5 UNICEF contributed to the awareness raising on health issued among young people	0.5	0.8260	Confident
6 An increased number of young people accessing youth friendly services deliver by Youth Centres (or Youth Clinics – YK)	0.5	0.8260	Confident
7 Young people feel that they are listened / their opinions matter when they receive health services	0.5	0.8823	High confident

UNICEF contribution included evidence based advocacy and advocacy for performance-based funding with the support of costing analysis. UNICEF also contributed, to a lower extent to capacity building of YFHC to increase their accessibility, but to a large extent to communication and outreach to increase their addressability.

UNICEF support appears as being instrumental in the promotion of the YFHS and their part in the 'youth sector ecosystem' as UNICEF is among the few organisations with capacity and attention to both (i) adolescents and youth health and (ii) youth empowerment and participation.

Although existing evidence allow a positive and optimistic assessment of YFHS impact and UNICEF contribution to thesis impact, the most important bottlenecks identified still need to be taken into account in the future management of youth access to dedicated health services:

- systemic bottlenecks of the healthcare system, including the traditional (Sovietic) doctor-patient relationship represents another set of limitations to youth participation and quality of youth friendly services;
- the large turnover of medical staff affects the sustainability of all capacity building activities;
- tokenism, the meaningless involvement of young people in order to formally check their participation.

Two main risks have been also identified:

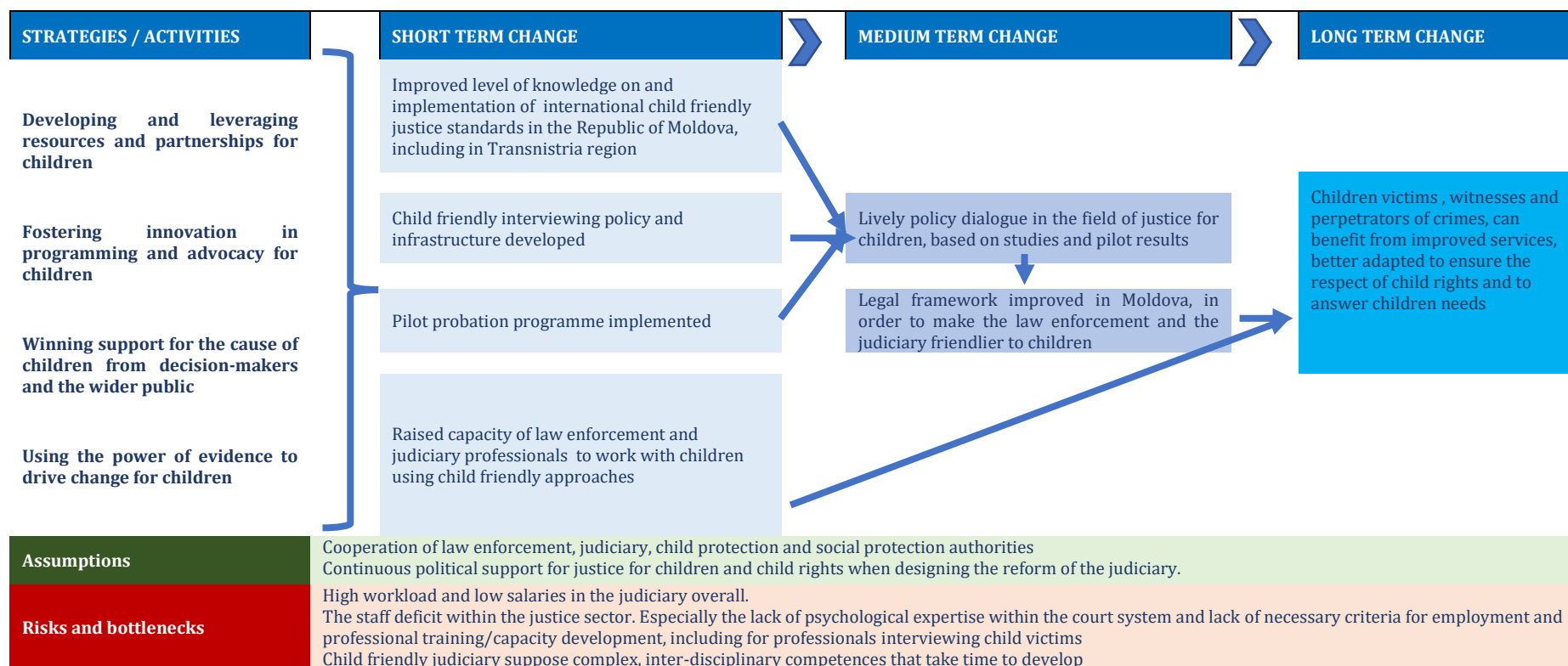
- COVID-19 pandemic affected mainly the addressability, but also the accessibility of YFHS in 2020. The risk disengagement of young people and health professionals for the future, caused by the pandemic, is still present and should be managed with increased outreach, capacity and quality development and trust building activities.
- The opportunity to improve the financing framework bears a risk of decreasing much needed funding, in the context of changes at the level of the National Health Insurance Company, that shows less support to YFHC compared to previous years. Effective advocacy activates can mitigate this risk.

Assessment of UNICEF Moldova contribution in the area of justice for children

The analysis in this section uses Process Tracing to measure UNICEF Moldova contribution in a selected area of impact, namely the justice for children. As underlined in the section dedicated to the methodology, we will present the **change claim chain**, as elaborated in the Inception Phase of the evaluation and immediately after. We will then present and analyse each claim in the logical chain presented and assess the level of confidence for each claim and globally.

Based on the initial research, the evaluation team formulated the following change claim chain (each claim numbered separately): *(1) UNICEF provided and supported the production of essential knowledge on and implementation of children in contact with the law and international child friendly justice standards in the Republic of Moldova, including in Transnistria region, (2) supported the implementation of child friendly interviewing room policy and infrastructure and the (3) developed and piloted an education probation program for children in conflict with law. With UNICEF involvement on policy dialogue based on studies and pilot results, as mentioned, (4) the legal framework has been improved in Moldova, in order to make the law enforcement and the judiciary friendlier with children. Moreover (5) UNICEF have been involved in raising the capacity of law enforcement and judiciary professionals in the judiciary (police, probation officers, magistrates) to work with children using child friendly approaches. As a result of the legal and capacity improvements, (6) children victims, witnesses and perpetrators of crimes, in contact with the judiciary (including: police response, legal investigations, probation), can now benefit from improved services, better adapted to ensure the respect of child rights and to answer children needs.*

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



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

Claim 1: UNICEF provided and supported the production of essential knowledge on and implementation of children in contact with the law and international child friendly justice standards in the Republic of Moldova, including in Transnistria region

a) Evidence

Data collection pointed out to several studies in the area of justice for children, drafted by researchers or teams contracted by UNICEF. All studies have recommendations for improving legislation and practice. The most important studies identified are:

- Assessment of regulatory framework and practice in criminal proceedings involving children in the Republic of Moldova, 2014;
- Alternative Report Ombudsman for child's rights of the Republic of Moldova for the Committee on the Rights of the Child of UN on Situation in the field of Children's Rights in Republic of Moldova in the Period from January, 2009 to December, 2016
- Feasibility Study on the opportunities and concerns related to accession by the Republic of Moldova to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure, 2018;
- The Perceptions of General Population and Specialists on Children Offenders and Children Victims and Witnesses of Crimes, 2018;
- Moldova case study: Child victims and witnesses in criminal proceedings, 2019;
- The study on the treatment of children in conflict with the law in Transnistria region, with focus on A.S. Makarenko" school for children in conflict with the law, 2020;
- Study on the Legal Framework and Special Hearing Practices of Children Victims or Witnesses of Crimes in the Republic of Moldova, 2020;
- Report on the Evaluation of National Indicators on Children in Contact with the Law, 2021.

In line with the conclusions of each study, UNICEF supported the implementation of study recommendations. The following activities are presented in UNICEF reports and have been mentioned by interviewees:

- An information brochure: "How to recognize an abuse", focusing on physical, sexual and psychological abuse was developed by National Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA) with UNICEF support and distributed to 10,000 children and adolescents.
- 262 professionals (social and medical workers, police officers, teachers) from nine districts were trained with UNICEF support on how to properly document, refer, investigate and provide quality services for child victims/ witnesses of crimes.
- UNICEF provided the Ministry of Justice with several curricula on the rights of the child and how to work with children for the training of professionals in the judiciary system (judges, prosecutors, lawyers etc.)
- In two districts with pilot projects implemented by UNICEF – in Singerei and Glodeni districts – the capacity of some 100 members of local multi-disciplinary teams (mayors, social workers, medical workers, teachers, police) were further strengthened to properly protect and assist children victims of violence, thus meeting all four elements of a quality service (monitor, identify, assist and report).
- In 2021, UNICEF has initiated provision of supporting the Ministry of Justice and the National Bureau of Statistics in testing and reviewing Access to Justice for Children Indicators as described in the Statistical Manual for a Core Set of Child Protection Indicators.
- UNICEF supports the Amicul Centre, the Barnahus type centre administrated by NCPCA, In Chişinău and advocated for the establishment of regional centres in other municipalities as well.
- UNICEF is supporting the educational probational programme presented below.
- UNICEF and the Institute for Penal Reform provided technical support to the MHLSP in drafting the intersectoral mechanism on measures and services for children with deviant behaviour as per the Law 299/2018. The first draft was based on the UNICEF-supported analysis of the piloted implementation of the inter-institutional mechanism which revealed invaluable lessons learned and good practice applied at community level. The draft was submitted to the MHLSP for further approval.

- UNICEF Moldova expanded the work of the cross-sectoral cooperation mechanism protecting children offenders to four new districts (in addition to initial 5) where 12 cases of children were identified and diverted out of the justice system
- UNICEF Moldova continues the work in Transnistria region, within the framework of the One UN Project in Transnistria, in order to promote the package of relevant legislative amendments, including to the Transnistrian Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code and Law on child rights.
- Within the framework of the UN project infrastructure interventions have been performed at “A.S. Makarenko” school for children in conflict with the law from the Transnistrian region. According to UNICEF reports and interviews, the renovation works have triggered several other infrastructure interventions funded and carried out by the local administration, and this is a indicator of the ownership developed by de facto authorities and the impact of the project on improving justice standards for children in Transnistria. However, this evidence is only present regarding infrastructure development, not the adoption of legal provisions for child friendly justice.

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

Sensitivity: 0.9. The evidence allows the evaluators to be highly confident that UNICEF supported studies and knowledge development and projects implemented in the field of justice for children. However, the evidence is not sufficient to convince that interventions implemented generated overall the full implementation of international child friendly justice standards in the Republic of Moldova, including in Transnistria region.

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

Type I error probability: 0.05. It is very unlikely to see the evidence presented above if the claim is false. Although the existing evidence shows that standards are partly implemented and each step proposed by UNICEF is advancing this situation, but these standards are not yet fully met and studies from 2020 and 2021 include important recommendations in this respect. Transnistria region is in a particular situation, but there too, the work of UN agencies, including UNICEF, with de facto authorities support the claim that some progress has been done with UNICEF contribution for the overall improvement of the international child friendly justice standards.

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 (0.05), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **highly confident (0.9473) the probability of the hypothesis of “UNICEF providing and supporting the production of essential knowledge on and implementation of children in contact with the law and international child friendly justice standards in the Republic of Moldova, including in Transnistria region”, 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?	0.9
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.05
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.9473

Claim 2: UNICEF supported the implementation of child friendly interviewing room policy and infrastructure

a) Evidence

Interviews show that UNICEF has been involved in the promotion of child friendly interviewing rooms in the justice institutions (courts, prosecutor's offices, police stations). However, UNICEF reports and other studies and the Ombutsperson for children show that these child friendly interviewing rooms are not functioning properly, with not enough facilities, endowment and without the necessary trained personnel. Although there are hearing rooms, mostly in public institutions in the country, only a modest limited number are properly arranged and equipped, in the spirit of child-friendly justice so that the hearing of the child takes place in a friendly atmosphere to avoid as much as possible. revictimization of

children. At the same time, it was established that at the moment no norms are elaborated and approved regarding the functioning of the hearing rooms in special conditions. The criminal investigation bodies (with the exception of the Prosecutor's Office) have not developed and approved rules on how to transport and insure the related expenses for the hearing of child victims or witnesses of crimes at the place of the hearing rooms.

UNICEF is the partner of NCPA in the implementation of Amicul Centre. It has been established in 2018, in Chişinău, as the first Barnahus-type child friendly hearing room. The results reported by the implementation partner, NCPA, include:

- In 2018 - support provided to 70 children victims of crimes during hearing and qualified legal assistance in court proceedings. In addition, 183 children victims and their families received psychological assistance and 93 children had access to rehabilitation services.
- In 2019 - qualified legal and psychological assistance and support provided to 347 children, including 58 child victims of crime, within court proceedings in 2020 and 518 children, including 66 children victims of crimes.

The Regulation for Barnahus-type services developed by MHLSP was approved by the Government on December 2019 and the Ministry acknowledges the support and feedback from UNICEF in the drafting of the regulation.

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

Sensitivity: 0.8. The evidence allows the evaluators to be highly confident that UNICEF supported the implementation of child friendly interviewing room policy and infrastructure. However, the impact of UNICEF support on the long term, for the child friendly interviewing rooms, remains limited. Moreover, the evidence on the UNICEF involvement in the promotion of child friendly interviewing rooms in the justice institutions (courts, prosecutor's offices, police stations) is limited to interviews, and no documents was available for the evaluation team.

For the Barnahus-type centres for children in contact with the law, UNICEF contribution to the Centre „Amicul”, including for the development of the infrastructure and for procedures, is visible in the existing evidence. UNICEF contribution to the new legislation on the development of Barnahus-type services is also acknowledged in all interviews conducted in the field.

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

Type I error probability: 0.1. It is unlikely to see the evidence presented above if the claim is false, as UNICEF is a partner of NCPA. However, the involvement of UNICEF in the provision of services for children in contact with the law, in the Barnahus-type centre – „Amicul” is not supported by evidence.

g) 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 **highly confident (0.8888) the probability of the hypothesis of “UNICEF supporting the implementation of child friendly interviewing room policy and infrastructure”, 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?	0.8
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	0.8888

Claim 3: UNICEF piloted an education probation program for children in conflict with law

a) Evidence

Documents and interviews show that UNICEF was concerned with the case of children in conflict with the law since the previous Country Programme. On the other hand, in 2018, the Association of

Participative Criminal Justice (PCJ), proposed to UNICEF the development of an educational probation programme in partnership with the National Probation Inspectorate.

The reports of the Association of Participative Criminal Justice include information on:

- the development of the methodology and curriculum for the educational probational programme proposed by APCJ, in 2018;
- 13 children offenders included in the programme in 2019;
- 13 children offenders included in the programme in 2020, offering them a real chance of social reintegration and not reoffending;
- a total of 70 probation counsellors (out of 170 nationally) trained in applying the mandatory probation programme, using online training tools in 2020;
- 85 legal professionals (prosecutors, judges, lawyers) were informed about the need for and overall positive effects of the probation programmes on children;
- more than 200 justice professionals received printed materials on the efficiency and effectiveness of the initial probation programme for children in conflict with the law.

According to the interview with the National Probation Inspectorate, the programme has been institutionalised in December 2019⁶⁵ and is implemented with full ownership from the Inspectorate, but with continuous technical assistance of UNICEF and APCJ.

According to the Council of Europe's evaluation of the existing probation programmes in the Republic of Moldova, the "initial mandatory probation programme for children in conflict with the law", developed with UNICEF support, obtained a high rating of efficiency, quality and resocialization.

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

Sensitivity: 1. The evidence allows for certainty on the piloting and impact of the education probation programme, proposed in 2018 and already institutionalised by the National Probation Inspectorate in December 2019.

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

Type I error probability: 0,05. It is possible to observe the evidence if the claim is false, only in the case of no or a very limited involvement of UNICEF in the development, piloting and institutionalisation of the educational probation programme. Although UNICEF was an important partner for APCJ and the National Probation Inspectorate and this is backed up by all written evidence, the interviews show that the involvement of UNICEF in the initiation and development of the programme was limited. The main (go to) dialogue partner for the National Probation Inspectorate is APCJ and the two partners (APCJ and UNICEF) are not seen as perfectly equals.

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (1) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.1), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **highly confident (0,9090) the probability of the hypothesis of "UNICEF piloting an education probation program for children in conflict with law", 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?	1
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.05
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.9523

Claim 4: The legal framework has been improved in Moldova, in order to make the law enforcement and the judiciary friendlier with children

a) Evidence

⁶⁵ Order of the President of the National Probation Inspectorate

This claim represents a result of the previous claims on UNICEF activities and contributions to justice for children and focuses on the legal framework. Therefore, the necessary and sufficient evidence is represented by laws and other legal norms adopted. Through data collection there are several norms identified:

- Law no. 299/2018 on measures and services for children with deviant behaviour;
- The Government Decision from December 2019 on the Framework Regulation on the organization and functioning of the Regional Centre for Integrated Assistance to Child Victims / Witnesses of Crime and Minimum Quality Standards;
- The Order of the President of the National Probation Inspectorate from December 2019, on the educational probation programme for minors and young people.

For all the approved legal provisions, the evaluation team collected written evidence (studies with clear recommendations) and interviews evidence about the integration of UNICEF recommendations in the legislation. In the case of law no. 299/2018, the representatives of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) underlined that initially, the Ministry proposed a draft law suggesting restrictive measures for child offenders, children committing misdemeanours and those manifesting anti-social behaviours, which was questioned by CSOs and the donor community. UNICEF Moldova used its convening role and supported initiation of a dialogue with the MoJ to align the draft law with international standards on child-friendly justice.

On the other hand, the framework regulation on the intersectoral mechanism on measures and services for children with deviant behaviour as per the Law 299/2018 is not yet adopted, at the moment of the evaluation, in August 2021, three years after the adoption of the law, despite UNICEF recommendations and advocacy.

Several problematic provisions of the Criminal Cod regarding the interviewing of children have been also identified in 2020 and improvements of the legal framework is still pending.

Moreover, according to UNICEF reports, despite the advocacy by UNICEF and CSOs, providing to the Ministry of Justice detailed proposals to include a specific objective for child-friendly justice in the strategy for ensuring independence and integrity in the justice sector (2021–2024) and the action plan for its implementation, this has not been done in the approved version of the strategy.

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

Sensitivity 0.75: The evidence allows the evaluators to be cautiously confident on the improvement of the improvement of the legal framework in Moldova, in order to make the law enforcement and the judiciary friendlier with children. The legal framework in Moldova has been already assessed as being conducive to improved access to justice for children. However, the lack of some recommended legislation and of the strategic focus advocated by UNICEF makes the existing evidence on the legal improvements necessary, but not fully sufficient for the claim to be true.

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

Type I error probability: 0.4. The claim could be false if the presented legislation is not actually effective in making the law enforcement and the judiciary friendlier with children. The likelihood of this situation is limited by the research and good practice examples used for the development of the legislation. However, because the adoption of these laws and normative acts is recent and considering the limitations of the judiciary presented below (see claim 5), there is still possible for the claim to be false – the new legislation to have very limited impact on making the law enforcement and the judiciary friendlier with children.

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 (0.4), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **cautiously confident (0.6521) the probability of the hypothesis of “the legal framework being improved in Moldova, in order to make the law enforcement and the judiciary friendlier with children”, 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?	0.75
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	0.6521

Claim 5: UNICEF have been involved in raising the capacity of law enforcement and judiciary professionals in the judiciary (police, probation officers, magistrates) to work with children using child friendly approaches

a) Evidence

UNICEF reports and provided documents, as well as the documents provided by implementing partners in the field on justice for children, include evidence about trainings organised for law enforcement and judiciary professionals:

- In 2018
 - o 40 specialists (prosecutors, police, probation, social work, education) were trained on addressing children's cases
 - o 34 police officers on investigating cases involving child offenders have been trained, in partnership with the National Police Inspectorate
- In 2019 262 professionals (social and medical workers, police officers, teachers) from nine districts were trained with UNICEF support on how to properly document, refer, investigate and provide quality services for child victims/ witnesses of crimes
- In 2020,
 - o 28 police investigators were trained to investigate criminal cases involving children offenders and 32 police officers were trained to apply the juvenile delinquency prevention programme developed earlier with UNICEF support and formally approved by the National Police Inspectorate (NPI) in partnership with "Stefan cel Mare" Police Academy
 - o A total of 70 probation counsellors (out of 170 nationally) trained in applying the mandatory probation programme, using online training tools in 2020;
 - o 85 legal professionals (prosecutors, judges, lawyers) were informed about the need for and overall positive effects of the probation programmes on children;
 - o more than 200 justice professionals received printed materials on the efficiency and effectiveness of the initial probation programme for children in conflict with the law.
- UNICEF provided quality standards for the training of lawyers involved in cases with children.

However, there is no evidence regarding the effectiveness and impact of the trainings and other capacity building activities. According to interviewees, UNICEF reports and the reports of the Ombudsperson for Child Rights, the rate of applicability of alternatives to detention remains low, especially because of the insufficient understanding among lawyers, prosecutors and judges of the core values underpinning the probation programmes and the potential impact of diversion on the national criminal justice system. Diversion programmes need further enhanced promotion and implementation.

The report issued by UNICEF in 2020 shows that the professionals involved in the special hearing of child victims or witnesses of crimes are not always qualified specifically for the given task or do not show adequate training on the needs of child victims, their performance being as in the case of adult victims in criminal proceedings; they do not regularly participate in training and evaluations.

Less than 30% of professionals in law enforcement and judiciary are ready to work with children according to the Ombudsperson for Child Rights. Moreover, the support of specialised psychologists able to work with children victims and witness of crime, but also with children in conflict with the law, is usually missing.

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

Sensitivity: 0.55. The evidence only allows the evaluators to be more confident than not about UNICEF contribution to the increased capacity of law enforcement and judiciary professionals in the judiciary (police, probation officers, magistrates) to work with children using child friendly approaches. Without

denying the work done by UNICEF, evidence is not enough to show a significant capacity improvement of the capacity of the judiciary to work with children. We would expect to see evidence of actual capacity improvements to assess the sensitivity higher.

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

Type I error probability: 0.25. In order for the claim to be false in the presence of the presented evidence, the activities implemented by UNICEF should have been totally ineffective. Although, as presented, their effectiveness is limited, it is very unlikely that they did not contribute at all to capacity improvements, although these are yet insufficient.

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.5) 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 **cautiously confident (0.6875) the probability of the hypothesis of “UNICEF being involved in raising the capacity of law enforcement and judiciary professionals in the judiciary (police, probation officers, magistrates) to work with children using child friendly approaches”, being true given the evidence.**

Claim 5	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?	0.5
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	0.6875

Claim 6: Children victims, witnesses and perpetrators of crimes, in contact with the judiciary (including police response, legal investigations, probation), can now benefit from improved services, better adapted to ensure the respect of child rights and to answer children needs

a) Evidence

The national legal and policy framework in Moldova is considered conducive to improved access to justice for children. Solitary confinement of children was discontinued, alternatives to detention improved, and all children in contact with the law are entitled to free legal aid. The evidence on the improvement of services presented above, when other claims have been analysed, should be taken into account in this case.

However, the report issued by UNICEF in 2020 shows that children face limitations on the protection of their rights, as children are not eligible to receive direct legal assistance guaranteed by the state (this is provided at the request of the legal representative). Children can benefit from free legal assistance by the state, if they are eligible, through the legal representative, but there are cases when the best interests of the child do not coincide with the interests of legal representatives. On the other hand, the Ombudsperson for Child Rights appreciate that the quality of legal assistance is in general low.

The Criminal Code of Moldova regulates the special hearing of children up to 14 years of age, although according to the international legal framework a child is considered any human being under the age of 18 and a child should not be prevented from being heard under special conditions only from age-related reasons (see Güveç v. Turkey).

The Criminal Code of also provides for only three categories of crimes for which professionals apply the hearing of child victims or witnesses in special conditions (sexual offenses, trafficking in children or domestic violence), despite the fact that the international legal framework treaties on human rights of children shall require the protection of the child against any form of violence, harm or abuse, physical or mental, abandonment or neglect, ill-treatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, for example: economic exploitation, any form of sexual exploitation and sexual violence, torture, punishment or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; it is also necessary to prevent the abduction, sale and trafficking of children for any purpose and in any form.

The Criminal Code stipulates that, in order to avoid secondary victimization of child victims or witnesses of crimes, their special hearing should be carried out within a limited time, repeated hearing of the minor

should be avoided, as far as possible, and avoidance. confronting the child with the suspect or defendant. The phrase " limited time " is approached differently in criminal prosecution and court proceedings, or CoE standards stipulate that, in all proceedings involving children, the principle of urgency should be applied in order to provide a rapid response and to protect the best interests of the child, while respecting the rule of law, and the ECHR case-law has ruled that the procedure has been they do not comply with the procedural requirement of promptness.

Although there are hearing rooms, mostly in public institutions in the country, only a modest limited number are properly arranged and equipped, in the spirit of child-friendly justice so that the hearing of the child takes place in a friendly atmosphere to avoid as much as possible. revictimization of children. Only one Barnahus-type assistance centre is functional, one other regional centre is redy to being opened in 2021 (in Bălți) and another one is under development (in Cahul). However, these regional centre can limit the access of children from more distant municipalities to the services. Moreover, the capacity of professionals to conduct interviews and provide the needed services is limited. Professionals involved in the special hearing of child victims or witnesses of crimes are not always qualified specifically for the given task or do not show adequate training on the needs of child victims, their performance being as in the case of adult victims in criminal proceedings; they do not regularly participate in training and evaluations.

The 2019 Thematic Report on "Assessing respect for the rights of children in state custody in connection with the prosecution or execution of the sentence" of the Ombudsperson Child Rights in 2019 identifies several problematic issues: the poor state of repair and the poor conditions within all prisons in which children are held; underdevelopment of psychological assistance and assistance services to mitigate conflict situations; housing units do not meet standards for protection of the health and development of children; sanitary blocks pose a risk of potential infection outbreaks; the education system does not meet the needs of children; The prison system is unable to ensure the effective separation of children in pretrial detention (detention on remand) and of adults in detention; prisons and the probation system do not enable the re-socialization of minors released from detention.

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

Sensitivity: 0.55. The evidence shows that improvement in the legal services for children took place and the availability of improved services in the Barnahus-type centre Amicul in Chişinău and in the educational probation programme cannot be denied. However, these improvements, although necessary, are far from being sufficient to allow for a high confidence that the claim is true. The large number of problems identified at the level of the legal framework, law-enforcement and judiciary system should not be present if the claim is true.

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

Type I error probability: 0.5. Improvements of services for children in contact and in conflict with the law have been presented when the other claims have been analysed and the existence of some improvements cannot be denied. However, the Ombudsperson for Child Rights, as well as other stakeholders, identify several limitations in the quality of services for children in the judiciary system and this can mean that most of the children cannot benefit from improved services when in contact with the judiciary.

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 (0.5), the account evidence of the documents and interviews allows us only to be more **confident then not (probability 0.5238) that the children victims, witnesses and perpetrators of crimes, in contact with the judiciary (including: police response, legal investigations, probation), can now benefit from improved services, better adapted to ensure the respect of child rights and to answer children needs.**

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?	0.6
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	0.5238

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 6 (referring to the overall impact of UNICEF’s contribution in the field of justice for children) with a posterior of 0.5238. This means that **we can only be more confident than not that UNICEF contributed to the overall improvement of the situation of children victims, witnesses and perpetrators of crimes, in contact with the judiciary (including police response, legal investigations, probation)**. The analysis shows that UNICEF undertook and supported a large number of activities in the field justice for children and we are highly confident or even reasonably certain these activities have short term results for the directly targeted children. Evidence also shows that UNICEF involvement determined improved legislation or prevented the legal framework (i.e. the law regarding children with deviant behaviour - child offenders under the legal age for criminal liability) to be adopted without respecting the fundamental rights and interests of the child.

Claim	Prior level of confidence...	Posterior level of confidence...	Assessment...
...that the claim is true			
1 UNICEF provided and supported the production of essential knowledge on and implementation of children in contact with the law and international child friendly justice standards in the Republic of Moldova, including in Transnistria region	0.5	0.9473	Highly confident
2 UNICEF supported the implementation of child friendly interviewing room policy and infrastructure	0.5	0.8888	Highly confident
3 UNICEF piloted an education probation program for children in conflict with law	0.5	0.9523	Reasonably certain
4 The legal framework has been improved in Moldova, in order to make the law enforcement and the judiciary friendlier with children	0.5	0.6521	Cautiously confident
5 UNICEF have been involved in raising the capacity of law enforcement and judiciary professionals in the judiciary (police, probation officers, magistrates) to work with children using child friendly approaches	0.5	0.6875	Confident
6 Children victims, witnesses and perpetrators of crimes, in contact with the judiciary (including police response, legal investigations, probation), can now benefit from improved services, better adapted to ensure the respect of child rights and to answer children needs	0.5	0.5238	More confident than not

However, medium term and long term results are still limited at the level of the legal framework, the capacity of the law enforcement and the judiciary system and the actual access of most of the children to improved services.

The most important bottleneck identified regarding the limited or missing impact are related to:

- the lack of strategic focus on making the judiciary better and friendlier for children. Although the issue may be taken into account in the future Child Protection Programme, a special attention of the Ministry of Justice on the issue should have been visible in the strategy for ensuring independence and integrity in the justice sector;
- the low level of interest of the professionals in law-enforcement and judiciary to participate to improving the situation of children in contact with the law and in conflict with the law;
- other bottleneck specific to the judiciary system, influencing the resistance to change in the system.

We base our conclusion on the low interest of the law-enforcement and judiciary specialist for the improvement of services for children on the findings of the 2018 study measuring the perceptions of judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers and society members towards successful social

reintegration of children in conflict with law and children victims/witnesses of crimes⁶⁶ The study also explores how respondents see the factors needed for the social reintegration of children. The specialists mentioned that the success of reintegration of children in conflict with the law depends on the severity of committed offense, the psychological profile of the child and the involvement of the family in the child rehabilitation. Referring to the services for the successful reintegration of child victims and witnesses, judges have first of all mentioned family counselling, while prosecutors, lawyers and police officers have stated that psychological counselling for children is required in the first place. How the law-enforcement and the judiciary are approaching and working with the children seems to be less important for the interviewed specialists and this opinion explains the low level of interest of the judges, prosecutors, lawyers, police officers to participate to improving the situation of children in contact with the law and in conflict with the law. This also can contribute the lack of strategic focus and the low capacity of the system to provide child friendly services.

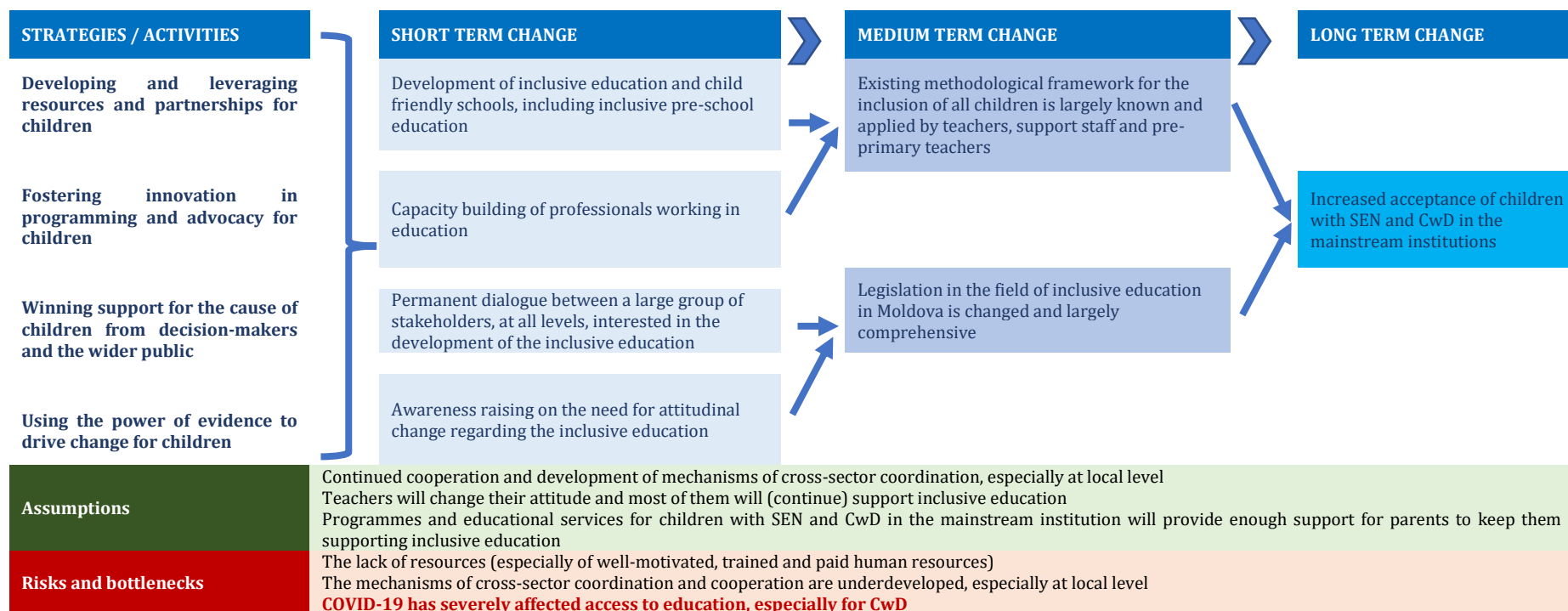
Assessment of UNICEF Moldova contribution in the area of inclusive education

The analysis in this section uses Process Tracing to measure UNICEF Moldova contribution in a selected area of impact, namely the inclusive education. As underlined in the section dedicated to the methodology, we will present the **change claim chain**, as elaborated in the Inception Phase of the evaluation and immediately after. We will then present and analyse each claim in the logical chain presented and assess the level of confidence for each claim and globally.

Based on the initial research, the evaluation team formulated the following change claim chain (each claim numbered separately): *(1) UNICEF provided and supported the production of essential knowledge for the development of inclusive education and child friendly schools, including inclusive pre-school education (early childhood education) in Moldova and (2) determined and encouraged a permanent dialogue between a large group of stakeholders at all levels (ministry, district and municipal authorities, schools, CSO, international organizations etc.) interested in the development of the inclusive education in Moldova. (3) UNICEF also supported the development of trainings and other capacity building activities for professionals working in education (especially with children with SEN) and (4) supported the development and implementation of communication activities for attitudinal change regarding the inclusive education. As a result (5) the existing legislation in the field of inclusive education in Moldova is largely comprehensive and (6) the existing methodological framework for the inclusion of all children is largely known by teachers, support staff and pre-primary teachers. These results, as well as the communications campaigns, have an impact on (7) the (slight) increased acceptance of children with SEN and CwD in the mainstream institutions (at school and pre-school level), especially among parents and children/students.*

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

⁶⁶ The perception on the social reintegration varies according to the committed offence and the profession of the respondent, but usually respondents rated high or very high the chances for the successful social reintegration of children victim or witness of crimes and of children liable for misdemeanors. They rated as about average the chances for the successful social reintegration of children liable for crimes against property and low or very low the chances for the successful social reintegration of children liable for violent crimes, murder or sexual criminal assault.



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

Claim 1: UNICEF provided and supported the production of essential knowledge for the development of inclusive education and child friendly schools, including inclusive pre-school education (early childhood education) in Moldova

a) Evidence

A large number of research, evaluation and analysis documents has been commissioned and supported by UNICEF in the field of inclusive education. Among the large number of documents mentioned by UNICEF and stakeholders interviewed, the evaluation team had access to:

- *The Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in the Educational System - Sociological Study*, 2018.
- *The Review of assessment and evaluation in education in the Republic of Moldova*, UNICEF Moldova, 2018
- *The mid-term evaluation of the Education Development Strategy for 2014-2020 'Education 2020'*, 2018
- *The Comprehensive Assessment of the Education Sector in the Republic of Moldova*, 2019.
- *The Joint evaluation of implementation of the Programme for Development of Inclusive Education 2011–2020, including application of child-friendly school's standards – Evaluation Report*, 2019
- *The study on the profile of out-of-school children and adolescents*, 2020

Except for the review of assessment and evaluation in education, all the other reports cover both pre-school and school level education.

An important issue, underlined by each of the studies with the exception of the sociological study, is that they have been developed with UNICEF support, but under the co-ownership of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research.

24 other reports, methodologies or tools are mentioned by the *Joint evaluation of implementation of the Programme for Development of Inclusive Education 2011–2020* as a result of UNICEF support for RCPA.

UNICEF provided also evidence on the followed with evaluation management response (EMR) produced, in accordance with timelines set out in Evaluation Office guidance for the Joint evaluation of implementation of the Programme for Development of Inclusive Education 2011–2020. Key activities are focused on strengthening government capacities and technical assistance in new policies and strategies in the domains of child protection and inclusive education. The EMRs were uploaded into the EISI tool with proper tracking of the implementation status of activities reflected in the system.

Interviews conducted show the importance of UNICEF contribution to the development of the inclusive education, not only the policy recommendations of the mentioned reports, but also standards, methodologies and tools developed with UNICEF support are considered instrumental by stakeholders in the field. During 2020, UNICEF supported MECR with a methodology for organizing education during quarantine, special regulations for the 2020–2021 school year, and students' and parents' guides on safe behaviour during COVID-19, according to reports provided by UNICEF.

More recently, interviews and UNICEF reports show that UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (MECR) to develop the new Education Sector Plan including long-term Education Strategy 2022–2030, medium-term IProgramme/Action Plan 2022–2025 and Simulation Models to them. These are based on the evidence generated by the comprehensive education sector analysis conducted with the support of UNICEF and GPE in 2019. It also builds on the lessons learned from COVID-19 to create a more resilient education system, ready to ensure the continuity of learning in a changing environment.

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

Sensitivity: 0.9. The evidence identified is necessary and largely sufficient to support the claim.

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

Type I error probability: 0.05. There is a very low probability that the evidence provided, including a large number of reports under the logo of the MECR and a large number of technical assistance deliverables (methodologies, guidelines etc.) were not used by public authorities and institutions in the

development and implementation of the national policy, the Programme for Development of Inclusive Education 2011–2020. This possibility, of the knowledge provided by UNICEF not being used is actually contradicted by all interviewed stakeholders.

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 (0.05), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **highly confident (0.9473) the probability of the hypothesis of “UNICEF providing and supporting the production of essential knowledge for the development of inclusive education and child friendly schools, including inclusive pre-school education (early childhood education) in Moldova”, 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?	0.9
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.05
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.9473

Claim 2: UNICEF determined and encouraged a permanent dialogue between a large group of stakeholders at all levels (ministry, district and municipal authorities, schools, CSO, international organizations etc.) interested in the development of the inclusive education in Moldova

a) Evidence

UNICEF is a partner of the MECR in the organisation of the Annual National Conference on Inclusive Education. Representatives of schools (headmasters, teachers), representatives of district education departments, NGOs, direct beneficiaries (parents, children) and representatives of the Government were all brought together to the conferences, hosting regularly hundreds of participants from across the country each year. In 2020 the conference was organised online, reaching 3,000 teachers, according to information provided by UNICEF and confirmed by the interviewed stakeholders.

The importance of the conference for the development of the inclusive education is underlined by all stakeholders interviewed.

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

Sensitivity: 0.7. The evidence about the Annual National Conference, although convincing, is not sufficient to allow for a high level of trust that the claim is true.

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

Type I error probability: 0.4. There is a fairly high possibility that the Conference, although an important event allowing the dialogue between the main stakeholders in the field, is not by itself a generator of a long-term effective dialogue in the field.

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.7) 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 (0.6875) the probability of the hypothesis of “UNICEF determining and encouraging a permanent dialogue between a large group of stakeholders at all levels interested in the development of the inclusive education in Moldova”, 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?	0.9
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.05
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.6363

Claim 3: UNICEF supported the development of trainings and other capacity building activities for professionals working in education (especially with children with SEN)

a) Evidence

As mentioned, interviewees underlined the importance of UNICEF contribution to the development of the inclusive education, not only the policy recommendations of the mentioned reports, but also standards, methodologies and tools developed with UNICEF support are considered instrumental by stakeholders in the field.

During 2020, UNICEF supported MECR with a methodology for organizing education during quarantine, special regulations for the 2020–2021 school year, and students' and parents' guides on safe behaviour during COVID-19, according to reports provided by UNICEF. In addition, a guide for parents of pre-school children titled "Organisation of learning and care process in pre-schools during COVID-19 pandemic"⁶⁷ was also developed.

Moreover, UNICEF and the implementing partner provided the online training of 12.945 managerial and didactic staff and 18.650 non-didactic staff on how to use the tools for the prevention and control of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases. A number of 1.486 managerial staff of kindergartens and 386 representatives of local public administration benefitted from capacity building training on applying the regulations for re-opening the pre-schools in practice.

Before 2020, targeted support was provided also to two school communities to ensure Roma children enrol and stay in education. UNICEF Moldova continued its partnership with CSO DACIA during 2018, piloting inclusive education for Roma children. According to project documents and reports provided by UNICEF, local leaders, parents and teacher-parent associations in pilot schools were mobilized and their understanding improved, and 37 teachers were trained to support the inclusion of Roma children in education. By the end of the year an additional 171 Roma children had been enrolled in pre-schools and schools in two predominantly Roma communities.

During the current Country Programme period, UNICEF continued supporting the capacity-building of a limited number of schools in the north of the country that provide advice to other local schools on how to conduct school assessments in line with the Child Friendly School (CFS) standards and draft respective school improvement plans. Reports provided by UNICEF and implementing partners show that 161 staff of the self-evaluated schools were trained on democratic school culture, cross-level cooperation, prevention and addressing violence against children cases. Moreover, about 45 primary school teachers were trained and supported by mentors to adopt child-centred teaching practices.

In Sîngerei District a protocol for inclusion of children with severe intellectual disabilities in education, focusing on intersectoral collaboration at local level was developed to be piloted. In 2018, representatives of LPA and 43 professionals were trained in supporting 40 children with severe disabilities and their parents to learn in regular school and pre-school classes. In 2019, about 155 education, social and health professionals and authorities from 27 localities in Sîngerei were guided to apply the instruction for inclusion of children with severe disabilities in education and 21 professionals got supervision and support. The project also included the training and preparation of 12 national trainers to further transfer the learned skills to other educators and to provide ongoing mentoring.

Before the current Country Programme period, between 2014 and 2015, UNICEF assisted RCPA to train all Psycho-pedagogical Assistance Services' (PAS) specialists. About 238 PAS specialists received a 10-day training.

Existent evidence on the assessment of various training programmes show that they are well appreciated by participants and considered useful or very useful. The *Multi-country evaluation of the UNICEF ECD response to covid-19 in the ECA region* confirms the same type of response concerning the training in 2020 to prepare schools for re-opening.

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

⁶⁷ UNICEF Moldova, "Cum organizăm procesul de învățare și îngrijire în condițiile pandemiei Covid-19 - Ghid pentru părinți cu copii de 2-7 ani", available at <https://www.unicef.org/moldova/rapoarte/cum-organiz%C4%83m-procesul-de-%C3%AEnv%C4%83%C8%9Bare-%C8%99i-%C3%AEngrijire-%C3%AEEn-condi%C8%9Biile-pandemiei-covid-19>

Sensitivity: 0.9. The evidence is convincing and largely sufficient to support the claim. More assessments based on pre and post tests and representative surveys among teachers and supporting teaching staff could further increase the level of confidence.

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 the number of training and trained professionals is high, most of the activities are localised and therefore a large number of professionals working in education (especially with children with SEN) may remain without the support supposed by the claim.

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 (0.8181) the probability of the hypothesis of “UNICEF supporting the development of trainings and other capacity building activities for professionals working in education”, 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?	0.9
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	0.8181

Claim 4: UNICEF supported the development and implementation of communication activities for attitudinal change regarding the inclusive education

a) Evidence

UNICEF helped in the efforts of having the same message promoted by all those involved in inclusive education. In this regard, in 2013 a Communication Plan on inclusive education was developed and a media campaign was organized with the slogan: “Come with me! The school is also for you!”. The campaign included commercials on TV and radio.

More recently, in 2018, in partnership with the National Football Federation, MECR and MHLSP, UNICEF Moldova implemented throughout the year the ‘tiny healthy player’ project supporting social and educational inclusion through sports at 11 preschools from nine districts and Chisinau Municipality. Around 1,000 young children, including those with special needs and children from Gagauzia Region, participated in sports events and benefitted from sports equipment donated to selected preschools. A compendium with therapeutic fairy tales was developed by the Football Federation and the Republican Centre for Psycho-Pedagogical Assistance and distributed at targeted preschools.

Nevertheless, the need for more communication campaigns addressing the stereotypes of parents and teaching staff is acknowledged. Thus, the *Joint evaluation of the implementation of the Programme for development of inclusive education 2011-2020* recommended developing and implementing a new Communication Plan for the promotion of Inclusive Education and developing new media campaigns, based on the pattern provided by similar actions carried out in 2013 with the support of UNICEF (under the slogan “Come with me, the school is also for you!”), for raising awareness on the importance of inclusive education among parents and the general public

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

Sensitivity: 0.7. There is limited evidence about recent large (countrywide) campaigns for attitudinal change regarding the inclusive education.

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

Type I error probability: 0.25. All campaigns have been implemented in partnership, by UNICEF and governmental authorities. There is a small probability that UNICEF contribution has been insignificant, deposite the acknowledgement of stakeholders.

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 (0.7368) the probability of the hypothesis of “UNICEF supporting the development and implementation of communication activities for attitudinal change regarding the inclusive education”, 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?	0.7
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	0.7368

Claim 5: The existing legislation in the field of inclusive education in Moldova is largely comprehensive

a) Evidence

The claim refers to the result of UNICEF contribution as assessed regarding to claims 1 and 2 in the contribution chain concerning inclusive education, presented above.

The *Joint evaluation of the implementation of the Programme for development of inclusive education 2011-2020* actually concludes that “the existing legislation in the field of inclusive education in the Republic of Moldova is largely comprehensive and basically represents one of the main results achieved through the implementation of the Programme, a success factor that has decisively contributed to the progress made on the inclusion of children with SEN in mass-education”. More specifically, the evaluation describes the following legal framework:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Moldova guarantees the right to education of all persons and, in particular, the right to education of persons with special needs or who are in vulnerable situations.
- In 2003, the Government of the Republic of Moldova adopted the national strategy "Education for all" in order to expand access to education and ensure its quality, to promote policies for the inclusion of children with special educational needs in mass education and support measures to this end. In 2010, *the Strategy on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, 2010-2013*, was adopted by Law no. 169, providing the adjustment of educational programmes to the special needs of children with disabilities, the diversification of inclusive education services and the improvement of quality of educational services for children and young people with disabilities.
- *The Programme for development of inclusive education in the Republic of Moldova 2011-2020*, approved by *Government Decision no. 523/2011*, describes the conceptual framework of inclusive education, analyses the situation in that period and sets forth structures, models of cooperation, types of services, stakeholders' roles, as well as the regulatory acts necessary for implementation.
- *Law no. 60/2012 on the social inclusion of persons with disabilities* aiming to guarantee the possibility of participation in all areas of life without discrimination, on equal terms with the other members of society, based on observing the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual (art. 1). To this end, the Ministry of Education and the authorities of the local public administration shall ensure favourable conditions for the access of children with disabilities to early education and rehabilitation services (art. 28). *The law provides support measures for students with disabilities - support teachers, personal assistants, other support services and/or with reasonable adjustments, social scholarships, in line with the legislation in force.*
- In this context, *the Education Code (2014)* defines inclusive education as an "educational process that responds to children's diversity and individual developmental needs and offers opportunities and equal chances to benefit from the fundamental human rights to quality development and education in common environments of learning" (art. 3). The Code guarantees, among the principles governing the educational system, equity, non-discrimination and social inclusion (art. 5). The law regulates inclusive education and provides that it shall be organized in general educational institutions, including special educational institutions, or home-schooling, the form of inclusion being determined according to the particularities of each individual, following periodic evaluations.

- The educational policy document entitled the *Strategy on Education development for 2014-2020 "Education 2020"* describes the vision of a quality educational system that is accessible for all and relevant both for society and economy. To this end, one of the targets is to increase the access of children with special educational needs to mass education by at least 10% every year. The strategy identifies the following barriers to inclusive education: the lack of the necessary conditions for the integration of these children (well trained teachers, infrastructure and adapted teaching aids) and the resistance to change shown by some school managers, teachers and parents (p. 17). The document reiterates the role of information campaigns at the level of parents, educational institutions and other stakeholders, including the general public, for raising awareness on the need to ensure equal opportunities for quality education to all children. It also provides the ensurance of adequate and sufficient material conditions and the reorganization of support measures for appropriate psycho-pedagogical assistance, accessible to all children with special educational needs (centres, support teachers, psychologist, social worker, etc.).
- Directly related to the development of inclusive education, the *Strategy on Child Protection for 2014-2020* proposes measures for the continuous reduction of the number of children in residential care, some of them aimed at developing inclusive education and improving the support services.
- Several MECR Orders: e.i. Order no. 1430 as of September 25, 2018, on the approval of the Methodological standards on inclusive education in technical vocational education; Order no. 1780 as of 03.12.2018 on the approval of the Standard Structure and Methodological Notes on the elaboration and implementation of the individualized Educational Plan in the early education institutions.

However, the evaluation identified a number of changes and additions needed at this time in the legislative framework related to inclusive education in the Republic of Moldova. The additional legal framework needed refers to the regulation of inclusive education financing at the level of early education, although, a number of steps have been taken to develop inclusive at the level of early education.

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

Sensitivity: 0.95. The evidence on the largely comprehensive legislation in the field of inclusive education in Moldova is very convincing, although some improvements are still needed and observed, especially in order to address the most important bottlenecks.

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

Type I error probability: 0.15. A large number of strategies have been identified, but less legal provisions are identified as improved. Moreover, evidence is not enough on the effectiveness of the implementation of all legal provisions to assess its full comprehensiveness.

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 (0.15), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **highly confident (0.8636) the probability of the hypothesis of "the legislation in the field of inclusive education in Moldova being largely comprehensive", being true given the evidence.**

Claim 5	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?	0.97
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.15
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.8636

Claim 6: The existing methodological framework for the inclusion of all children is largely known by teachers, support staff and pre-primary teachers

a) Evidence

The claim refers to the result of UNICEF contribution as assessed regarding to claims 2 and 3 in the contribution chain concerning inclusive education, presented above.

The *Joint evaluation of the implementation of the Programme for development of inclusive education 2011-2020* actually concludes, based on case studies, that “the existing methodological framework for the inclusion of all children is largely known by teachers, support staff and pre-primary teachers (at least in inclusive schools, but not only)”, and UNICEF, PAS and numerous CSOs involved have made a decisive contribution in this regard. Moreover, “both at the level of educational units (especially in general education) and at the level of PAS, a sufficient level of knowledge has been reached that will allow, progressively, the consolidation of inclusive education.”

As confirmed by the sociological study “Implementation of inclusive education in the Republic of Moldova”, since 2018, most teachers already knew the procedures for enrolment, referral, establishment and work according to the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)⁶⁸ as well as the methodology of working with children with SEN, including in kindergartens (or at least in inclusive kindergartens).

On the other hand, although competent to use the methodologies, the staff is not enough to support quality inclusive education in all schools. According to the *Joint evaluation of the implementation of the Programme for development of inclusive education 2011-2020*: “that the number of support teaching staff is insufficient to achieve inclusive education in an effective manner. In addition, the low salary and the fact that a support teacher does not represent a separate professional category causes their rather high fluctuation.” In this context, additional basic training is required for staff that enters the system to replace the leaving trained teachers and supporting teachers. Moreover, in order to counteract the fluctuation of staff, it was suggested to train a second teacher who can take over the duties of an support teaching staff.

The *Joint evaluation* also finds that: “in addition, support teaching staff need much more applied, practical training, but also specific and in-depth training to work with children with severe disabilities, hearing and sight impairment, ASD (autism spectrum disorders, behavioural disorders). Currently, STS are not prepared to satisfy these challenges. There is a need for a proactive approach of the training process of support teachers, depending on the profile of the children with SEN who attend the school and those who will attend general education, by monitoring their course in the educational process.”

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

Sensitivity: 0.95. The evidence on the methodological framework for the inclusion of all children and its use in school is documented and presented by different evaluations, therefore very convincing. Some additional needs in the development of competences of specialist in the field are, however, still identified.

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

Type I error probability: 0.4. More assessments based on pre and post tests and representative surveys among teachers and supporting teaching staff could further increase the level of confidence that a ‘false positive’ is not resulting from the cited evaluations.

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 (0.4), the account evidence of the documents and interviews increases to **confident (0.7037) the probability of the hypothesis of “the existing methodological framework for the inclusion of all children being largely known by teachers, support staff and pre-primary teachers”, 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?	0.97
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.15
Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.7037

⁶⁸ As confirmed by the sociological study “Implementation of inclusive education in the Republic of Moldova”, 2018, ACFSP.

Claim 7: One can observe an increased acceptance of children with SEN and CwD in the mainstream institutions

a) Evidence

In 2018, the knowledge, attitudes and practice study (KAP) showed that two-thirds of respondents believed that children with disability should be cared for at home or in residential institutions, while 24.5 per cent supported inclusive education (increase, compared to 5.2 per cent in 2009 and 5.6 per cent in 2003).⁶⁹

However, the SitAn in 2019 underlined that 60% of children with disabilities are not in pre-school education. Although there has been substantial progress on inclusion of vulnerable children in educational system between 2014 and 2019 (the share of children with disabilities who attend general educational institutions increased by 10% in the last five years and reached 93% in 2018), most of the education institutions are not adapted to meet inclusive education standards. This leads to only one-third of children with SEN and CwD graduating from school.

Evidence from the 2018 sociological study and the KAP study (*Knowledge, attitudes and practices in early childhood development and care, 2018*) shows that

- The attitude of the public regarding the inclusion of children with special needs in general education institutions remains unfavourable to inclusion. Still, most of the carers and teachers choose to care for these children in the family or in residential institutions.
- At the same time, comparatively with the previous studies, slight improvements were registered in the case of carers, in the 2018 study 23% chose to include these children in mainstream institutions, compared to 17% in 2012 and 20% in 2009.
- Teachers were more open to the integration of children with special needs in mainstream institutions, but there is a decrease in their weight compared to the previous study (41% in 2018 compared to 47% in 2012). On the other hand, in 2018, 24% of the interviewed teachers (31,4% in 2012) believed that these children should be cared for in the family and 24% (13% in 2012) opted for their placement in residential institutions.
- Opinions of students on the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream educational institutions remained scattered, and there is an increase in the degree of tolerance towards students with SEN.
- there is a considerable increase in the population that supports inclusive education (24,5% in 2018, compared to 5.2% in 2009 and 5.6% in 2003).
- discrimination of the children with HIV/AIDS remain high – 62% of the carers would not accept that their child to play with a person infected with HIV.”

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

Sensitivity: 0.6. Existing data, although confirming the claim, are only based on opinions and newer data (2021) would have been needed to increase the level of confidence concerning the observed progress.

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

Type I error probability: 0.45. Given that data are based on opinion survey, they can be affected by desirable answers.

d) Update of the prior into the posterior confidence level

Given the likelihood of seeing account evidence if the hypothesis is true (0.6) and the probability of seeing this same evidence if that hypothesis was false (0.45), the account evidence of the documents and interviews allow us only to be **more confident than not (0.5714) about the probability of the hypothesis of “increased acceptance of children with SEN and CwD in the mainstream institutions”, 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?	0.6
Type I error - If the claim is false, how likely would we expect to see the evidence?	0.45

⁶⁹ UNICEF Moldova, 2018. Knowledge, attitudes and practices in early childhood development and care, Chisinau, 2018.

Posterior probability of the claim being true	0.5714
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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 7 (referring to the overall impact of UNICEF’s contribution in the field of inclusive education) with a posterior of 0.5714. This means that **we can only be more confident than not that UNICEF contributed to the overall improvement of the inclusion of children with SNE and CwD in the mainstream education institutions**. The analysis shows that UNICEF undertook and supported a large number of activities in the field inclusive education and we are highly confident these activities have short term results for the directly targeted professionals and contributed to raised capacity of schools and teachers to receive and to work with children with SNE and CwD. Evidence also shows that UNICEF involvement determined improved legislation in the field.

Claim	Prior level of confidence...	Posterior level of confidence...	Assessment...
	...that the claim is true		
1 UNICEF provided and supported the production of essential knowledge for the development of inclusive education and child friendly schools, including inclusive pre-school education (early childhood education) in Moldova	0.5	0.9473	Highly confident
2 UNICEF determined and encouraged a permanent dialogue between a large group of stakeholders at all levels (ministry, district and municipal authorities, schools, CSO, international organizations etc.) interested in the development of the inclusive education in Moldova	0.5	0.6363	Cautiously confident
3 UNICEF supported the development of trainings and other capacity building activities for professionals working in education (especially with children with SEN)	0.5	0.8181	Confident
4 UNICEF supported the development and implementation of communication activities for attitudinal change regarding the inclusive education	0.5	0.7368	Confident
5 The existing legislation in the field of inclusive education in Moldova is largely comprehensive	0.5	0.8636	Highly confident
6 The existing methodological framework for the inclusion of all children is largely known by teachers, support staff and pre-primary teachers	0.5	0.7037	Confident
7 One can observe an increased acceptance of children with SEN and CwD in the mainstream institutions	0.5	0.5714	More confident than not

However, medium term and long term results are still limited at the level of the legal framework, the capacity of the part of the teaching staff. Moreover, although UNICEF supported communication campaigns for attitudinal change, they proved to be insufficient for a significant impact at the level of both the general public (especially parents) and teachers.

Existing evidence also show that children with severe disabilities and children with HIV/AIDS remain high remain highly discriminated and schools remain largely inaccessible to them.

The most important bottleneck identified regarding the limited or missing impact are related to:

- difficulties in hiring qualified staff, especially in preschool education, resulting from: the small number of specialized staff available; the large turnover, especially, of the support teaching staff; the regulation of the number of support teaching staff depending on the number of children with SEN, determining instability of employment for the support teaching staff and lack of motivation to fill the position among the qualified young professionals, low salaries for the specialized staff;
- lack of digital skills among teachers among teachers, but also among support teaching staff;

- insufficient or poor intersectoral cooperation in the education, health and social protection sectors regarding non-educational support services for CwD, such as personal assistance, but also the identification and early referral of cases of severe disability. There is a lack of clear and effective case reporting mechanisms, that should facilitate early interventions in sensitive periods for the recovery of children with disabilities.
- financial allocations for inclusive education are not calculated on the basis of the number of children with SEN⁷⁰ and their individual needs are not taken into account.

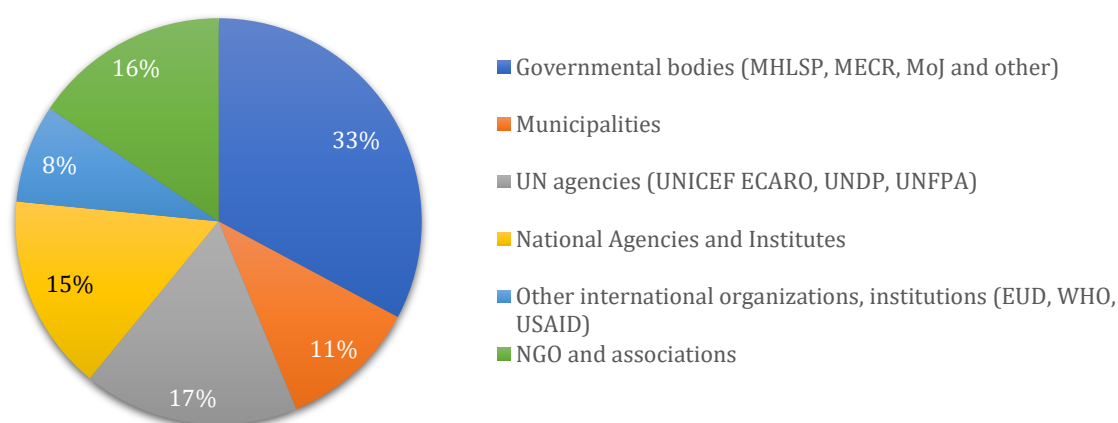
⁷⁰ The allocation is a fix percentage from the total budget allocation for education in each district.

Annex 3. Results of the Social Network Analysis

The specialists/country officers that have provided us answers to the questionnaire work in following areas: child protection, education, health, COVID 19 response, adolescents' development and participation and monitoring and evaluation.

According to the collected data, the main institutions with whom the CO collaborates are: governmental bodies (represented mainly by ministries), UN agencies (excluding different departments of UNICEF CO Moldova that have been indicated by respondents as important collaborators, but they are not addressed in this particular analysis) CSOs⁷¹ and national agencies and institutes. As the below table shows, from the institutions that have been chosen by respondents, the most connections are established between UNICEF CO and ministries (36%).

Figure 6 Type of institutions/organizations indicated as important partners by Moldova CO respondents



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

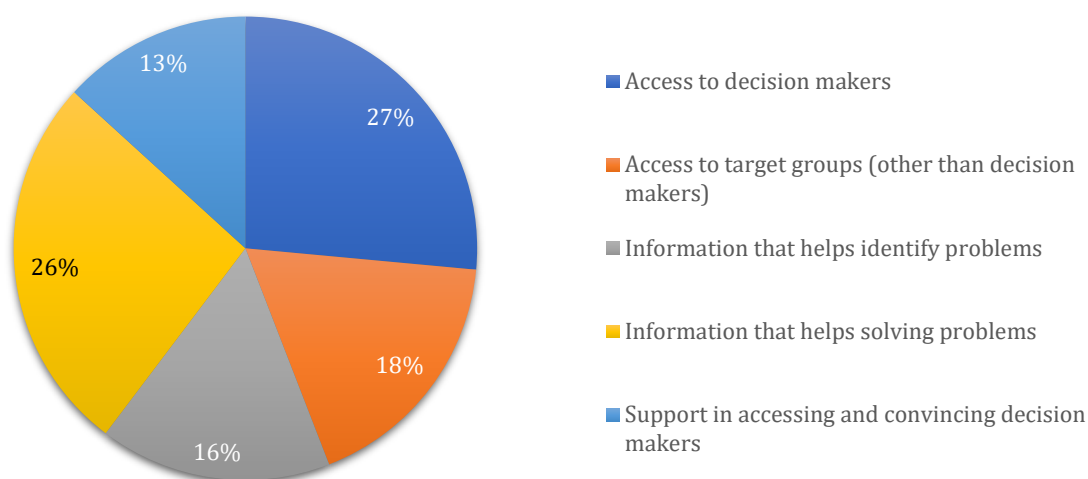
The Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection from Moldova has been identified most often as an important partner in the development of COs activities (8 times), followed by Ministry of Education and Research (5 times). Municipalities are also important partners for UNICEF CO, most nominalized LPAs being Cahul and Ungheni. 7 respondents identified them as important collaborations in the development of the activities under CP Moldova. The data shows that UN Agencies are key partners in the development of the CO's work. The links identified between the CO and UNDP are most frequent. Based on the number of respondents that have nominated a particular partner institution, a similar type of collaboration, has been observed in the case of Voinicel Early Intervention Center.

Moreover, regarding the frequency of communication, as observed from the data collected, most frequent contacts have been established with the municipalities, the Ministry of Economy, the National Council of Youth from Moldova, National Bureau of Statistics, NGOs (CNTM, Probono and TEKEDU) and UN agencies (UNICEF ECARO, UNICEF Headquarters, UNCT, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNDP).

According to the opinion of respondents, the primary benefit of the collaboration developed with the indicated institutions or organization, most frequent support was rated to access to decision makers (27% of the analyzed case), followed by receiving information for solving problems (26%) and access to target groups, others than decision makers (18%).

⁷¹ Such as: CCF, CNTM, Health for Youth association, Nova Association, ODIMM, Probono, Republican Center for Pedagogical Assistance, TEKEDU.

Figure 7 Type of information or support provided by the partners of UNICEF CO Moldova



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

When speaking about the benefits identified in the collaboration with governmental bodies and the parliament, most important types of support identified were: access to decision makers (43%) and support in accessing and convincing decision makers (29%). When addressing the benefits received from the collaboration with UN agencies, the most important aspect, as perceived by respondents, is that they receive information for solving problems (29% of the cases), followed by access to decision makers and information that helps identifying problems (each 21%). In the case of collaboration with LPAs, the benefits are equally distributed among the following: access to decision makers, information for solving problems and access to target groups. And, finally, in the case of partnerships developed with NGOs and associations, the main benefit refers to receiving information for solving problems (44,5% of cases), followed by facilitated access to target groups, other than decision-makers (33,3%).

Another important criterion of the analysis is the level of value that the CO's staff or contracted experts give to certain collaborations. On a scale form 1(no value) to 10, the average value of the collaboration established with governmental bodies is 6,53. In the case of LPAs, the information and supported received by the respondents is valued at 7,83 points. The value of the collaboration established with NGOs and associations is 8,91. According to the data provided by respondents, the most valued collaboration are the partnerships developed with the Health for Youth Association and Institute of Mother and Child Health and UN Agencies (UNICEF Headquarters, UNAIDS and UNFPA).

Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in the Republic of Moldova

Table 5. Metrics of the Social Network Analysis in Republic of Moldova

Metric	Value
Average Degree	2.5
Average Weight Degree	2.731
Network Size	52
Network Diameter	6
Modularity	0.541
Average Path Length	3.356
Connected Component	1

Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in in the Republic of Moldova

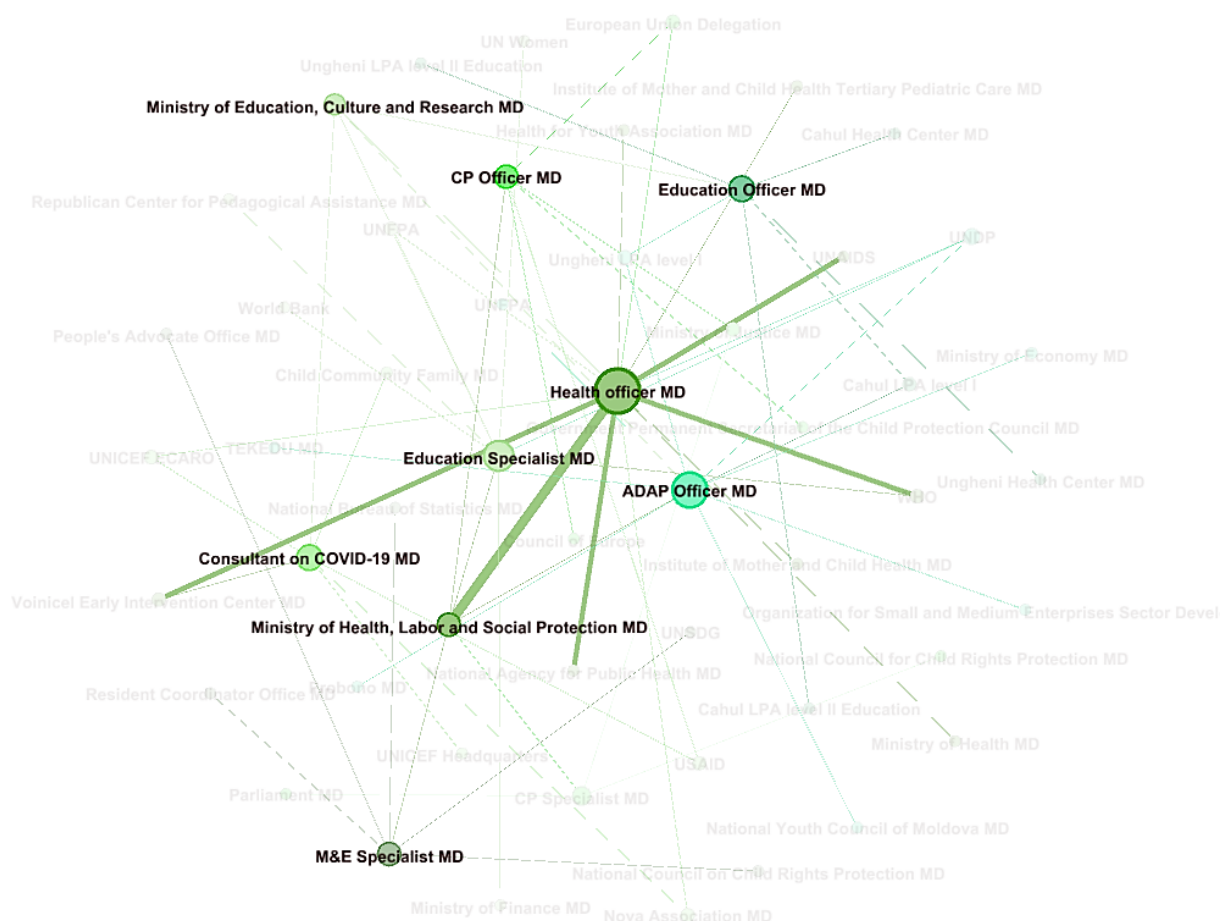
In the Republic of Moldova, the social network of UNICEF CO has an average degree of 2.5 edges per node and an average weight degree of 2.731. Thus, in UNICEF's network in the Republic of Moldova, UNICEF's experts and external partner organization have 2 or 3 connections on average between each other. The size of UNICEF's network in the Republic of Moldova is 52 nodes and the network diameter, which represents the shortest distance between the two most distant nodes in the network, is only 6 nodes. The network diameter coefficient implies an efficient flow of information in UNICEF's network in the Republic of Moldova, as 6 interactions are needed to connect the two most distanced nodes in the network.

Regarding the characteristics of the overall partnership network developed by UNICEF CO in the Republic of Moldova, the data analysis shows the existence of a relatively strong community, with various connections between actors in different clusters formed around each department of the CO or

each specialist/expert of the CO. This conclusion is based not only on the network diameter coefficient, but on the modularity coefficient (0.541) as well. Both show that network is not formed only by clusters of interactions, but that the identified clusters are interconnected through the connections established between their members. The modularity coefficient for the UNICEF CO in the Republic of Moldova is lower than the coefficient for the regional level, which indicates that the network is more partitioned. One explanation for this partition could be explained through the focus on fields, as UNICEF's experts are connected with external partner organizations that activate in the same field (health, education, social protection, etc.)

The average path length has a coefficient of 3,356, which indicates strong flow of information in the network of UNICEF CO in the Republic of Moldova. The average number of steps along the shortest paths for all possible pairs of network nodes is only 3 UNICEF experts and/or external partner organization. In other words, to reach a certain node in the network it only requires a path through 3 UNICEF's experts and/or external partner organizations. When comparing the average path length (3,356) with the network diameter (6), we observe that there are not many actors being in the periphery of the network. This statement is also based on the analysis of the connected component indicators (1) that shows the number of nodes that are connected with each other but isolated from the rest of the network. Nevertheless, we need to emphasize that in the case of Moldova the number of survey respondents is rather low (but representative for the size of the CO).

Figure 9. Social Network of UNICEF in Republic of Moldova filtered by number of degrees



Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Republic of Moldova

The graph from above highlights the nodes that have more than 5 edges in UNICEF's network in the Republic of Moldova, representing the partners that have the largest number of connections with UNICEF CO in Moldova. The nodes that have the highest number of degrees are all from the CO of UNICEF in the Republic of Moldova, as follow: the Health Officers with 15 degrees, the ADAP Officer with 11 degrees, the Education Specialist with 9 degrees, the Consultant on COVID-19 with 7 degrees and the

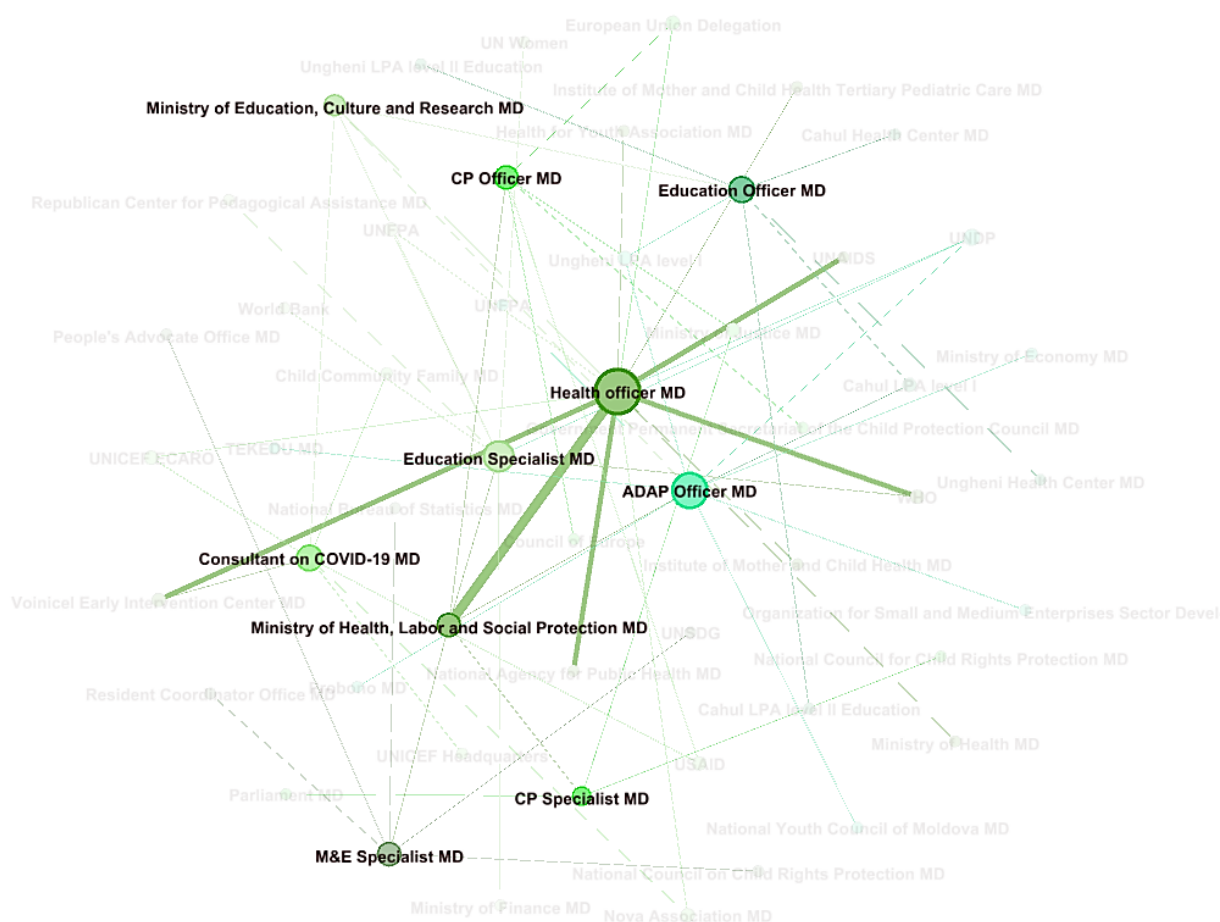
Education Officer with 7 degrees. Concerning the external partners organizations that have the most edges with UNICEF's experts in the Republic of Moldova are the following: the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection with 6 degrees, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research with 5 degrees, UNDP with 3 degrees, USAID with 2 degrees and UNICEF ECARO with 2 degrees.

Table 6. Top 5 nodes in number of degrees in UNICEF network in the Republic of Moldova

Node	Degrees
Health Officer	15
ADAP Officer	11
Education Specialist	9
Consultant on COVID-19	7
Education Officer	7

Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in the Republic of Moldova

Figure 10. Social Network of UNICEF in Republic of Moldova filtered by betweenness centrality



Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in Republic of Moldova

The graph from above presents the nodes that have the highest betweenness centrality coefficients in UNICEF's network from the Republic of Moldova. The following table from presents the nodes that have the highest betweenness centrality coefficient.

Table 7. Top 5 nodes in betweenness centrality in UNICEF network in the Republic of Moldova

Node	Betweenness centrality	Degrees
Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection	0.436625	6
Health officer	0.383573	15

Node	Closeness centrality	Degrees	Betweenness centrality
Ministry of Education, Culture and Research	0.425	5	0.249952
ADAP Officer	0.41129	11	0.316135
Education Specialist	0.398438	9	0.198186

Source: Data collected through a survey conducted in the Republic of Moldova

The nodes that have the highest betweenness centrality coefficient have the highest closeness centrality coefficients. The Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection has the highest closeness centrality coefficient as well (0.46), followed by the Health Officers of UNICEF (0.44), the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research (0.43), the ADAP Officer of UNICEF (0.41) and the Education Specialist of UNICEF (0.40).

Although it has a much lower number of degrees than other nodes from the network (such as the Health Officers or the ADAP Officer), the Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection has connections with nodes in the Republic of Moldova that have high betweenness and closeness centrality coefficients, such as the Health Officer of UNICEF (betweenness centrality: 0.38, closeness centrality: 0.44), the ADAP Officer (betweenness centrality: 0.32, closeness centrality: 0.41), the Education Specialist (betweenness centrality: 0.20, closeness centrality: 0.40), the M&E Specialist (betweenness centrality: 0.19, closeness centrality: 0.33) and the CP Specialist of UNICEF (betweenness centrality: 0.09, closeness centrality: 0.41).

In the case of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, the other external partner of UNICEF that have high coefficients in both betweenness and closeness centrality, it is also connected with other nodes that high coefficients in both metrics. Thus, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research is connected with Health Officer of UNICEF (betweenness centrality: 0.38, closeness centrality: 0.44), the ADAP Officer (betweenness centrality: 0.32, closeness centrality: 0.41), the Education Specialist (betweenness centrality: 0.20, closeness centrality: 0.40), and the Consultant on COVID-19 MD of UNICEF (betweenness centrality: 0.12, closeness centrality: 0.34).

Annex 4. 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	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	Document review	Review of existing documents and interviews' results (minutes, recordings, notes)	Reference materials for evaluation
		5.1.2. Implementation strategies effectively reflected the needs identified at planning stages and the evolution of these needs	Examples of CPs interventions tailored to the specific needs of most vulnerable children (ideally for each goal area of intervention in the CPDs)	Interviews (see Annex E) Observation		UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments CSOs
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			<i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>
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.	Availability of information, data and knowledge on changes in national needs and rights of the beneficiaries	Document review	Critical System Heuristics approach <i>used to analyse interview results and to identify how the main stakeholders understand the context and its change and influence UNCEF actions within the respective context dynamics</i>	Reference materials for evaluation
		6.2. UNICEF CPDs were aligned with country priorities and addressed key development issues	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	Interviews		UNICEF COs
			Common understanding amongst stakeholders about the expected and actual links between UNICEF-supported interventions and selected national priorities	Observation		Central Government Ministries and Departments
			Stakeholders can identify actual or potential areas of convergence and divergence between the national strategies and UNICEF-supported interventions in the country			CSOs Other UN agencies, Donors/International development partners <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>

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 (changes in national needs are part of the context analysed by the realist evaluation)	
		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, (CPDs, COARs) etc. 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
		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			Partner ministries, representatives of relevant UN clusters, international stakeholders
			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			<i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>
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	Review of existing documents and interviews' results (minutes, recordings, notes) 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 <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>
	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 didn't generated 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,					

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
	how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?					
Q1	Moldova CP <i>Did UNICEF Moldova contribute to the results at-scale? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i>	1.2.1. Positive changes can be observed concerning children protected from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discrimination, - exploitation, - violence, - abandonment, - family separation - neglect - exclusion from basic services (education and health) (education already covered by impact area evaluation) (related to Programme Outcome 1)	Trends in institutional capacity to protected from <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discrimination, - exploitation, - violence, - abandonment, - family separation - neglect - exclusion from basic services (education and health) 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)
		1.2.2. Positive changes can be observed concerning the realization of children's rights, especially: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - duty bearers capacity to fulfil their obligation for realization of child rights and for child protection - adolescents and youth participation (ado. & youth participation already covered by impact area evaluation) (related to Programme Outcome 2)	Trends in national indicators and targets related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - duty bearers capacity to fulfil their obligation for realization of child rights and for child protection - adolescents and youth participation All indicators related to Programme Outcome 2			
		1.2.3. UNICEF made significant contributions to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increased children protection from discrimination, exploitation and violence (related to Programme Outcome 1) - increased children protection from abandonment, family separation and neglect (related to Programme Outcome 1) - increased children access to quality services and social protection (related to Programme Outcome 1) 	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 	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>

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"> increased duty bearers capacity to fulfil their obligation for realization of child rights and for child protection (related to Programme Outcome 2) improved adolescents and youth participation (related to Programme Outcome 2) 	resulting in the development of child situation and improvement of indicators concerning children			
		1.2.4. Different conditions and factors influenced the effectiveness of UNICEF's CPDs	<p>Evidence on different mechanisms being valorised by UNICEF to generate results at-scale for children, under each Programme Outcome.</p> <p>Evidence showing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how these mechanisms work why these mechanisms work for whom these mechanisms work best 	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Observation</p>	Realist Evaluation	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNICEF COs</p> <p>Central Government Ministries and Departments</p> <p>CSOs</p> <p>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</p>
	<p>Adolescents and youth participation and empowerment, including YFHC in Moldova</p> <p><i>Did UNICEF Moldova contribute to the results at-scale in the area of adolescents and youth participation? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i></p>	<p>(1) UNICEF provided a performance-based budgeting framework for the Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFYC) in Moldova, based on the result of a modelling/pilot project and</p> <p>(2) contributed to the raising the capacity of health professionals to use youth friendly approaches in their work.</p> <p>As a result, (3) the funds allocated by the national health insurance fund to YFYC increased substantially,</p> <p>(4) as well as the quality of their services and their coverage of adolescent boys and girls with youth friendly health services.</p> <p>(5) UNICEF also contributed to the awareness raising on health issued among young people.</p> <p>The progresses in capacity of the YFYC and the health awareness of young people are leading to (6) an increased number of young</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>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Observation</p>	Process Tracing	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNICEF COs</p> <p>Central Government Ministries and Departments</p> <p>CSOs</p> <p>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</p>

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
		<p>people accessing youth friendly services deliver by YKs and Youth Centres and</p> <p>(7) feeling that they are listened / their opinions matter when they receive health services.</p>				
	<p>Inclusive education in Moldova</p> <p><i>Did UNICEF Moldova contribute to the results at-scale in the area of education? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i></p>	<p>(1) UNICEF provided and supported the production of essential knowledge for the development of inclusive education and child friendly schools, including inclusive pre-school education (early childhood education) in Moldova and</p> <p>(2) determined and encouraged a permanent dialogue between a large group of stakeholders at all levels (ministry, district and municipal authorities, schools, CSO, international organizations etc.) interested in the development of the inclusive education in Moldova.</p> <p>(3) UNICEF also supported the development of trainings and other capacity building activities for professionals working in education (especially with children with SEN) and</p> <p>(4) supported the development and implementation of communication activities for attitudinal change regarding the inclusive education.</p> <p>As a result (4) the existing legislation in the field of inclusive education in Moldova is largely comprehensive and</p> <p>(5) the existing methodological framework for the inclusion of all children is largely known by teachers, support staff and pre-primary teachers.</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>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Observation</p>	<p>Process Tracing</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNICEF COs</p> <p>Central Government Ministries and Departments</p> <p>CSOs</p> <p><i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i></p>

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
		These results, as well as the communications campaigns, have an impact on (7) the (slight) increased acceptance of children with SEN and CwD in the mainstream institutions (at school and pre-school level), especially among parents and children/students.				
	<p>Justice for children (including reform of criminal justice regarding children) in Moldova</p> <p><i>Did UNICEF Moldova contribute to the results at-scale for children in contact with the law? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i></p>	<p>(1) UNICEF provided and supported the production of essential knowledge on child friendly justice in Moldova and, especially in Transnistria region,</p> <p>(2) UNICEF supported the implementation of child friendly interviewing room and</p> <p>(3) developed and piloted a probation program (civic education and vocational training) for children in conflict with law.</p> <p>(4) With UNICEF involvement on policy dialogue based on studies and pilot results,</p> <p>(5) the legal framework have been improved in Moldova, in order to make the judiciary friendlier with children.</p> <p>Moreover (6) UNICEF have been involved in raising the capacity of professionals in the judiciary (police, probation officers, magistrates) to work with children.</p> <p>As a result of the legal and capacity improvements, (7) children victims and perpetrators of crimes, in contact with the judiciary (including: police response, legal investigations, probation), can now benefit from improved services, better adapted to ensure the respect of child rights and to answer children needs.</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>	<p>Document review</p> <p>Interviews</p> <p>Observation</p>	<p>Process Tracing</p>	<p>Reference materials for evaluation</p> <p>UNICEF COs</p> <p>Central Government Ministries and Departments</p> <p>CSOs</p> <p><i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i></p>

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	Review of existing documents and interviews’ results (minutes, recordings, notes)	Reference materials for evaluation
		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	Interviews		UNICEF COs
		2.3. UNICEF COs used risk management and risk prevention strategies in order to overcome challenges and bottlenecks	Evidence of management and prevention strategies and tools included in CPs and other planning documents	Observation		Central Government Ministries and Departments
			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 took into account 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
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			Interviews		
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			Observation	Result area analysis	
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			Document review		Review of existing documents and interviews’ results (minutes, recordings, notes)
			Interviews	UNICEF COs	Central Government Ministries and Departments	
			Observation			
			Result area analysis			

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Judgement Criteria	Indicators/Descriptors	Data collection methods	Data analysis methods	Sources of information / stakeholder groups to consult
			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			CSOs <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>
Q4	Which strategies or group of strategies were effective in producing results at scale?	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. <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>	Evidence of different strategies with specific purpose used and combined to achieve results at-scale.	Document review Interviews Observation	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)	Reference materials for evaluation UNICEF COs Central Government Ministries and Departments CSOs <i>(as identified in the stakeholders analysis)</i>

Annex 5. List of interviewees

Interviews regarding the Country Programme

1. Ministry of Health Labour and Social Protection, State Secretary Primary Health Care
2. Institute of Mother and Child Health
3. Singerei District Council
4. Child Community Family (CCF) Moldova

Interviews regarding result area: Inclusive education

5. UNICEF CO Education Specialist/Officer
6. UNICEF CO Early Child Development Specialist/Officer
7. Ministry of Finance
8. State University of Moldova
9. Republican Centre for Psycho -pedagogical Assistance
10. Alliance of Active NGOs in the field of Child and Family Social Protection
11. A.O. Lumos Moldova

Interviews regarding result area: Justice for children

12. UNICEF CO Child Protection Specialist/Officer
13. Ministry of Health Labour and Social Protection
14. Ministry of Justice
15. National Council on Child Rights Protection
16. Ombudsperson for Child Rights
17. National Probation Inspectorate
18. USAID
19. UNDP (One UN Project in TN)
20. Association for Participatory Criminal Justice (APCJ)
21. National Council for Prevention of Child Abuse (NCPCA)
22. Resonance NGO in Transnistrian region

Interviews regarding result area: Adolescents and youth participation and empowerment, including YFHC

23. UNICEF CO UNICEF Youth and Adolescents Officer
24. UNICEF CO UNICEF Health Officer
25. Minister of Education, Culture and Research – Department for youth
26. Swiss Cooperation Programme in Moldova
27. World Health Organisation – Moldova Country Office
28. National Center for Reproductive Health
29. National Youth Councils of Moldova
30. NEOVITA
31. ATIS YFHC Balti

Annex 6. 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	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?							
	Moldova CP <i>Did UNICEF Moldova 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. In your opinion, between 2018 and 2021, children in Moldova are better protected from: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Discrimination Violence Exploitation or abuse Neglect Family separation Exclusion from health services 	X	X	X	X	X	X
		2. If yes, for each of the six areas, how was progress possible? 3. If no, for each of the six areas, why progress was not possible? 4. Based on your professional expertise, which indicators do you have in mind when assessing the child protection? 5. Did UNICEF contributed to the progress observed? If yes, how? Please give examples for different areas.						
		6. In your opinion, the capacity of state institutions to deliver results for disadvantaged children has been improved between 2018 and 2021? 7. Can you give the example of institutions that improved their capacity? How was progress possible? What factors supported the progress? 8. Can you give the example of institutions that could not improve their capacity? Why progress was not possible? 9. Based on your professional expertise, which indicators do you have in mind when assessing the capacity of institutions to deliver results for disadvantaged children?	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>10. In your opinion, the capacity of parents to fulfil their obligation for realization of child rights and for child protection has been improved between 2018 and 2021? How was progress possible? What factors supported or hindered the progress?</p> <p>11. Based on your professional expertise, which indicators do you have in mind when assessing the capacity of parents to fulfil their obligation for realization of child rights?</p> <p>12. In your opinion, the mass media and general public have a better understanding of child rights in 2021 compared to 2018? How was progress possible? What factors supported or hindered the progress?</p> <p>13. Based on your professional expertise, which indicators do you have in mind when assessing the mass media and general understanding of child rights?</p> <p>14. Did UNICEF contributed to the increased capacity of institutions, parents and media? If yes, how? Please give examples.</p>						
	<p>Adolescents and youth participation and empowerment, including YFHC in Moldova</p> <p><i>Did UNICEF Moldova contribute to the results at-scale in the area of adolescents and youth participation? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i></p>	<p>Please give examples about UNICEF contribution to adolescents' empowerment in Moldova, especially concerning their health. Please refer especially to:</p> <p>15. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the Youth Friendly Health Centres (YFHC)?</p> <p>16. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to raising the capacity of health professionals to use youth friendly approaches in their work?</p> <p>17. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to increased funds allocated to YFHC?</p> <p>18. how would you describe UNICEF contributions raising awareness on health issues among young people?</p> <p>19. How do you assess the quality of the YFHC and YK services?</p> <p>20. How do you assess the coverage and availability of YFHC and YK services?</p> <p>21. Are young people listened and participate to decisions concerning their health?</p> <p>22. What other stakeholders contributed to the progress observed?</p> <p>23. Based on your professional expertise, which indicators do you have in mind when assessing young people participation to decisions concerning their health?</p>	X	X				X
	<p>Inclusive education in Moldova</p> <p><i>Did UNICEF Moldova contribute to the results at-scale in the area</i></p>	<p>Please give examples about UNICEF contribution to inclusive education in Moldova. Please refer especially to:</p> <p>24. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the development of inclusive education and child friendly schools?</p>	X	X				X

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
	<i>of education? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i>	<p>25. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the development of inclusive early education and child friendly kindergartens?</p> <p>26. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to policy dialogue and consensus regarding inclusive education?</p> <p>27. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the training of professionals working in education (especially with children with SEN)?</p> <p>28. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to awareness raising about the importance of inclusive education among:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">a. teachers?</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">b. parents?</p> <p>29. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to improved legislation in the field of inclusive education in Moldova?</p> <p>30. Based on your professional expertise, how much are methodologies and tools for inclusive education used in schools in Moldova?</p> <p>31. What other stakeholders contributed to the progress observed?</p> <p>32. Based on your professional expertise, which indicators do you have in mind when assessing the acceptance of children with SEN and CwD in the mainstream schools and kindergartens?</p>						
	<p>Justice for children (including reform of criminal justice regarding children) in Moldova</p> <p><i>Did UNICEF Moldova contribute to the results at-scale for children in contact with the law? If yes, how and why did it make a difference and for whom? If no, why not?</i></p>	<p>Please give examples about UNICEF contribution to justice for children in Moldova. Please refer especially to:</p> <p>33. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the increased knowledge on child friendly justice in Moldova and, especially in Transnistria region?</p> <p>34. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the implementation of child friendly interviewing room?</p> <p>35. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the probation program (civic education and vocational training) for children in conflict with law?</p> <p>36. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to policy dialogue and consensus regarding reforms needed to make justice netter for children?</p> <p>37. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to improved legislation, in order to make the judiciary friendlier with children?</p> <p>38. how would you describe UNICEF contributions to the increased capacity of professionals in the judiciary (police, probation officers, magistrates) to work with children?</p> <p>39. In your professional opinion, can children victims and perpetrators of crimes, in contact with the judiciary benefit from improved services?</p>	X	X				X

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
		40. What other stakeholders contributed to the progress observed?						
		41. Based on your professional expertise, which indicators do you have in mind when assessing the improvement of the judiciary when children are in contact with the legal system?						
Q2	Did UNICEF identify and reassess bottlenecks throughout programme implementation?	42. 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)	X	X	X	X	X	X
		43. How is UNICEF CO identifying and analysing the bottlenecks and barriers on the realisation of CP outcomes?	X					
		44. What are the most important measures taken by UNICEF to cope with barriers and overcome challenges and bottlenecks on the realisation of CP outcomes?	X	X	X	X		
		45. How is UNICEF CO identifying and analysing risks?	X					
		46. What are the most important measures taken by UNICEF to manage the identified risks?	X					
		47. 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?	X	X	X	X		
		48. In your opinion, how effective is UNICEFUNICEF CO in managing 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?	49. Can you identify and give specific examples of benefits of UNICEF's activities for the most marginalised children?	X	X	X	X		X
		50. Would you say that UNICEF contributed to reduced equity gaps between children in your country? Can you give some examples?						
		51. 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?	X	X				X
		52. What factors have been supporting or hindering UNICEF COs activities for the most marginalised children?						

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
		53. What measures have been taken by UNICEF's CO to ensure the sustainability of its results?	X					
		54. 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?						
		55. Please give examples of changes that ensure the sustainability of UNICEFUNICEF results (mentioned before in the interview). Please think about: 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	56. In your professional opinion, what are the most important needs of children in your country?	X	X	X	X	X	X
		57. 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?						
		58. Please give examples of CPs interventions tailored to the specific needs of most vulnerable children.	X	X	X	X		X
Q5.2	consistently integrated the equity and gender equality in all aspects of programming and implementation, including policy and advocacy?	59. Please give examples of CPs interventions tailored to promote gender equality.	X	X	X	X	X	X
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?	60. How is UNICEF COs gathering information about: a) The current needs of children in the country? b) The government priorities?	X					
		61. In your professional opinion, how well is UNICEFUNICEF CO agenda aligned with national priorities?	X	X			X	
		62. Are there any national priorities not taken into account by UNICEFUNICEF CO? Why?						
		63. Are there any objectives of UNICEF CO that are not national priorities? Why?						
Q7	To what extent has UNICEF been able to respond to the shifts	64. 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? 65. Why and how this impact was generated?	X	X	X	X	X	X

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
	caused by crisis or major socio-economic and political changes?	66. How did UNICEF respond to these crisis and major socio-economic and political changes? 67. What changes have been made to UNICEF CO strategies and priorities? 68. In your professional opinion, how effective was the response? What more could have been done?	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?	69. Which are the most important UNSDCF and SDGs taken into account by UNICEF CO when planning the CPD?	X			X	X	
		70. How is UNICEF CO aligned with UNICEF's global and regional strategies?	X					
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?	71. How is UNICEF CO building and sustaining partnerships?	X					
		72. How would you describe your collaboration with UNICEF? 73. Please assess your collaboration with UNICEF as effective or ineffective on a scale from 1 to 10.		X	X	X	X	X
		74. 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	75. 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

Evaluation questions and sub-questions		Question	UNICEF	Government / Public institutions	Donors	UN agencies	Academia	Services providers / implementing partners
	and							
	10.2 to what extent were they necessary and sufficient for contributing to the results at scale to be achieved?	76. 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. 77. <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?	78. What new partners have been identified in the last two years? 79. How did the CO revised 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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inst./org. 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Inst./org. 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inst./org. 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<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
- Executive management
 - International Professional
 - National Officer
 - General Service
 - Consultant & individual contractor

Annex 7. List of documentary evidence

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