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# Formative evaluation of UNICEF Ethiopia Country Programme

## Evaluation report

6 December 2019



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF UNICEF ETHIOPIA COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION REPORT

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## ACRONYMS

AAP	Accountability to affected population
APAI	Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement
ARRA	Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs
ASR	Accelerated School Readiness
AWD	Acute Watery Diarrhoea
BEmONC	Basic Emergency Obstetric and New-Born Care
BOLSA	Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs
CBNC	Community Based New-born Care
CCCs	Core Corporate Commitments for Children in Emergencies
CERF	Central Emergencies Response Fund
CHTE	Complex High Threat Environment
CM	Child Marriage
CMAM	Community-Based Management of Malnutrition
COAR	Country Office Annual Report
CP	Country Programme
CPD	Country Programme Document
CPE	Country programme evaluation
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CRVS	Civil registration and vital statistics
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CtC	Child to Child
CTEs	Colleges of Teacher Education
C4D	Communication for Development
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DHIS2	District Health Information Software 2
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECO	Ethiopia Country Office
EDHS	Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey
EMIS	Education Management Information System
EPSA	Ethiopia Pharmaceutical Supply Agency
EQ	Evaluation Questions
ERIC	Ethical Research Involving Children
ESARO	East South African Regional Office
ESDP V	Education Sector Development Programme V
ET	Evaluation Team
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGM/	Female genital mutilation/cutting
FGD	Focus group discussions
FO	Field Office
FSC	Federal Supreme Court
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEEW	Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women
GEQIP	General Education Quality Improvement Program
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GPECM	Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage
GPR	Gender Programmatic Review
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HECDI	Holistic Early Childhood Development Index
HEP	Health Extension Programme
HEW	Health Extension Workers
HQ	Head Quarters
HSTP	Health Sector Transformation Plan
HW	Health Workers
IAHE	Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation
iCCM	Integrated Community Case Management
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IFA	Iron and Folic Acid
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
IMAM	Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition
IMEP	Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
IN SCT	The Improved Nutrition Through Integrated Basic Social Services Social Cash Transfer

INT	Insecticide Treated Nets
I GTP	First Growth and Transformation Plan
II GTP	Second Growth and Transformation Plan
KII	Key informant interview(s)
L&D	Learning & Development
LRPS	Request for Proposal for Services
LTA	Long Term Agreement
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MHH	Menstrual Health and Hygiene
MHNT	Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams
MNCH	Maternal, newborn and child health
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoU	Memorandums of Understanding
MoWCY	Ministry of Women, Children and Youth
MTR	Mid Term Review
NCBI	National Centre for Biotechnology Information
NICU	Neonatal Intensive Care Unit
NISS	National Intelligence and Security Service
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NNPII	National Nutrition Programme (second phase)
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OWNP	One Wash National Programme
PHCU	Primary Health Care Unit
PMU	Programme Monitoring Unit
PSCM	Procurement and Supply Chain Management
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
PSN	Programme Strategy Note
RAM	Result Assessment Module
RBM	Results-Based Management
RBoE	Regional Bureau of Education
REBs	Regional Education Bureaus
RF	Results Framework
RFP	Request for Proposal
RHBs	Regional Health Bureaus
SBGBV	School-Related Gender-Based Violence
SDD	Solar Direct Drive
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SAM	Sever Acute Malnutrition
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SMIS	Student information management systems
SPESI	Social policy and evidence for social inclusion
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCSDf	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGA	UN General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISE	Unified Nutrition Information System
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UPC	Universal Periodic Review
WASH	Water sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WDA	Women Development Army
WSWG	Water Sector Working Group

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### BACKGROUND

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF's) Ethiopia Country Programme (2016-2020) (CP) aims to support government efforts to reduce inequalities within the country, with a focus on children and gender. It is also intended to further strengthen the integration of the Gender Action Plan (2014-2017) (GAP), and the second part of the Government of Ethiopia's (GoE's) Growth & Transformation Plan (GTP II). The CP is aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and makes provision for risk-informed emergency preparedness, congruent with UNICEF's Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

### EVALUATION OBJECTIVE(S) AND INTENDED AUDIENCE

The UNICEF Regional Office for East and Southern Africa (ESARO) commissioned this formative Country Programme Evaluation (2016-2020) (CPE) with the joint supervision of UNICEF's Ethiopia Country Office (ECO). The CPE, being formative, assesses the results of the current CP, but also informs the next Country Programme (2020-2024). The evaluation assesses the relevance and effectiveness of selected outputs by ECO of the CP and provides conclusions, lessons learnt and recommendations, with a focus on the strategic issues for UNICEF to address in the new CP. A Gender Programme Review covering the period of the Country Office Gender Action Plan and Adolescent Girls' Strategy was also conducted.<sup>1</sup> The intended audience of the evaluation extends from UNICEF to government partners and all national stakeholders. It is hoped that the evaluation will prove useful in advancing the rights of children, equality between genders, and disadvantaged demographic groups within Ethiopia.

### METHODOLOGY

The methodological framework that was used to conduct the Formative Evaluation of the UNICEF Ethiopian Country Programme (2016-2020) is based around the internationally accepted evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), with particular focus on Relevance and Effectiveness, as agreed with the client. The Terms of Reference (ToR) and Evaluation Questions (EQ) were developed into the evaluation matrix used to conduct the evaluation, as reported in the Inception Report. The evaluation methodology uses a mixed-methods approach, building on the ToR, to triangulate the qualitative and quantitative data captured in Phases 1 and 2 of the evaluation. A theory-based approach was adopted, with ECO's theories of change being reviewed for formulation of the evaluation's recommendations and conclusions.

The expected users of the evaluation include: all sections of UNICEF ECO Health; Nutrition; WASH; Child protection; Social policy and evidence for social inclusion (SPESI); Education; and the Programme Management Unit (PMU); as well as field offices. The evaluation will be presented to government partners.

### STRATEGIC ISSUES CONCLUSIONS

#### 1) Significant progress has been made

UNICEF has made strides in bolstering key indicators which pertain to child well-being in the past decade. Child marriage, stunting, and mortality have all declined but some indicators have stopped improving at the desired rate or at all, despite a 40 per cent increase in expenditure by the Government. Not all indicators show positive progress. For example, rates of neonatal mortality are not declining in Ethiopia. Geographic disparities remain and equity gaps between regions have not diminished significantly. UNICEF analysis shows that inequity is propelled by gaps in levels of education, wealth, and the rural-urban divide.

#### 2) UNICEF is well positioned in Ethiopia

UNICEF has a long-standing history in Ethiopia, and it shows. The foundation it has built since 1958 has created a level of trust and support between the organization and the Government of Ethiopia. Stakeholders involved in the Country Programme 2016-2020 regard the work done by UNICEF as being high quality and necessary. The GoE appreciates UNICEF's sustained efforts for children and its large-scale emergency response. UNICEF's convening power is well demonstrated in its ability to bring diverse actors together. The GoE see UNICEF's funding as

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<sup>1</sup> It is an independent report, and for integration purposes, it's executive summary can be found in Annex 16.

very important.

UNICEF's mandate, capacity and focus on children and females is unparalleled in the country. UNICEF is seen as a pivotal partner by government agencies and ministries, a trusted but 'critical friend' that is flexible and task-oriented. Even within the United Nations as a whole, UNICEF is perceived to have the greatest reach through its field offices in all regions of the country. However, this also raises expectations that UNICEF should address all the challenges relevant to its mandate right across the whole country.

### 3) UNICEF is aligned with government and global initiatives

UNICEF aligns itself with and supports the Government in many strategic national initiatives. This reflects UNICEF's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UNICEF's own Strategic Plan 2018-2021. Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan II 2016-2020 has also enjoyed the support of UNICEF while it transitions into its third phase.

### 4) There are common challenges across sectors

The following challenges have been identified as being prevalent in all sectors of the evaluation:

- There are various weaknesses in the model of national implementation, especially regarding accountability for results elements of UNICEF's funding that are aimed at social and pro-poor expenditure. UNICEF needs to review aspects of its model for national implementation with the Government.
- High turnover of human capital in the health, education and other sectors is reducing both the efficiency and the effectiveness of UNICEF's investments.
- The Government has low-quality, aggregated data sets, which would serve better if broken down by region.

### 5) There is a need for improved change strategies

The report sets out the case for UNICEF developing stronger change strategies, including for systems strengthening and capacity development, for multi-sector programming, and for behaviour change, among several others.

## OUTPUT LEVEL CONCLUSIONS

### *Health*

UNICEF's Health Programme and the outcome that was set for the 2016–2020 period were relevant, as they supported the Government's interests related to services and interventions for new-borns, children, adolescent girls, and women. The Programme aimed to contribute to closing gaps and improvement in figures for *births delivered in a health facility*, *maternal mortality ratio*, *child mortality*, and *adolescent fertility*, which reflect, in part, UNICEF contributions. There is a challenge, however, related to the large **variations among regions** within those aggregates. The Programme is also aligned with the various global goals and key stakeholders' agendas for the country. As for the population's needs, public perceptions are that, in general, the coverage of health services is better than four years ago, but there are challenges in quality of care services with regard to lack of compassion and not being sufficiently equitable and timely (mainly because Health Extension Workers (HEWs), Health Workers (HWs) and the Women Development Army (WDA) are overburdened, have limited opportunities to upgrade, and have poor incentive structures). The results of the outputs evaluated show that the achievements are mainly related to provision of essential supplies and coverage of services, but **quality lags behind**. For the last couple of years, though, UNICEF has recognized and improved service quality by supporting the country to implement national strategies for quality of care. **Adolescents seem to be a missing link** within the UNICEF's Health Programme. UNICEF's strategic actions to improve adolescent maternal health do not fully align with national, international and UNICEF Gender Action Plan priorities for adolescent health.

### *Nutrition*

UNICEF's Nutrition Programme and the outcome set for the 2016–2020 period were relevant as the Programme supported the Government's interests through upstream nutrition policy support and multi-sectoral engagement and strengthening systems for nutrition service delivery. The Programme is also aligned with various global goals and key stakeholders' agendas for the country. UNICEF has successfully promoted nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes through, for example, the integration of nutrition-sensitive interventions into the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) IV. However, the quality of care services is affected by the health system challenges outline above: lack of compassion and

not being sufficiently equitable and timely. During this 2016-2020 CP, UNICEF has been successful at **strengthening multi-sectoral engagement** and the accountability framework by advocating for the Government to recognize the importance of the multi-sectoral approach to reducing malnutrition and compromises to reduce it. It has followed the first steps of the operational approaches to improving nutrition programming as it has *built commitment, strengthened leadership and strengthened governance*, which resulted in the development and launch of the National Nutrition Programme (NNP) II, the approval of the Food and Nutrition Policy, the Food Fortification Standards, the School Health and Nutrition Strategy, as well as a Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Strategy (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2017) (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018), all of which provided a legal framework that enhanced the nutrition system in Ethiopia.

Donors are not as interested in supporting **adolescent programming** as they are in supporting programmes for children. ECO is attempting to increase the evidence base on adolescent nutrition to appeal to funders and improve training. However, there is still a problem when addressing adolescent programming, as the natural stakeholders for adolescent nutritional programming lack insight into the need for differentiated interventions for adolescents.

### *WASH*

UNICEF's WASH Programme and the outcome set for the 2016–2020 period were relevant as the Programme supported the Government's interests related to use of affordable, safe, reliable, sustainable and adequate water supply and sanitation, and appropriate hygiene practices in households, communities and institutions in rural and urban areas. The Programme is also aligned with various global goals and key stakeholders' agendas for the country. As for the population needs, public perception is that, in general, UNICEF does fill a gap in providing WASH services, but the resources are insufficient to fulfil the high demand for coverage of services needed and the areas it reaches.

The work UNICEF has done on WASH is clearly recognized internally and externally, especially the introduction of a climate resilience component in the One Wash National Programme (OWNP). From the OWP Phase I, much has been done to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the GTP I targets, and to fulfil the short-to-medium term objectives of the GTP II. However, key problems – such as the low capacity of implementing partners and low resource mobilization – have affected UNICEF's performance and, in general, implementation of the OWP, which was designed with little involvement of the actors in the regions and woredas.

### **CHILD PROTECTION**

#### *Birth registration*

UNICEF advocacy actions have had a strategic impact on the civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system of Ethiopia. By influencing the legal framework through the amendment of Proclamation 760/2012, UNICEF, in coordination with other stakeholders, succeeded in including free birth registration certification for all refugee children and linkage between the health sector and the CRVS system. Advocacy challenges persist towards removing in-system barriers by removing payment for the birth registration certificate and the requirement for both parents to be present when registering their child. Government commitment, at both national and sub-national levels, has led to increased access to birth registration. However, as the CRVS system is decentralized, expansion of services will require increasing commitment from the regions. This will lead to challenges in increasing budgetary allocations at all levels to progressively reduce dependence on UNICEF resources.

#### *Justice for children*

UNICEF is making significant efforts to position itself as a strategic government partner to strengthen the child justice system. This will require ending implementation of strategies where UNICEF does not generate value and finding others where it can take more advantage of its technical capacity. The introduction of social workers to the justice system and their progressive integration into the government payroll has been one of the most important UNICEF contributions. However, the absence of a labour framework for the social welfare workforce could be one of the causes of wage differences and excessive caseloads and could result in high turnover of social workers. The absence of gender-disaggregated, sufficient and systematic data on child victims of violence and witnesses of crime or children in conflict with the law who are getting into the system, and on the services that have or have not been provided, are a critical issue that must be addressed urgently. Without this information, UNICEF does not have evidence

to advocate for and to monitor the impact of its strategies.

### *Child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting*

ECO is an influential and trusted partner to the GoE and has had a significant impact on the pronouncement of national policies and initiatives that impact on child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). ECO's contributions to the Joint Programmes on Child Marriage (Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage – GPECM) and FGM are the main vehicles by which UNICEF intervenes with communities to eliminate these harmful practices. ECO's weakness around community participation and consultation in the areas of child marriage and FGM may reflect an overall institutional lack of strategies and tools to effectively engage Government to elevate the status of children and adolescents to partners in policy, plan and programme design and monitoring. United Nations resolutions clearly call for children and youth to be active collaborators in issues that affect them, but ECO's CP on these issues does not prioritize their involvement. Community interventions and communication campaigns to raise awareness of the harms of child marriage (CM) and FGM that lead to community declarations of abandonment seem not to consider the factors that drive family decisions around child marriage and FGM.

## LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### *Early childhood and education*

UNICEF's ECE support has been implemented as part of the National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). While this policy is needed to frame pre-primary and ECE services, the country needs to move towards a national policy on Early Childhood Development that, from a child-centred approach, integrates all sectors, programmes and services to ensure comprehensive development. Although there is a strong commitment to ECCE services, budget allocation is still insufficient, both at national and subnational levels and there is a lack of expenditure tracking. Family and community engagement have been successful in increasing awareness of the importance of ECE services for young children. However, ECE services still have the challenge of increasing the participation of families in their role to contribute to child development.

UNICEF support for capacity development significantly increased the number of teachers that have been trained. Although the Government recognizes the quality of training, this evaluation did not find any evidence to support positive changes in teacher pedagogical practices. Further, the evaluation found high turnover rates of teachers trained by UNICEF to be a significant challenge.

### *Policy planning & knowledge management*

UNICEF's collaboration with UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) to support the Government to develop the Results Framework (RF) and the annual operational plan was a critical achievement. The support from UNICEF and UNESCO IIEP to the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the Regional Bureau of Education (RBoE) for crisis-sensitive planning is highly relevant in a context of increasing humanitarian emergencies resulting from conflicts and natural disasters. Support has also been provided in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to include the Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs (ARRA) as a key stakeholder in delivering education services to refugee children. A question may arise about the level of integration between the ESDP and the Ethiopia National Refugee Child Protection Strategy (2017-2019). Supporting strengthening of the education management information systems has been a critical strategy towards improving planning and education sector analysis capabilities among planning experts from the MoE and RBoE. However, information from this evaluation suggests that critical challenges persist in implementation of the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and the student management information systems (SMIS) Web Application systems.

### *Adolescent girls' participation in primary education*

ECO's priority actions to improve adolescent girls' primary school completion are multi-sectoral and address the social ecology of girls' lives and influences, from the individual (self-esteem, knowledge, life skills) to the community context (community campaigns to raise awareness of the consequences of child marriage, for example). This increases the strategy's probability of success as measured in terms of programme uptake, coverage and gender parity. Ethiopia is quickly moving closer to gender parity in enrolment at primary level, no doubt in large part thanks to UNICEF Ethiopia's support for legislative

and policy changes, as well as direct interventions to convince families to send girls to pre-primary and primary schools. The ecological approach requires that girls and boys be seen both as individuals and as part of communities, regions and countries and political, economic and social contexts.

### **SOCIAL POLICY AND EVIDENCE FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION (SPESI)**

As the evidence presented suggests, various policy officials and partners of UNICEF in Ethiopia highly regard the quality standards and technical skills of the organization and its staff. There is also a clear perception of the close and trusting relationship that it holds with the GoE, which gives UNICEF a privileged position to shape public debates around protection of the rights of children and woman.

Currently, UNICEF is undertaking several initiatives to address problems related to lack of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) information. Nonetheless, there seems to be a lack of general public understanding about how the evidence produced in pilot studies translates into practical advice for policymakers and communities on how to increase the efficiency of policy processes. The limited participation in policy and service delivery debates highlighted by communities may help to understand the existence of this gap.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

#### *Health*

It is difficult to follow a logical connection across the Theory of Change of the Programme Strategy Note (PSN) for **Health**. There are no clearly defined **activity indicators** for the activities that detail how UNICEF ECO is going to achieve results. This made it difficult for the consultancy firm to make assessments of specific activities. UNICEF's Health Programme provides valuable support to the GoE that is not visible when reviewing the accountability tools designed for the CP. Other sources of information, such as the Country Office Annual Report (COAR), are reports that describe what has been done, but the RF for the CP does not provide the information needed for this purpose. Cross-cutting components should not be left to be measured as independent outcomes in the design, as they could lose importance when the implementation phase begins.

#### *Nutrition*

Although there have been advances in multisectoral engagement, there is an acknowledgment inside UNICEF (63 per cent of the interviewees) that programme sections work in silos, and that this affects their effectiveness at delivering the planned interventions.

#### *WASH*

The role of the private sector in the strategic note of the sector is secondary and generic. There are no specific activities defined to address this. This factor de it difficult for the consultancy firm to assess private sector participation. Given the potential for private sector participation, the new Country Programme Document (CPD) should include specific activities to approach work with the private sector. UNICEF's WASH Programme gives great support to the GoE that is not visible from review of the accountability tools designed for the CP. Other sources of information, such as the COAR, are reports that describe what has been done, but the RF for the CP does not provide the information needed for this purpose.

#### *Child Protection*

The engagement of community-based platforms is useful in advocating for registration, as well as for identifying women who are expecting to deliver and those who have recently delivered. UNICEF's support for strengthening the link between the health system and CRVS system has proven to be a critical strategy to increase birth registration in the first 90 days. Lesson from this experience are valuable for scaling-up to other regions to increase the birth registration rate.

Justice for children cannot be approached without being part of wider justice sector reform, or experience will be more ad hoc (improvised). There is a need for better understanding of the scope of justice for children, which includes child victims and witnesses and children in conflict with the law. Making use of the new civil society organization will enable UNICEF, in partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to build awareness of the right to access to a quality child justice system for all child victims and witnesses, and children in conflict with the law.

#### *Learning and development*

High-level advocacy has been a key strategy for ensure that the Government integrates within its education policy and sectoral plan the results of UNICEF support. Giving leadership to the Government when

implementing demonstrative models during the process (designing, implementing, monitoring and supervising) has been critical for ensuring the sustainability of UNICEF's support. According to the Government, the results framework planning process should consider government capacities in order to ensure timely and proper implementation. Capacity development and system strengthening in educational planning and management should always be ongoing processes, given the continuous staff turnover and reshuffling of experienced staff at various levels of education administration.

#### *Social policy and evidence for social inclusion (SPESI)*

The strategy notes for SPESI are quite generic. There are no specific strategies for each outcome, but these are presented as general for all of the outcomes; this made it difficult for the consultancy firm to assess specific activities involved in its operation. That lack of specific strategies makes it difficult to analyse and understand the positive panorama expressed in the outcome indicators presented in the Result Assessment Module (RAM) report. Some of the critical comments presented in the analysis of SPESI should invite UNICEF to revise these indicators and define if they are suitable for monitoring the progress of its various initiatives.

### STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the strategic recommendations based on the findings and conclusions. The report includes a set of recommendations at output level which appear in the body of the report but are not detailed in the executive summary.

#### REVIEW AND REVISE UNICEF ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Section 7.2 of the Report sets out a series of challenges that UNICEF experienced in implementing the country programme through national implementation that undermined the effectiveness of the country programme and UNICEF's ability to be accountable for the results of some aspects of its funding to the GoE (see Table 3 of the Report).

In particular, the GoE is not sufficiently accountable for the hundreds of millions of US dollars that it receives every year through UNICEF. The GoE does not report adequately or in a timely manner on the results it is achieving with UNICEF funding. A second challenge is that the GoE policy of rapid relocation of officials between duty stations is undermining capacity development as government staff need constant reorientation and training.

UNICEF should work with the GoE to address the challenges within the scope of the current Basic Cooperation Agreement. Making the necessary changes will take time. It is recommended that UNICEF sees this as a 2-3-year change programme. It is proposed that ECO starts by documenting the implementation challenges for discussion with the GoE, starting with the Ministry of Finance, and leading to a consultation with all the relevant ministries and departments.

This discussion could also be approached via the Resident Coordinator as a joint United Nations initiative, given that other United Nations agencies may face similar challenges. If that does not prove possible, UNICEF should carry forward agency-specific discussions with the GoE.

#### NARROW THE SCOPE OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

UNICEF Ethiopia is well advanced in its planning for the new CP, including narrowing the scope of the activities within each sector and the geographic scope. The evaluation supports these efforts, which are consistent with the feedback from all parties that the current programme is too broad and diffuse. In addition to other criteria for narrowing scope – for example, focusing on areas with a prevalence of multiple deprivations, or where partnerships are sufficiently advanced to deliver results – it is recommended that the scope of the CP is kept to activities that can be supported well (see also systems strengthening below) and where accountability for results (not just for finance) can be assured.

#### INVEST FOR IMPACT

It is recommended that UNICEF Ethiopia transition from a model of funding of key initiatives to investment for results, applying a deliberate set of investment criteria in favour of, for example, interventions that: are proven to work in Ethiopia; are cost effective; target woredas with high rates of multiple deprivations; and have the required political and financial commitment from the relevant regional authorities. This recommendation can stand alone but is also a supporting strategy to a reformed approach to national implementation, as set out in Recommendation 1 (See Section 7.5 for further discussion).

While the bulk of UNICEF's investment will continue to go towards national sector-based programmes, it is recommended that UNICEF increases its funding to high value-added functions where UNICEF has an established reputation in Ethiopia, including high-quality research and advocacy. UNICEF also needs to strengthen the ECO knowledge management function to draw on lessons learned from these exercises.

### DEVELOP CHANGE STRATEGIES

This recommendation is to be read and understood in conjunction with Section 7.7, which sets out how the current CP has suffered from a lack of well-developed change strategies and provides the argumentation for their future development.

During 2019, in preparing the new CP, ECO prioritized the progressive development of six Programme Strategy Notes. These strategy notes are intended to cover programme content (the What) and change strategies (the How). However, the How elements are not sufficiently well developed, and ECO needs to redress the balance to ensure that the planned results of the new CP can be delivered. It is recommended that, rather than assuming change strategies can be covered in the programme strategy notes, ECO should develop separate change strategies for application, as needed, across all the programme strategies. It may be unrealistic to expect all the change strategies listed below to be developed at once, and sequencing may be required. While all are important, the first two are most fundamental:

- **Systems strengthening and capacity development**, based on proven models and evidence-based approaches. As UNICEF has no technical section or guidance on systems strengthening, UNICEF Ethiopia will need support from ESARO, and perhaps also from headquarters (HQ). *Please also see Annex 11.*
- **Multi-sector approach to programming**, starting with an agreed position on how child-centred outcomes are achieved through multi-sector programming, supported by new structural solutions within ECO with formal accountability for cross-sectoral outcomes assigned to senior managers, with revised reporting lines, and matrix team working. ECO must determine what it means by 'integration' and 'convergence' and determine which multi-sector approaches should be used and in which circumstances. This cannot only be left to section chiefs as they may lack sufficient incentives to implement cross-sector working. As UNICEF has no technical section or guidance on multi-sector programming, UNICEF Ethiopia will need support from ESARO, and perhaps also from HQ. *Please also see Annex 12.*
- **Social and behaviour change** needs its own strategy, including communication for development, building on a better researched and developed understanding of social change. The core model and strategy should first be developed at an office-wide level and then interpreted for each sector. Further support may be required from ESARO.
- **Child and youth participation**, through CSOs and 'demonstration' approaches that show local authorities what is possible and how interventions become more relevant when the voices of children and youth are heard.
- **Peacebuilding and social cohesion**, learning from peacebuilding interventions that predate the current country programme, working with the Ministry of Peace and, potentially, in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

### FURTHER STRENGTHEN UNICEF'S FOCUS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

It is recommended that UNICEF Ethiopia exploits the improved political environment for greater openness to discussion of human rights and protection. In particular:

- Advance its engagement with national print and local social media to increase public understanding of, and dialogue around, the multiple deprivations faced by the children of Ethiopia.
- Increase public attention to gender-based violence (GBV), FGM and other rights violations, including for the protection of internally displaced persons and refugees, in partnership with national institutions (the human rights commission/ombudsman) and rights-based United Nations agencies and NGOs.

- Increase civil society engagement in following up on selected conclusions from the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the United Nations Human Rights Commission's Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Ethiopia.<sup>2</sup>

These elements should be built into ECO's advocacy strategy, which is currently under review.

#### EXTEND UNICEF'S PARTNERSHIPS

It is recommended that UNICEF strengthen its partnerships with:

- **Civil society organizations**, to develop their capacity to hold the Government to account for quality service delivery, speak out on children's rights, play a role in rapid emergency response, and help provide the missing community voice in UNICEF programmes. The first step is to map the relevant CSO actors.
- **The private sector**, mapping out the main private sector actors, starting a child-centred public-private sector dialogue on practical steps to advance children's rights, and working with interested companies to extend the reach of essential services and goods that benefit children into more deprived areas.
- **The United Nations**, with United Nations agencies and the Resident Coordinator on common areas, to be determined in development of the United Nations Sustainable Development Common Framework (UNSCDF), including, for example: adherence to human rights treaties, increasing national budgetary allocations to social sectors, peacebuilding and social cohesion, and joint approaches to national implementation and systems strengthening.
- **The World Bank** office in Ethiopia, which is ready to welcome increased engagement with UNICEF on fiscal analysis and advocacy for greater national resources to support children's rights, going beyond the long-running engagement on the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). Partnership should be extended and strengthened with other international financial institutions.

#### AIM FOR STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN CRITICAL NETWORKS OF FRONTLINE WORKERS

It is recommended that UNICEF should continue to analyse the bottlenecks to the productivity and continuity of essential frontline workers – in particular, health extension workers, health workers and social workers, whose performance and job satisfaction are key to the success of several of the major national programmes supported by UNICEF. Recognizing that the creation of truly sustainable and stable national networks of such workers is challenging, UNICEF should work with the GoE and other partners to chart a path towards achieving national capacity based on national resources, and with reduced reliance on technical assistance subsidized by international aid. Frontline workers need manageable workloads, adequate remuneration and living conditions, access to transport, and systems for ongoing advice and encouragement.

#### ENSURE UNICEF ETHIOPIA FIELD OFFICES ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE

It is recommended that UNICEF Ethiopia further empower its field offices to support national decentralization especially at regional level:

- Review and rebalance the level of UNICEF human resources between UNICEF Addis Ababa office and the regional field offices in favour of the regions, aiming to have more staff outside Addis than in, initially reversing the current ratio of 53:47 capital/field<sup>3</sup> to 47:53 and potentially moving to a 40:60 capital/field ratio in staff numbers over the period of the plan, depending on the scale of decentralization required;
- Provide technical support to ensure consistent quality across the regions
- Ensure that each field office has tailored its plans and programmes to its regional context
- Consider the functions that may require extra capacity in field offices, for example social policy analysis and social and behaviour change;

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<sup>2</sup> The Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Ethiopia were issued by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on 3 June 2015. The result of the UPR were due to be considered by the Human Rights Council Forty-second session, 9–27 September 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Not counting TAs and other third parties

- Once responsibilities have been reviewed and adjustments agreed upon, revise the UNICEF Ethiopia Accountability Matrix accordingly
- Ensure regular communication between UNICEF in the capital and the regions, and the sharing of experience between regions

#### REVIEW AND REVISE UNICEF ETHIOPIA'S SKILLS MIX

The capacity and quality of UNICEF Ethiopia personnel is well recognized. However, UNICEF should look to the future and not assume that its current capabilities meet all its future requirements. It is recommended that UNICEF Ethiopia review its skills mix to close skills gaps and enhance the skills that will be at a premium for implementation of the new country programme. These skills may be acquired or reinforced: 1) By targeted training of existing staff and; 2) by ECO seeking out these skills in its new recruits:

- ECO needs at least one **fully dedicated specialist in adolescent programming**; it is already considering how to close this capacity gap
- ECO needs increased **Communication for Development (C4D) capacity in the regions**; this is already under discussion by ECO
- As ECO reviews the effectiveness of its training programmes, **mentoring and accompaniment skills** to support capacity, the development of partners is likely to be in increasing demand.
- ECO requires more personnel able to **plan and implement projects and programmes across sectors**.
- If the survey results are reliable, there is some demotivation and frustration in the workforce that could be mitigated with better **people management** skills
- If UNICEF Ethiopia moves to an impact investing approach, an enhanced set of project management skills will be needed, including the ability to **build and defend an investment business case**.
- ECO requires **greater capacity to respond quickly to emergencies** and, potentially, specialists in the technical sections that understand rapid response as a part of UNICEF's Core Corporate Commitments for Children in Emergencies (CCCs) (this remains a general observation only pending completion of the humanitarian evaluation recommended below).

#### EVALUATE UNICEF ETHIOPIA HUMANITARIAN RESULTS

Whatever the Level at which the UNICEF Ethiopia humanitarian response has been classified since 2016 (L1, L2 or L3), the expenditure of more than US\$350 million on humanitarian response over the current CP period indicates the need for a standalone evaluation of the drought, refugee and internal displacement responses. There has been no external evaluation since the beginning of the drought response in 2015. The two internal lesson-learning exercises undertaken by ECO, the global Complex High Threat Environment (CHTE) evaluation recently completed by UNICEF HQ, and the evaluation of the Ethiopia Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Drought Response commissioned by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), soon to be completed, will all provide helpful background to UNICEF Ethiopia's own evaluation. However, taken together they are no substitute for a standalone external evaluation of UNICEF Ethiopia's humanitarian response over the current country programme period.

## UNICEF ETHIOPIA BASIC INDICATORS

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### ETHIOPIA'S BASIC INDICATORS

- Population size, total (2018): 108,386,931<sup>1</sup>
- Population: 21.2% (urban) 66.8% (rural), 12. % (pastoral)<sup>1</sup>
- Population growth rate (annual %): 2.83%<sup>1</sup>
- Life expectancy at birth (years): 63 years<sup>2</sup>
- Fertility rate, total (births per woman): 4.91 children born/woman<sup>2</sup>
- Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births): 39.1%<sup>2</sup>
- Child labour (7-14 years old): 41.5%<sup>2</sup>
- Prevalence of HIV: 1,0 (among the 15-49 group)<sup>2</sup>
- Birth rate, crude (per 1,000 people): 32.775<sup>2</sup>
- Birth registration: 3% births registration with civil authorities of children under age 5<sup>2</sup>
- Caesarean deliveries: 0.6%<sup>2</sup>
- Protection against neo-natal tetanus: 86%<sup>4</sup>
- Primary school attendance: 41%<sup>2</sup>
- Secondary school attendance: 16%<sup>2</sup>
- Gender parity index (related females to male (education): 0,99 (primary) 0.959 (secondary) 0.482(tertiary)<sup>2</sup>
- Child marriage (% of women aged 25-49 married before age 18): 55.3%<sup>3</sup>
- Stunting rate: 36%<sup>3</sup>
- Underweight children: 24%<sup>3</sup>
- Prevalence of anaemia: 41.1%<sup>5</sup>
- Prevalence of malaria: 68.1%<sup>5</sup>

1 CIA World Factbook 2018

2 EDHS 2016

3 UNICEF 2016, JMP

4 WHO 2019

5 NCBI 2018

## PRESENTATION

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The UNICEF Ethiopian Country Office (ECO) commissioned Econometría, with its local partner Jarco, to undertake this Country Programme Evaluation (CPE). The purpose of this evaluation is to provide lessons and recommendations on the progress made towards the results formulated in the Country Programme (CP) of UNICEF Ethiopia (2016-2020) and to inform the next CP of Ethiopia (2020-2024).

This report presents the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. As required by the client, the evaluation includes a Gender Review, which is presented as a stand-alone report (though some of its key findings are referred to in this report).

This report is the final deliverable of the CPE. The evaluation was undertaken in two phases. 1) Output level, including a three-week first mission conducted by the Evaluation Team (ET) in May 2019 to collect data at federal, regional and local level, 2) a second phase commissioned by the new UNICEF Representative, adding a strategic level to the evaluation, with a one-week complementary second mission to Ethiopia for, plus an online survey of UNICEF ECO and regional office staff. For the second phase, it was agreed with UNICEF that the evaluation should primarily concentrate on the evaluation criteria of relevance and effectiveness. As the scope of the first field phase did not include UNICEF emergency and humanitarian activities, they are not fully addressed. However, Section 6 highlights issues for UNICEF to consider for future humanitarian evaluation.

The report is comprised of 11 sections. The CPE background, purposes, objectives and methodology are described in the first three sections. Relevance and effectiveness findings at output level are analysed in section 4. Even though the efficiency and sustainability criteria, as well as humanitarian issues, were excluded by UNICEF, sections 4 and 5 cover the emerging trends in these topics. These criteria are embedded in the strategic issues analysed in section 7. Conclusions and lessons learned are presented in sections 8 and 9 and recommendations are divided into overall recommendations (section 10) and output-level recommendations (section 11).

The above sections rely on a set of fifteen annexes, that are presented in a separate document, which contains a full and detailed report of the output-level evaluation, and reviewing it is highly recommended.

## 1 BACKGROUND

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### 1.1 OBJECT OF EVALUATION

The object of the evaluation is the CP (2016-2020) and the gender-related elements of current programming that are assessed in a separate gender programme review. The CP also includes an assessment of efforts to integrate the priorities of the Gender Action Plan (2014-2017) (GAP) into the CP (2016-2020)<sup>4</sup>. The CP supports the GoE's second Growth & Transformation Plan (GTP II) and contributes to the implementation of the four pillars of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) (2016-2020). In addition, the CP (2016-2020) includes provisions to mainstream risk-informed emergency preparedness in alignment with the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action.

The CP has been implemented nationally, with a particular focus on the developing regional states of Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Somali, and other marginalized areas or population groups. It consists of seven key components: health; nutrition; water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); learning and development; child protection; social policy and evidence for social inclusion (SPESI); and programme effectiveness. Each of these programmes was designed to include knowledge generation and management and advocacy for sustainable financing. To implement it, the proposed aggregate indicative budget was of US\$449,950,000, made up of regular resources (US\$143,105,039, subject to the availability of funds), and other resources (US\$306,844,961, subject to the availability of contributions for specific purposes). The distribution of the budget was planned as follows: health US\$136,165,000 nutrition US\$82,464,000 WASH US\$64,587,000 learning and development US\$53,024,000 child protection US\$43,958,000 social policy and evidence for social inclusion US\$19,080,000 and programme effectiveness US\$50,672,000. The various

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<sup>4</sup> The cost of the evaluation was for the first phase USD138,641 and addition of USD70,000 for the second phase.

stakeholders connected to each programmatic area are detailed in Annex 4 of this document. Annex 2 outlines the context of the CP (2016-2020) across each of UNICEF’s six programmatic areas.

## 1.2 CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

At the time the UNICEF Ethiopia CP (2016-2020) was formulated the Ethiopian economy had been demonstrating impressive growth, with the Government of Ethiopia (GoE) aspiring to transition to middle-income status by 2025. Significant progress had been achieved in reducing poverty, yet declines in rural poverty were lagging behind those of urban poverty, with 25 million Ethiopians still living below the poverty line (UNICEF, 2016).

With a significant child population in the country (48 per cent under the age of 18), the need to support adolescents to develop skills to lead healthy and productive lives was especially evident. Good progress had been achieved in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Even so, gender inequality was prevalent in Ethiopia, as reflected in the country’s Gender Development Index (GDI), ranking 121<sup>st</sup> out of 160 countries in 2017. In both rural and urban areas, many young people, particularly young women, are unemployed or working in the informal sector. Most young people live in rural areas, where livelihood opportunities are increasingly scarce. (UNDP, 2019).

Ethiopia is subject to both chronic and acute emergencies. Every year, the country suffers droughts and flooding. Conflict over resources, poor infrastructure and access to services exacerbate Ethiopia is more stable than most of its neighbours but hosts the second largest number of refugees of any African country, with refugees coming from Eritrea, South Sudan and Somalia in particular.

In March 2018, the CP was the subject of a Mid Term Review (MTR), with the purpose of reflecting “key changes in the national and global programming context which took place since the development of the CPD in 2015 to ensure that the proposed programme and related staffing structure remain ‘fit for purpose’ for the remainder of the CP period.” The MTR reviewed programme strategies and results in the light of changes to the country’s programming context, as captured in the updated 2017 situation analysis (based on 2016 Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) data). The revised programme strategy notes (PSNs) developed for the MTR aimed to more clearly articulate ongoing efforts in terms of advancing multi-sectoral programming (UNICEF, Mid Term Review, 2018). Furthermore, the CP was aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and with UNICEF’s Strategic Plan (2018-2021) and results framework (2018-2021). As a result of the MTR, each programme component was adjusted, as was the results framework (2018-2021).

## 1.3 RESULTS CHAIN / THEORY OF CHANGE

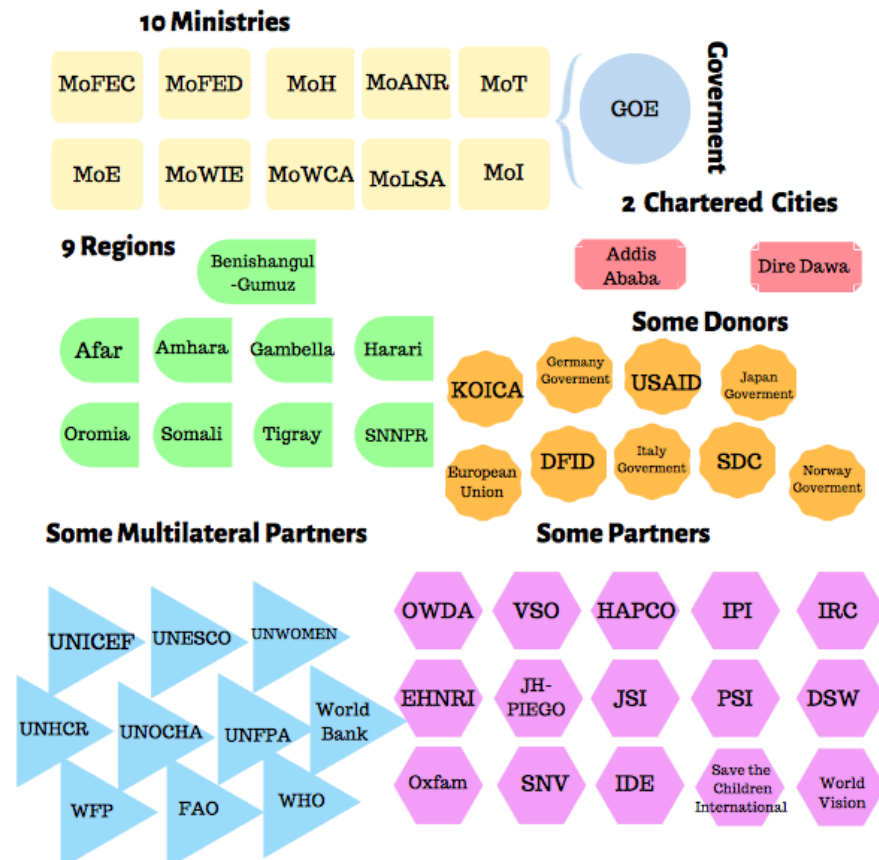
The ultimate goal of the CPD is to reduce child poverty and its effects (UNICEF Ethiopia, n.a). In this context, all of the outcomes and outputs that constitute the theory of change are focused on contributing to its achievement. A fundamental element is resilience and its value in helping to bridge the humanitarian and development divide and respond to the country’s longer-term development programming challenges (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2016).

The figure in Annex 3.1. presents the Theory of Change (ToC) for the CP. The figure emphasizes the selected outcomes evaluated and those which were gender-prioritized. Annex 3.2. presents the detail of the ToC. (Only outputs selected by UNICEF were selected for evaluation, not the complete ToC of the CP).

## 1.4 KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ROLES

Over the past six decades, UNICEF has established strong relations with the GoE, bilateral donors, development partners and civil society organizations (CSOs). The various stakeholders connected to each programmatic area at the federal and regional levels are shown in Figure 1 and detailed in Annex 4.

**Figure 1 - National Stakeholders**



Source: Econometría based on (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2016)

## 2 EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

### 2.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The rationale for a CP Evaluation and a Gender Programmatic Review (GPR) was to provide lessons and recommendations on progress being made towards the results formulated in the Country Programme (CP) of UNICEF Ethiopia (2016-2020) and to inform the next CP (2020-2024). The expected users of the evaluation include all sections of UNICEF ECO: Health; Nutrition; WASH; Child protection; SPESI; Education; and PMU; and field offices. The evaluation will be presented to government partners. The evaluation performs two key functions: (1) to assess the relevance and effectiveness<sup>5</sup> of the CP (2016-2020) (OECD/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria); (2) to identify key challenges and lessons learned, and to make recommendations for the formulation of the upcoming Country Programme (2020-2024) ahead of a key strategic review by ECO in May/June 2019; and (3) to conduct a GPR and support the development of a Country Office Gender and Adolescent Girls' Action Plan and Adolescent Girls' Strategy.

In Phase 1, fieldwork was conducted at the federal, regional, woreda and kebele levels, covering urban, rural and pastoral populations in the Oromia, Amhara and Somali regions. Federal-level data was collected in Addis Ababa.<sup>6</sup> Phase 2, with the agreement of ESARO, sought to address an additional question posed by ECO that was not in the original TOR: “How well has the Country Programme done in terms of focusing on a few key strategic results for children in Ethiopia and how could we do better?” The evaluation highlights strategic issues for UNICEF ECO to consider as it prepares for and enters its new CP period, beginning in June 2020.

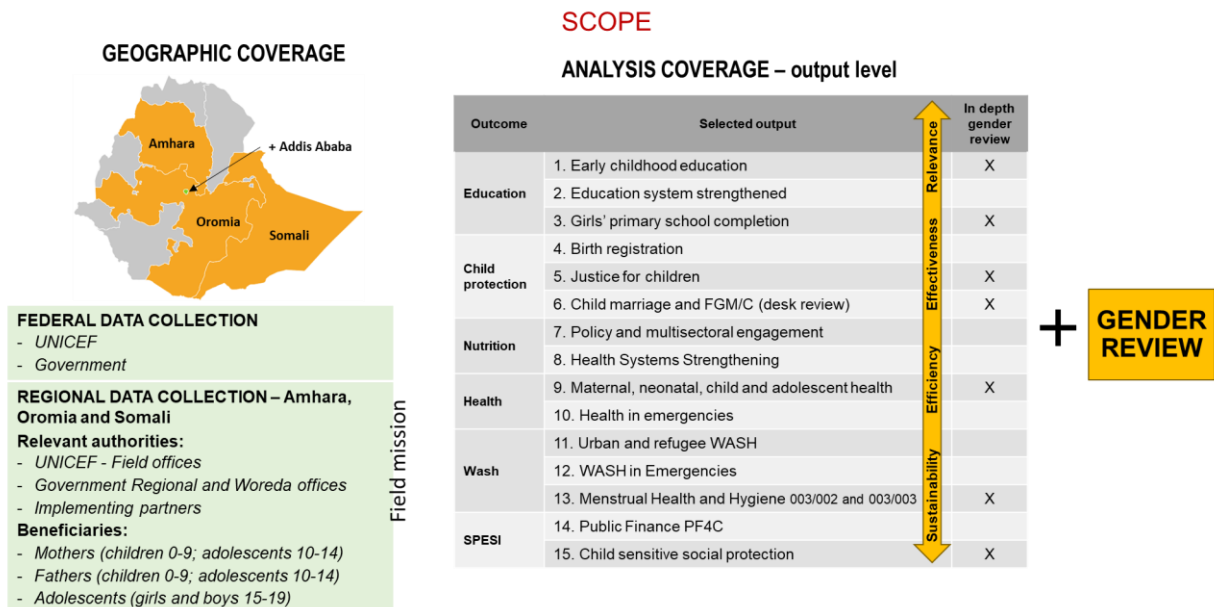
## 3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The following figures show the evaluation process. They describe both the phases of the evaluation.

<sup>5</sup> Efficiency and sustainability criteria were replaced by the strategic issues

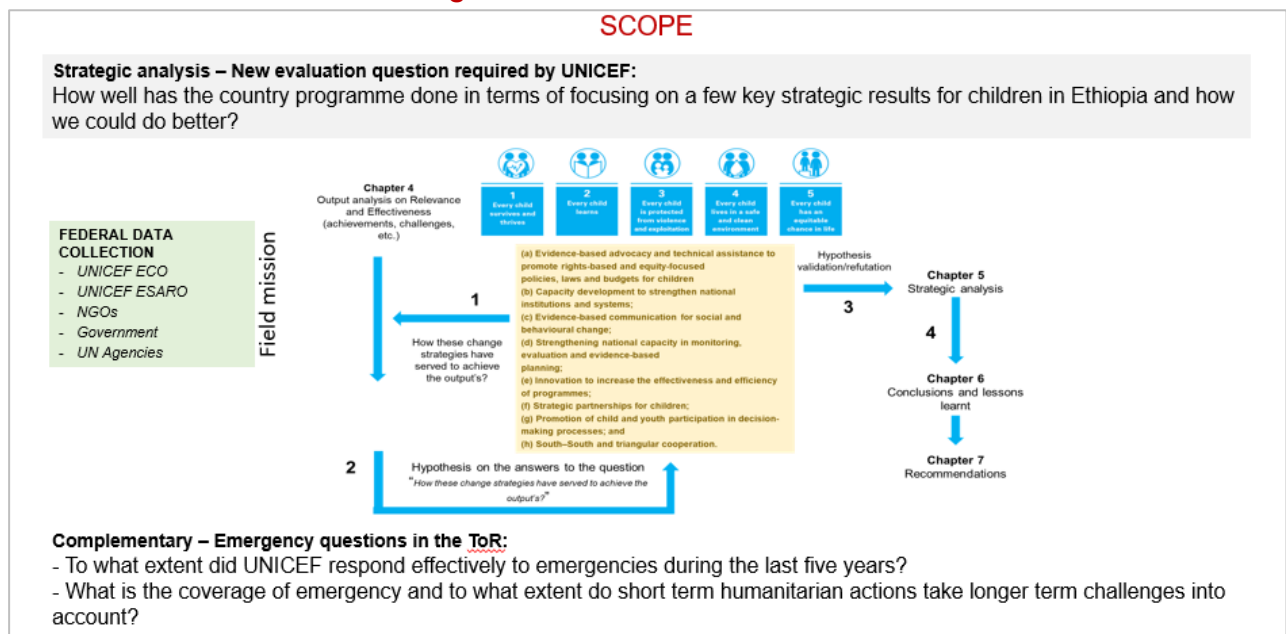
<sup>6</sup> See Annexes 7 and 16 for Key Informant listing.

**Figure 2 – CP evaluation – Phase I**



Source: Econometría

**Figure 3 – CP evaluation – Phase II**



Source: Econometria based on UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017

### 3.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

This consultancy applied the standard evaluation criteria of Relevance and Effectiveness, described below and defined within the literary discourse (Peersman, 2014):<sup>7</sup>

- **Relevance:** The extent to which the objectives of an intervention are consistent with the recipients' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' policies.
- **Effectiveness:** The extent to which the intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, considering their relative importance.

The methodological approach for this formative evaluation was to utilize mixed methods, which not only are suitable for addressing the evaluation questions but also for responding to the ToR. According to the ToR, this evaluation involved various stakeholders with multiple perspectives and complementary understandings. It relied on a range of sources (primary and secondary). For this evaluation, a concurrent triangulation design was appropriate, as qualitative and quantitative data [from different sources] were collected simultaneously in one phase. The data were analysed separately and then compared to confirm, cross-validate or corroborate findings (Center for Innovation in Research

<sup>7</sup> As mentioned above, efficiency and sustainability were replaced by the strategic analysis. Emerging efficiency issues are presented in Chapter 5 and sustainability is embedded and transcended by strategic issues. Efficiency refers to the extent to which economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, equipment, etc.) are converted into results. Sustainability is the continuation of benefits from the intervention after major development assistance has ceased. Interventions must be both environmentally and financially sustainable. Where the emphasis is not on external assistance, sustainability can be defined as the ability of key stakeholders to sustain intervention benefits – after the cessation of donor funding – with efforts that utilize locally available resources.

and Teaching).

In addition to the methodological approach, the following theoretical approaches underlie the evaluation:

*Theory of Change approach:* Application of a Programme Theory approach based on the Results Framework (RF), identifying the key programme objectives vs. its achievements.

*Participatory approach:*<sup>8</sup> Involving various stakeholders in various ways in specific aspects of the evaluation process: i) in the data collection stage, semi-structured and structured interviews, focus groups and informal dialogues with key stakeholders (government officials, NGOs, donors and beneficiaries); ii) in the analysis stage, participatory workshops to validate key findings and recommendations; and iii) throughout the consultancy, involving key government partners.

*Gender approach:*<sup>9</sup> Gender was addressed: i) in the evaluation criteria and evaluation questions; ii) by making the evaluation methodology and data collection and analysis methods gender-responsive; and iii) by reflecting gender analysis in the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.

*Child-centred approach:* The Total Environment Assessment Model for Early Child Development (Siddiqi, Irwin, & Hertzman, 2007) proposes that children are at the centre and are considered unique, as their developmental paths are influenced together by outer spheres, and by biological and cultural factors, including but not limited to age and gender. This approach shares the same conceptual basis as the Holistic Early Childhood Development Index (HECDI) framework.

## 3.2 EVALUATION MATRIX

The evaluation matrix was built on the criteria and Evaluation Questions (EQs) from the ToR. During Phase 2, the matrix was reviewed and amended in order to include the new question and corresponding sub-questions. The complete evaluation matrix is included in Annex 5.

## 3.3 EVALUATION TYPE

The CPE is formative, meaning it evaluates the worth of the programme while the programme activities are forming. The evaluation's methodology was based on a mixed methods approach. Building on the TOR, a triangulation design was built into the evaluation, drawing on qualitative and quantitative data from various sources. The data from each source were analysed separately and then compared and/or combined to confirm, cross-validate or corroborate findings (Center for Innovation in Research and Teaching, n.d.).

## 3.4 DATA COLLECTION<sup>10</sup>

During Phase 1, a total of 116 key informant interviews (KII) were conducted, including 45 at federal level and 64 at regional level. Seven were conducted via Survey Monkey. Of the seven surveys, three were relevant to the education programme, and one each to the child protection, SPESI, health and nutrition programs. Three regions (Amhara, Oromia and Somali) were sampled. The complete interviews can be seen in Annex 16.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to select woredas and kebeles for data collection based on the following criteria: (1) rural/urban/pastoral characteristic of the woreda/kebele; (2) concentration of multisectoral UNICEF projects; (3) accessibility; (4) duration of UNICEF intervention; (5) security; and (5) the existence of a WASH emergency programme in the woreda(s)/kebele(s). Following consultations with UNICEF, these criteria were utilized to select individual woredas and kebeles for data collection. A participatory workshop was conducted by the ET at the end of the first fieldwork mission, and its results fed into the Strategic Moment of Reflection (May 2019). The methodology and results can be observed in Annex 6.

During Phase 2, a total of 26 KIIs were conducted. The organizations interviewed were UNICEF, UN Women, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

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<sup>8</sup> Based on (Guijt, 2014)

<sup>9</sup> Based on (International Organization of Migration, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Annex 4 contains the list of informants in phases 1 and 2

(UNOCHA), the Ministry of Education (MoE), the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth (MOWCY), UNHCR, the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and UNDP.<sup>11</sup>

### 3.5 LIMITATIONS

1. The CPE is not a comprehensive outcome-level assessment as it only covers outputs selected by UNICEF for evaluation. The original ToR did not define this narrowed scope. However, during the inception phase the evaluation team was required by ECO to deliver the emerging results of the evaluation for a Strategic Moment of Reflection (as part of the activities for formulation of the next CP) in early June. Therefore, it was agreed that it was not possible to cover every output for every outcome of the current CP in the evaluation. To address this, UNICEF ECO selected 14 key outputs on which the evaluation team focused their analysis. The 14 outputs included a subset of three, that UNICEF ECO also suggested should be looked at within a gender evaluation. Thus, the conclusions and recommendations related to the selected outputs do not extend to outcome level for each sector.
2. In addition, in the second phase of the evaluation, when more strategic analysis was required, it became evident that the emergency and humanitarian response was largely missing from the ToR. The evaluation team mentioned this, and the ECO responded that there were two studies were ongoing to evaluate these issues.<sup>12</sup>
3. The evaluation is limited by a lack of outcome-level data that can be used to assess the results in most cases. Based on desk review, some indicators from the Results Framework were updated as they relied on official information that was out-of-date.
4. Finally, given that the scope of the evaluation was extensive and at a level that required many details, it was also challenging to fit the evaluation of 6 sectors, and 13 outputs and strategic issues into the standard number of pages. A significant proportion of the evidence is presented in the annexes.

### 3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS<sup>13</sup>

The CPE was developed by Econometría and Jarco. They considered gender, equity and human rights approaches as mainstream and cross-cutting dimensions. This was done following the guidelines set out by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in the document, “Integrating human rights and gender equality in evaluation: Towards UNEG guidance” (UNEG, 2014), particularly those referring to the implementation stage of evaluation.

Those dimensions were considered in the selection of appropriate evaluation methodology, data collection techniques, and the analysis of information; both in preparation of the report and when planning the dissemination strategy. The evaluation team considered international standards on gender issues, human rights and equity. They committed to being sensitive to beliefs, manners and customs, and to acting with integrity and honesty in their interactions with all stakeholders. In line with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the evaluators were sensitive to and addressed issues of discrimination and gender equality (UNEG, 2005). The UNEG Ethical Principles in Evaluation are always reviewed and considered in evaluations conducted by Econometría. Also, as information was collected directly with children and adolescents, the “Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC)” project website (<http://childethics.com>) was considered, in order to ensure that their participation in the evaluation would not cause any harm. The three core ethical principles (respect, benefit and justice), were all known and followed, with commitment by the researchers participating in this evaluation.

To ensure that the research was conducted in an ethical manner and followed the principles above, Ethical Clearance was requested. The inception report containing the methodology protocol received approval from an *ad hoc* Committee formed by the Director of Econometría and two external members which were

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<sup>11</sup> See Annex 4

<sup>12</sup> In the conversation on 11 July 2019 UNICEF mentioned that there were two ongoing studies, an interagency humanitarian evaluation and an evaluation of the drought response, that accounted for the emergency and humanitarian response.

<sup>13</sup> Annex 6 contains detailed information on the ethical procedures carried out.

not part of the consultancy with experience in similar evaluations. The Committee approved the methodology proposed, as well as the work plan and fieldwork procedures undertaken. The ethical clearance concept note is presented in Annex 6.<sup>14</sup>

## 4 EVALUATION FINDINGS PER OUTPUTS

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The main findings for relevance and efficiency are presented in this chapter. For each CP component after the context, the relevance and effectiveness criteria are developed. The tables which set out relevance and achievements can be found in Annex 10.3.

### 4.1 HEALTH<sup>15</sup>

#### Relevance

UNICEF ECO has actively supported the health sector in Ethiopia by supporting greater coverage of health services to reach the most disadvantaged children and women and by providing essential lifesaving services to the most vulnerable children during emergencies. The key strategies implemented by UNICEF ECO were: developing evidence-based policies and strategies; leveraging resources; monitoring and evaluating progress towards universal health care; and supporting public/government health facilities to provide essential lifesaving services, helping to strengthen management of the supply chain system for essential commodities and the health information system (UNICEF Ethiopia, ND). As the quality of health services continues to be a challenge, UNICEF, in collaboration with other partners, is supporting the country to implement national strategies for quality of care in the health sector, such as the Quality of Care Network in which Ethiopia is one of the ten leading countries (WHO, 2019).

A review of various federal level stakeholder plans in the health sector shows that UNICEF is aligned with their priorities in the country. UNICEF's CPD health objectives and outcomes coincide with the WHO's cooperation agenda (2016-2020)<sup>16</sup> to support the Ethiopian Government through a grant for maternal interventions by producing technical guidelines, strengthening capacity building, improving quality of care and developing a transition roadmap. UNICEF's focus on health also coincides with UNFPA's CPD, the first outcome of which – Sexual and reproductive health – covers improvement of the national capacity to deliver quality maternal health services, including in humanitarian settings, within its first output (UNFPA, 2015). While ECO's emphasis on improving the coverage and quality of health services is aligned with the GAP, the National Adolescent and Youth Health Strategy (2016-2020) and the WHO Strategy on Women, Children's and Adolescents' Health, UNICEF's strategic actions to improve adolescent maternal health do not fully align with national, international and UNICEF GAP priorities for adolescent health. In line with national plans and strategies, UNICEF's priorities – improving maternal health services for adolescents; improving attention to GBV; providing immunization against HPV; and implementing efforts to prevent adolescent pregnancy – aim to address barriers to access for adolescents. These priorities focus on health equity, increasing information and education, access to health, youth participation, and addressing the social determinants of health to support improvements in adolescent health access and outcomes. However, the outputs most directly addressing these priorities are not included in the present analysis. Where the Health Sector Strategy does not directly address the recommendations and priorities of national and international mandates, the GAP priority areas ensure alignment between UNICEF Ethiopia's investments in adolescent health and the National Adolescent and Youth Health Strategy (2016-2030) (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Ministry of Health, 2016) and WHO's Global Strategy on Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health (WHO, 2016).

According to the relevant authorities interviewed, UNICEF is aligned with Ethiopia's priorities at the regional level. It meets the needs of the population, and its interventions are highly valued. “*Mostly*

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<sup>14</sup> Econometría's Ethical Committee (EC) was created in July 2017 and is endorsed by the Statutes of the Company, the Code of Good Governance of the Company, and national and international guidelines, which guide the good practices of the people who work for it and respectful relationships with their customers, suppliers and stakeholders. The EC is an advisory body and expert consultant that has the faculties to develop: 1) Ethical evaluations of external projects to the company, which groups or centres of interested researchers request; 2) ethical evaluations of internal projects to the company, which require the resolution an ethical dilemma or review of ethical considerations defined in the project; and 3) Evaluation and solution of ethical conflicts and dilemmas present in the different activities developed by the company.

<sup>15</sup> See Annex 10.1

<sup>16</sup> WHO's strategic priority No. 2 is to, “*reduced maternal, new-born and child morbidity and mortality and improved Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) rights and utilization*” and strategic priority No. 3 attempts to, “*improve access to quality and equitable health services in ensuring universal health coverage*” (WHO, 2018).

UNICEF's work focuses on children and adolescents. And improving the health and wellbeing of children and adolescents is among the priority health issues in our woreda - Woreda Health Office." "It targets the priorities of the region. The support follows the existing government strategies and policies to respond to children's and adolescents' needs - Regional Health Bureau" (Regional interviews). This is based on the resources, assistance, and essential supplies provided by UNICEF, and the timely response to emergencies between 2016 and 2018, specifically the acute watery diarrhoea (AWD) outbreak in which UNICEF procured and delivered case treatment centre kits and emergency drug kits. There are still opportunities for improvement, however, as several interviewees noted that adolescents receive less attention than children and their participation in planning, implementation and M&E of the interventions has been insufficient. While communities recognize that, in general, the provision of health care services is better than four years ago, there is a lack of compassion and quality<sup>17</sup> in care services provided by health workers at kebele level: "they [health workers] don't want to provide the service at night, or doctors tend to be impolite to us farmers because we don't dress well". The shortage in health workers, particularly female workers, to support female adolescents' needs (menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) and services to address complications of FGM), is a significant challenge for this demographic.

When reviewing the ToC, it is difficult to determine the relevance of the results chain that supports it. It is hard to follow a causal sequence in which each of the components contributes to expected results; in particular adolescents seem to be a missing link. The ToC has no specific indicators to measure and be accountable for advances within this group despite the fact that, according to the description of the outcome, adolescence should be addressed in maternal and new-born programming. It is not a visible part of UNICEF's Health Programme, though it is one of the two programme areas to be concentrated on in UNICEF's Strategy for Health 2016–2030<sup>18</sup> (UNICEF, 2016).

## Effectiveness – Outputs

At the outcome level, half of the indicator targets were reached or surpassed, while the other half did not reach their targets.<sup>19</sup> None of them report disaggregated data per region, despite the baseline doing so. Adolescence is not reflected in any of the defined indicators, despite being targeted in the outcome. This creates obstacles for accountability.

### *Maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health*

UNICEF's support on *maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health*, according to the PSN 2018, includes: 1) providing and improving coverage of maternal, new-born and child health (MNCH) services to reach the most disadvantaged children and women; and 2) improving the quality of MNCH services, with a focus on gender equality.

Progress until 2018 had been, in general, satisfactory, as the goals for the indicators had been either accomplished or surpassed in most cases. The percentage of health posts providing integrated community case management (iCCM) fell short by 4 per cent. UNICEF ECO's efforts in this area contributed to the implementation of guidelines and training materials for iCCM and community-based new-born care (CBNC). In 2018 these guidelines and training materials were revised with the support of other partners and were reported to have improved in service quality. The indicators reflect the achievements of greater availability of basic emergency obstetric and new-born care (BEmONC) facilities, coupled with the modification of training for health care workers to maximize cost-effectiveness (duration reduction). The indicator related to the EVM composite country score does not have information available that shows conclusive progress. The elimination of neonatal tetanus, supported by the procurement of vaccines, technical assistance, and increased coverage of routine immunization, due to new Solar Direct Drive (SDD) refrigerators, contributed to achievements in the immunization services provided by UNICEF. Other activities carried out by ECO were oriented to strengthen service delivery, such as establishment of a Level III Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and the New-born Corner<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> Lack of compassionate service, non-equitable and non-timely.

<sup>18</sup> a) Maternal, new-born and child health (focus on equitable access to community-based health care), and b) Older child and adolescent health (focus on public policies and supportive environments)

<sup>19</sup> The number of births delivered in a health facility in 2018 was 66%, 7% below the target for that same year and much higher than the 16.4% baseline. "New-borns receiving postnatal care within two days of births" was also supposed to reach results 20% above the achievement, which would impact the achievement of the results for 2020. "Children < 1 year receiving DTP-containing vaccine at national level" was the indicator with the smallest gap and is worth noting the improvements accomplished in two years (61% vs. 94%).

<sup>20</sup> Equipping them with essential drugs and supplies for essential new-born services

Several challenges have stymied the programme. Firstly, there is high turnover of Health Extension Workers (HEWs), whose responsibilities and the health package they deliver have been increasing over the years. They see limited opportunities to advance. The Women Development Army (WDA) has a heavy workload, and poor incentive structures and work environment. HEWs have been overburdened. Some mitigation measures have begun but there is not yet any evidence that this has improved the situation. Secondly, there is low government capacity at all levels, with low levels of ownership. At the regional and local levels there are low levels of skilled workers. The Government's weak procurement system makes it difficult to make essential supplies available on time and at a competitive cost. UNICEF's procurement system has filled the gap. Finally, the allocated budget is not enough to deliver services with a wider coverage within certain regions. Political transition, insecurity, and restricted access to some population groups, as well as the frequency of emergencies (floods, droughts and disease outbreaks) have aggravated these circumstances.

### *Health in emergencies and resilience*

UNICEF's support for health care in emergencies and resilience includes, according to the PSN, the following activities: 1) providing essential lifesaving services to the most vulnerable; 2) building the capacity of government and partners, including community stakeholders; and 3) linking emergency response to the strengthening of the Primary Health Care Unit (PHCU). The targets for 2018 were mostly achieved. UNICEF ECO's efforts (financial and logistical) that contribute to prevention of "excess mortality among girls, boys and women in humanitarian crisis"<sup>21</sup> are generally recognized by the various partners. "UNICEF support for internally displaced person and refugee assistance is key for the last five years" (Government interview). UNICEF is a member of the Health Cluster in Ethiopia, supporting inter-agency coordination mechanisms in the health sector. UNICEF also supported the preparation of national and sub-national multi-hazard, multi-sectoral preparedness plans, focusing on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH), which addressed the building resilience priority (indicator 3 in this output). Children and women accessing life-saving interventions through population and community-based activities were addressed by UNICEF. For example, in the SNNP and Oromia zones, there was a measles vaccination campaign for children aged 6 months to 15 years to stop the outbreak. The campaign achieved 91 per cent coverage (indicator 1 in this output) (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2019). In addition, 375,000 refugees were given long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LITNs), including children and women who settled in the Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz and Tigray regions (indicator 2 in this output). Also, UNICEF procured and delivered AWD case treatment centre kits and medical consultations in drought-affected areas.

According to interviewees, the main factors contributing to the success of these initiatives are: UNICEF's regional presence, which gives it the capacity to be closer to communities than other partners; and UNICEF's procurement system, which has filled the gap left by the Government's weak procurement system, which has proven untimely in emergency response situations. Also, UNICEF has garnered government commitment at regional level, and raised awareness regarding emergency response. The Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams, which function under the Regional Health Bureau (RHB) in the regions of Somali and Afar, are also highly valued, and have helped reach more beneficiaries. On the other hand, several interviewees identified factors that have hindered UNICEF from attaining the programme objectives. Security problems, information gaps, difficulties with coordination of various stakeholders at regional level, low government capacity, and lack of preparedness for rapid response and recovery (though the early warning systems have improved) were mentioned. The geographic conditions of some regions and the topography in which natural emergencies arise are challenges when attempting to reach the most vulnerable populations. Finally, some groups of internally displaced people and refugees<sup>22</sup> put pressure on the health system, thus compromising provision of regular services to the host communities and to themselves.

## **4.2 NUTRITION<sup>23</sup>**

### **Relevance**

UNICEF has actively supported the Government of Ethiopia to implement the National Nutrition Programme (NNP II), oriented to reduce stunting amongst children under five years of age to 26 per cent

<sup>21</sup> Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCC) Health strategic result

<sup>22</sup> Largely refugees have their own health centers which also service host communities

<sup>23</sup> See Annex 10.1

by 2020. The four areas prioritized by UNICEF in the CPD (2016–2021) were: (1) fostering multi-sectoral action across stakeholders; (2) supporting equity-focused national nutrition related policies, legislation, strategies and plans through evidence generation and monitoring of the implementation; (3) improving access to services and adopting appropriate practices in adolescent maternal, infant and young child nutrition; (4) sustaining a large scale treatment of acute malnutrition and micronutrient supplementation (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018). These are aligned with the commitments to the Nutrition Decade and guided by UNICEF’s Strategic Plans (2014–2017, 2018–2021). Nutrition is considered a priority within the Health Sector Transformation Plan (HSTP), under the strategic objective “P1: *Improve Equitable Access to Quality Health Services*” to increase the accessibility to quality health services. Specifically, the HSTP highlights the importance of a strategy to improve the nutritional status of vulnerable groups (mothers, neonates, children, adolescents and youth, and the elderly). Moreover, the 2016–2020 NNP II aimed to address the challenges faced during the first period (NNP I – 2008–2015)<sup>24</sup> by adopting a lifecycle approach with an emphasis on the period of pregnancy and the first 1,000 days of a child’s life, and by putting in place a clear structure of accountability, along with reporting mechanisms to ensure that the national, regional and woreda coordination bodies are functional and accountable (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. National Nutrition Coordination Body.). The outcome set by UNICEF’s Nutrition Programme: “by 2020, an increased percentage of under-five girls and boys, adolescent girls, and pregnant and lactating women are appropriately nourished and cared for” is clearly designed and aligned with the NNPII and, by extension, with the Seqota declaration, a 2015 commitment that builds on and supports the NNPII to end stunting in children under two years of age by 2030 (Seqota Declaration, 2018).

The review of other federal-level stakeholder plans in the health sector show that UNICEF is also aligned with their priorities in the country. On one hand, UNICEF’s CPD nutrition objectives and outcomes coincide with the WFP country strategy, particularly with strategic outcome 3, which states: “nutritionally vulnerable populations in targeted areas receive support aimed at preventing all forms of undernutrition” (WFP Ethiopia, 2019). The efforts of elevating nutrition to a broader scope are also shared with donors such as USAID with its multi-sectoral nutrition strategy (2014–2025) (USAID, 2014). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and UNICEF have worked in nutrition-sensitive agriculture through two joint FAO/UNICEF nutrition and resilience projects (FAO, n.d.).

When looking at the regional level, according to the relevant authorities interviewed, UNICEF’s interventions are highly valued, although their implementation started relatively recently so it is difficult to be conclusive. “UNICEF is the only one engaged to reduce the high prevalence of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM). There is low attention by the Government when compared to the high need in the region – Interview Somali Region.”

## Effectiveness – Outputs

At the outcome level, only one of the five indicators reached its 2018 target. The target for “Children aged 6–59 months affected by SAM who are admitted into treatment (whether or not supported by UNICEF)” was very close (95 per cent) and the target for the “percentage of girls and boys 6–59 months that received two annual doses of vitamin A supplementation” was below its target. The other two indicators<sup>25</sup> have no information available, according to the RAM report.<sup>26</sup> The emergencies generated by El Niño, the internal conflict that resulted in the internal displacement of millions of people and the large refugee population exceeded capacity to respond.

### *Policy and multisectoral engagement*

UNICEF’s contribution to the nutrition sector has been recognized, especially its achievements under the Policy and multisectoral engagement output, which set an enabling environment to improve the nutritional status of the targeted population. UNICEF ECO’s actions are in line with the commitments to the Nutrition Decade and guided by UNICEF’s Strategic Plans (2014–2017, 2018–2021), and in particular, by the United Nations System’s Standing Committee on Nutrition’s *Programme Area 5: Knowledge, Partnerships and Governance for Nutrition* (UNSCN, N.A). UNICEF informed policies and generated programmes that elevated the status of nutrition in the Government’s agenda, promoting its commitment to reduce the levels of malnutrition. The launch of the NNPII, which integrates community-based management of

<sup>24</sup> The challenges during the NNP I were: Institutional limitations for mainstreaming nutrition into the line ministries’ strategic plans; a weak coordination system without responsibilities and accountabilities clearly defined; the lack of inclusion of adolescence nutrition and related lifestyle.

<sup>25</sup> “Percentage of infants aged 0–5 months who are exclusively fed with breast milk” and “Percentage of children aged 6–23 months receiving a minimum number of food groups”

<sup>26</sup> While other outcome indicators report information from the EDHS, indicator number 2 is outdated, presenting numbers from 2011. UNICEF should consider this, to set realistic targets when planning.

malnutrition (CMAM) into the routine health system, the approval of the Food and Nutrition Policy, the Food Fortification Standards, the School Health and Nutrition Strategy, and the Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Strategy, provided a legal framework that enhanced the nutrition system in Ethiopia (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018).

Within UNICEF, the Food and Nutrition Policy is recognized by several of the interviewees to be one of the biggest achievements of this CP, as it strengthens the multisectoral engagement and the accountability framework and involves resource allocation for nutrition. At the regional level, stakeholders recognized the importance of the availability of policies and strategies on nutrition. *“The NNP is in its second phase and there is a well-established structure down to the grassroots level for smooth implementation of the programme activities - Regional Health Bureau”*. UNICEF also advocated for the establishment of a Food and Nutrition Counsel and Coordination Agency. There is a proclamation drafted for this purpose. Together with other nutrition partners, UNICEF contributed to the creation of a National Nutrition Council under the Deputy Prime Minister to enhance multisectoral accountability. Multisectoral coordination, as can be seen, has a structure, from the Federal to the Woreda level, led by GoE Health body, supported by the Education and Agriculture bodies. At the federal level there are already ToRs for the organization and the regions have also adopted ToRs based on regional contexts. There are regular meetings for planning and monitoring of multisectoral issues. However, many interviewees were concerned about the actual enactment of these legal frameworks; primarily because the current governance structure at federal level lacks a mechanism for holding each member sector accountable for delivering on its commitments, and because all the ministries are at the same level for multisectoral coordination. These issues create problems with sustainability and implementation.

To support equity-focused monitoring, evaluation, and research to inform policies, UNICEF provided technical and financial support to the MoH to build the Unified Nutrition Information System (UNISE), a platform that seeks to strengthen the monitoring of multisectoral implementation by providing data that is nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific. UNISE was also incorporated into the District Health Information Software 2 (DHIS2) to create government ownership and sustainability. The system was reportedly piloted in 2019 in two woredas identified in the Seqota Declaration during the innovation phase. This shows important progress, as availability of data is an obstacle in Ethiopia. As one UNICEF respondent mentioned: *“It is still a challenge to get nutrition information, especially for SAM treatment, on time, also the routine data in DHIS2 is very weak”*. The challenge is also recognized at regional level: *“The report and the data management, in general, is a problem – Regional Health Bureau”*. However, UNISE is at a very early stage, so clear results and improvement in data availability are yet to be seen.

One remarkable achievement was the integration of nutrition-sensitive interventions into the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) IV, which was supported by a UNICEF partnership with the World Bank. This in turn originated in the fact that data that showed the third phase of PSNP had little impact on the nutritional status of clients and that stunting among PSNP children was higher than the national average (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018).

The main factors that have contributed to the success of these achievements, according to the interviewees, are the government commitment, UNICEF’s presence at regional level, and different tools for enabling the environment to implement programmes. On the other hand, external factors like security problems and political unrest (the change in structure of the Government affects the functionality of multisectoral coordination), the reduction in donor funding, in part as a consequence of the absence of a financial counterpart in the Government, and the frequency of emergencies, have hindered UNICEF from attaining results.

#### *Systems strengthening*

UNICEF’s support for systems strengthening is oriented to scaling up nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions with quality. The interventions delivered under this output are in line with the commitments to the Nutrition Decade (UNSCN, N.A): *Programme Area 1: Early Childhood Nutrition* and *Programme Area 2: Nutrition of School Age Children, Adolescents and Women* are crucial in this case. One key achievement within the nutrition-specific interventions that is well recognized is the increased awareness and ownership in the MoH of provisions for the continuity of care for acute malnutrition: *“It’ll be important*

*going forward for UNICEF to focus on advocacy and policymaking; building capacity and strengthening systems. This will enable us to better deliver the services - MoH”.*

The number of health facilities equipped to treat children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) through community-based management of malnutrition increased, with treatment provided to more than 332,132 children with severe acute malnutrition, and a recovery rate of 91 per cent (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2017). UNICEF ECO promoted access to a nutrition-sensitive social protection programme when it demonstrated the value of Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams (MHNTs) in providing services to the hardest-to-reach populations. The intervention is now part of the Government’s health equity strategy. In Afar and Somali regions almost 400,000 people were provided with medical consultations by the MHNT in 2018, including life-saving treatments for SAM and moderate acute malnutrition. There are still coverage challenges because of the mobile nature of the community and the large geographic area “*Reaching children in a mobile community is one of the major factors we have faced in delivering this output – UNICEF Somali.*” UNICEF also technically and financially advocated for and supported including treatment of Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) into the Health Extension Programme (HEP). Over 33,000 HEWs and HWs in the integrated refresher were trained, promoting the scaling-up of policies and programmes to provide care for children with SAM as part of routine services for children<sup>27</sup>.

The interventions above concentrated on addressing coverage. However, quality has room for improvement. One step towards improving quality is integrating nutrition into the National Supply Chain Management System. UNICEF did a feasibility study that provided a strategic roadmap on how to integrate nutrition supplies into the government system. At the regional level, UNICEF field offices highlight the uninterrupted supply provision from UNICEF as a success factor when implementing interventions.

Adolescent nutritional needs differ significantly from those of infants and children. According to the National Adolescent and Youth Strategy (2016-2020) (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2016), “adolescent girls are particularly vulnerable to malnutrition because they are growing faster than at any time after [the] first 1000 days of life.” Adolescents’ greatest need is for micronutrients like protein and iron. Adolescent girls’ demand for iron increases during menstruation, and these needs increase further during pregnancy. When children enter adolescence without proper nourishment, they become “more vulnerable to disease and premature death” (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2016). In addition, “low maternal pre-pregnancy body mass index is a known determinant of low birth weight and contributes to the intergenerational cycle of malnutrition. The size and body composition of the mother at the start of pregnancy is one of the strongest influences on fetal growth” (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2016).

UNICEF contributed to integration of adolescent nutrition into the education and health systems as part of the School Health and Nutrition Programme by advocating so that the school platform provides nutrition services to adolescents that included deworming medications that reached 430 Woredas, and iron supplements that reached 17 Woredas (Specialist, 2019), some of them through school-based gender clubs. The majority of nutrition interventions in Ethiopia are carried out in 100 CINUS Woredas that are selected based on major criteria: i) financial investment, ii) most vulnerable woredas, iii) PSNP woreda, iv) not covered by other partners on development nutrition, and v) convergence with other UNICEF programmes (WASH and Education). In addition to the 100 woredas, UNICEF – as nutrition cluster lead – works in all woredas of the country on most of the outcome indicator targets, including Vitamin A, Iron and Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation, and so on.

ECO also supported the development of a training course to strengthen adolescent-sensitive interventions to raise awareness of the nutritional needs of adolescents. As part of this initiative, ECO produced a Youth-Friendly Service Manual that included training for all adolescent interventions. ECO has conducted additional school-based training events on health and nutrition and for HEWs and HWs. Adolescent nutrition has also been integrated into the emergency response in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, the FMoH and the Water Bureau. One initiative is the creation of a plan for adolescent nutrition assessment among refugee camps and host communities in Gambella (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018).

Interviewees suggested that the greatest obstacles to improving services for adolescent nutrition are lack of capacity and lack of funding. HWs lack understanding and the tools to address adolescents’ unique

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<sup>27</sup> Commits to the Nutrition Decade.

nutritional needs. As mentioned, undernutrition of this population can have grave consequences for health and well-being. At the same time, donors are not as interested in supporting adolescent programmes as they are in supporting programmes for children. ECO is attempting to increase the evidence base on adolescent nutrition to appeal to donors and improve training. Additionally, *“the natural stakeholders for adolescent nutritional programming are the MoWCA, the WASH sector and Education, but these sectors lack insight into the need for differentiated interventions for adolescents around nutrition – UNICEF ECO Adolescent Nutrition Specialist”*. One of the biggest challenges mentioned by many interviewees is the population’s attitude and perception towards nutrition. As one of the government officials interviewed highlighted, *“Ethiopians don't understand the benefit of nutrition. For them, getting some food is more important than getting the right food. Nutrition isn't simply about getting food, it's about getting diverse and adequate food – Federal Government”*.

External factors mentioned previously also interfere with accomplishing the goals. Political unrest hampers the programme’s performance, and staff turnover as a consequence of the work overload also interferes with achieving goals. This mainly affects the HEWs and translates into provision of low-quality nutrition services because of the additional services in the HEP package and the increased size of population they need to attend to in areas to which people have been internally displaced. Even if they are being trained, there is a problem of overburdening.

### 4.3. WASH<sup>28</sup>

#### Relevance

UNICEF is aligned with and supports the WASH component of the national GTP II through the ONE WASH National Programme, a sector-wide and multi-sectoral approach to WASH programming (OWNP) in five principal pillars (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018): 1) advance improved sanitation and hygiene promotion in vulnerable zones; 2) leverage resources from the ONEWASH pooled fund for accelerated institutional WASH coverage and gender responsive school WASH; 3) innovation to improve the functionality and resilience of water supply in water insecure areas where water supply sources are highly vulnerable; 4) intensified urban sanitation and pro-poor water service delivery; and 5) strengthen sector coordination and the enabling environment for development and emergency programming through innovative research, knowledge generation, monitoring and evaluation. UNICEF’s WASH programmatic intervention areas for the CPD 2016-2020 were: 1) Sector coordination; 2) Knowledge management; 3) Rural WASH; 4) Urban WASH; and 5) Emergency WASH.

The Government’s development objective, which was formulated in the first phase of the OWP, and refined in the second phase, is “to improve the health and well-being of population in rural and urban areas by increasing sustainable and climate resilient water supply and sanitation access and the adoption of good hygiene practices” (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2018). The first phase of the Ethiopian OWP was supposed to be implemented from mid-2013 to mid-2015. The OWP was the GoE’s main instrument for achieving the goals of the first GTP (2010/11-2015/16) (GTPI), with a US\$2.9 billion budget (Trachoma Coalition, 2016). The second phase of the OWP (July 2015 to June 2020) incorporated the lessons learned from three consecutive years of severe drought in Ethiopia due to El Niño and the Indian Ocean Dipole, and addressed activities that were not fully attended to in Phase I. Areas needing greater strengthening were: 1) capacity building; 2) bringing WASH NGOs into alignment with the OWP; and 3) enhancing joint participatory planning practices at all levels (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2018). A climate resilience component, as well as the cross-cutting issues of “refugees and internal displacement” and “gender”, were included in the second phase. Since OWP Phase I, much has been achieved towards the SDGs and the GTP I targets, as well as fulfilment of the short-to-medium term objectives of the GTP II. However, the programme was designed with little involvement of the actors in the regions and woredas to ensure their ownership and use of it (Wilson, Faris, Getaneh, & Admasu, 2018).

The review of other federal-level stakeholder plans in the WASH sector show that UNICEF is also aligned with their priorities in the country. As part of the WASH cluster, UNICEF has worked with other partners to ensure household water safety and security, and to promote hygiene. The WASH outcome is correlated with three of the UNDAF outcomes of two of its main pillars<sup>29</sup> (United Nations, 2015). UNICEF is also

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<sup>28</sup> See Annex 10.1

<sup>29</sup> UNDAF Pillars 2 and 3, relevant for the WASH outcome, are in line with the GTP pillars and the SDGs as well. Alignment with Pillar 2: *outcome 3 - by 2020, the Ethiopian people, particularly in disaster prone areas are resilient, have diversified sources of income and are better able to prepare, respond to and recover from emergencies and disasters*; Pillar 3: *outcome 9 - by 2020, the Ethiopian population, in particular women, children and vulnerable groups will have*

in line with the WHO's cooperation agenda for 2016-2020, the first strategic priority of which is “*reduced mortality, morbidity, and disability due to communicable and non-communicable diseases*” (WHO, 2018). It is also one of nine pilot countries included in the WHO network on Quality of Care, launched in February 2017, which provided an opportunity for further integration of quality and WASH efforts (WHO, 2017). Similarly, UNICEF was aligned with the strategic objectives of UNOCHA at the time of CPD formulation in relation to humanitarian preparedness and response.<sup>30</sup> Gender inequality and the significance of responsive gender programming are addressed in the OOWNP through the dialogue on adequate resources for menstrual hygiene management and the value of sanitation facilities that cater to specific gender needs<sup>31</sup> (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2018). Under OOWNP, the Ministry of Education in Ethiopia is also responsible for: (1) The development of a gender and age-sensitive curriculum on sanitation and hygiene; (2) The establishment of standards for the construction of school latrines and hand washing facilities; and (3) The establishment of school WASH clubs (Federal Democratic Republic Of Ethiopia Ministry of Health, 2016).

Additionally, the Ministry of Health has created a gender mainstreaming document that will be utilized within the health sector programme components in OOWNP. Regional authorities in three visited regions agree that UNICEF responds adequately to the needs of children, fills a gap in WASH services and focuses on children's and adolescents' needs. However, the resources are insufficient to meet the demand for services offered across a very wide area. The effects of climate change and the weather in some regions, such as Somali, magnify the needs of the population. The communities interviewed consider that health services are not adequate to meet adolescents' needs as: (1) there are not enough female health workers to address adolescent girls' needs for menstrual hygiene and FGM-related assistance, especially in the Somali region; (2) there is a lack of compassionate and accurate care service providers; (3) there is a shortage of medication; and (4) there is a lack of counselling and support to continue with their education if marriage occurs when girls are still children.

## Effectiveness

The WASH Cluster reported that UNICEF reached 3,795,830 beneficiaries during 2018 with WASH activities. Activities include the distribution of household water treatment, hygiene kits, and water trucking/tankering among other activities (completed and ongoing). UNICEF had the most WASH beneficiaries during the period (WASH Cluster Ethiopia, 2018). Conversely, in 2016, the Government was the biggest contributor in terms of beneficiaries, accounting for 39 per cent, while UNICEF, in second place, accounted for 32 per cent of the beneficiaries (WASH Cluster Ethiopia, 2016). Half of the outcome indicator's targets were reached or surpassed.

### *Urban and refugee WASH*

For half the indicators of this WASH output there is no available information. The others that do have available information show that basic water supply and sanitation services reached around 213,000 people, half of the target for 2018, while the target for the percentage of schools with a water supply (urban) was surpassed.

The UNICEF WASH programme built on the strategic shifts<sup>32</sup> that took place in the previous period. UNICEF informants recognized Urban WASH as one of the greatest achievements since 2016, as well as providing more durable solution for the integration of refugees.

Under the “*Urban and refugee WASH*” output, training was provided on climate-resilient water safety planning in selected towns in Tigray and Oromia to help local service providers establish water quality monitoring protocols for their new systems. Also, as part of the long-term solutions to provide refugees and host communities with sanitation master plans for the management of liquid and solid waste, UNICEF

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*access to and use of affordable, safe and adequate WASH services; and Pillar 3: outcome 10 - by 2020 equitable access created and quality education and training provided to all learners at pre-primary, primary and post primary with a focus on the most disadvantaged and vulnerable children, populations and localities.*

<sup>30</sup> “1: save lives and reduce morbidity related to drought” which states that “ensuring access to safe drinking water underpins all efforts – without which there could be largescale population movement”; and “3: Prepare for and respond to other humanitarian shocks – natural disasters, conflict and displacement”.

<sup>31</sup> (1) By 2020, provide improved and gender segregated sanitation facilities with hand washing from the present 36 per cent to 75 per cent of primary schools and 100 per cent of high schools including MHM; (2) By 2020, 100 per cent of health facilities have gender disaggregated full packages of WASH facilities, including MHM facilities. - *Activities*: Adolescent schoolgirls' school absenteeism associated with menstruation reduced/eliminated

<sup>32</sup> 1. Sector Wide Approach (SWAp); 2. Sanitation Public Provision Markets; 3. Sustainable Systems; 4. Urban Services; and 5. Payment for Results.

Ethiopia began developing them among refugee-hosting populations and refugees in Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Tigray camps. The actual improvement in implementation of water safety plans at community level is not yet available as the project ended in June 2019 (UNICEF ESARO, 2019).

Within its service delivery strategy, UNICEF has served approximately 108,479 people, providing them with water schemes for basic water supply by building urban sanitation facilities in towns in Amhara, Oromia, Somali and Tigray regions. UNICEF also continued building permanent water supply infrastructure for refugee camps in Tigray and Benishangul-Gumuz regions, while Phase II of the water supply systems, which was expected to serve around 180,000 refugees and 30,000 host community members in camps in Gambella region, was also completed; The building of Itang water utility was identified as one of five global best practice examples for UNICEF. Despite these achievements, *according to the target set for 2018*, the results are below the expectations in around 25 per cent (425,000 vs. 108,479); in addition, when asked about where least progress had been since 2016, several interviewees within UNICEF mentioned the latrine improvement programme.

In relation to the institutional WASH results, UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Education to revise the WASH in Schools Construction Manual, including a new manual on facility maintenance (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018). Table 4 shows that the percentage of schools with water supply (urban areas) results for 2018 surpassed the target by 20 per cent (61 per cent vs. 41 per cent).

As part of its evidence generation strategy, UNICEF contributed to academic publications and learning notes related to gender and equity, contracting modalities, experience with sustainability checks, the emotional implications of WASH services and a sanitation learning note, among others. In addition, UNICEF's WASH Programme has been working hand in hand with the Government to establish a partnership with the Government of Brazil on urban sanitation and to formulate a regulatory framework for water and sanitation services in Ethiopia. This contributes to global South-South cooperation and is expected to be scaled up by the national Government and other stakeholders.

With regard to private sector participation in providing WASH services in Ethiopia, according to the Private Sector Landscape for WASH in Ethiopia (Defere, 2015), the private sector, including the informal sector, currently contributes over 80 per cent of GDP. However, there has been little expansion in water and sanitation services. There is a need for policy and legal changes to specify how the private sector can play a role in operating water supply services and effectively regulating and monitoring performance. The role of the private sector has been limited to study and design services, construction and drilling wells, supply of goods, maintenance services and solid and liquid waste collection and transportation. The report says that the Government should consider extending incentives for the private sector to provide water and sanitation services in other parts of the economy and to strengthen the small-scale informal sector that makes an important contribution to local services.

#### *WASH in emergencies*

UNICEF's support on *health in emergencies and resilience* includes the following activities: 1) providing essential lifesaving services to the most vulnerable; 2) building the capacity of government and partners, including community stakeholders; and 3) linking emergency response to PHCU strengthening.

As cluster lead in WASH, UNICEF coordinates the humanitarian response to building the resilience of communities and the capacity of local structures; it also co-leads the Water Sector Working Group (WSWG) and is the lead advocacy and influencing partner to the Government. First, to consolidate the previous CP accomplishments in this area, UNICEF supported the formulation of the second phase of the OOWNP, as well as policies, strategies, manuals and overall enabling environment elements to continue with the 'nexus' approach between development and emergency.<sup>33</sup> A significant accomplishment was the introduction of a climate resilience component in the OOWNP; several interviewees within UNICEF (CO and RO) agree that climate-resilient WASH is a remarkable accomplishment of the organisation. Communication for development (C4D) was also considered in this output along with the indicator: "*number of people affected by WASH emergencies participating in hygiene promotion activities*". The use of community-

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<sup>33</sup> Alignment in structures within UNICEF to create a single point of responsibility for coordination in emergency and development programmes and the introduction of new management models for the rural water supply utilities to cope with the increasingly more complex (and resilient) water infrastructures

based platforms for MHM has been a successful approach used in WASH, though there is still room for improvement: UNICEF staff mentioned that only 1,850,938 people were reached with hygiene promotion.

UNICEF's accomplishments are notable, given the numerous situations that led to emergencies between 2016 and 2018 in Ethiopia (conflict (internal and external), disease outbreak, floods and drought) and their consequences in terms of displacement of large groups of people. All the goals for the indicators have been reached or surpassed; moreover, most of the staff interviewed online agreed that UNICEF responds to emergencies at scale and with speed and quality (Econometría, 2019). Federal-level stakeholders agreed that UNICEF's timeliness in emergencies is remarkable, and they are satisfied with the quality of its interventions. The interviewees gave the highest score possible.

Monthly cluster meetings were conducted without interruption. However, this does not reflect UNICEF's actual and crucial contribution. For example, UNICEF played a role in the emergency preparation with humanitarian information management. At the *federal level*, it also collected, analysed and reported information (by their own newly deployed staff, specifically for that task) to give inputs to the WASH stakeholders, within the coordination preparation activities; it was used to inform the planning, intervention and monitoring of their activities and decisions. Moreover, the "4Ws" matrix<sup>34</sup> emergency information, also collected and analysed by UNICEF, transcended as it was used to identify gaps in the emergency response, available resources and capacity, and intervention areas of implementing partners. At the *regional level*, several interviewees highlighted the importance of having a coordination body to ensure timely responses.

Among the directly implemented emergency response activities, UNICEF strengthened its staff in Gedeo (SNNP), and West Guji (Oromia), where an estimated 620,747 people are displaced due to localized conflict (UNOCHA Reliefweb, 2019). UNICEF also reached 2,607,364 people with life-saving water supply interventions and 35,851 people benefitted from emergency sanitation, which included the construction of durable solutions for internally displaced persons and communities in the need and provision of life saving and permanent WASH services (constructed latrines for internally displaced persons, and rehabilitated and constructed water supply schemes).<sup>35</sup> Household water treatment chemicals were also distributed and, when these are counted, the number of beneficiaries rises to over 5.5 million (UNICEF ESARO, 2019). At the federal level, government and United Nations partners agree that one of UNICEF's greatest achievements was to provide emergency WASH services, maintaining minimum standards.

At the regional level, the results of UNICEF's "*WASH in emergencies*" work are perceived to be good. Several interviewees agreed that UNICEF's presence in the field and its technical assistance are very valuable, and there was good coordination at regional level. Community participation as well as government commitment were positive external factors mentioned by the interviewees. However, the perception of UNICEF's performance is undermined by "*budget shortages*", political unrest, and lack of security. This is combined with the unpredictability of the emergencies that have been hitting Ethiopia from multiple fronts. The low institutional capacity of regional governments (human and financial resources) was also mentioned by interviewees as a factor hindering UNICEF's attainments.

#### *Monitoring data management for WASH*

It is worth noticing that, aside from the achievements, the RAM report presents difficulties in terms of monitoring progress against the indicators. The reported results do not respond to the indicator of the RF "*no approved indicator ratings*".<sup>36</sup> That same indicator reports advances in the national numbers but not those specific to UNICEF's contribution. It stated: "*proportion of the population using an improved drinking water source in the reporting year only, as a result of UNICEF direct support*".

#### *Menstrual health and hygiene*

ECO includes an indicator on menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) that measures girls' and women's knowledge of menstruation as a proportion of all menstruating girls and women. From a 2017 baseline of 55 per cent, ECO saw an increase in menstrual knowledge of 5 percentage points to 60 per cent in 2018.

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<sup>34</sup> Who, What, Where and When?

<sup>35</sup> As of October 2018. (UNICEF ESARO, 2019).

<sup>36</sup> RAM report, note for output 004

If growth continues at about 8 per cent per year, UNICEF will reach its goal of 70 per cent in 2020 (UNICEF ESARO, 2019). Much of the work on knowledge around menstruation is being publicized under the health sector (Bevan, 2017), rather than under WASH, though WASH has coordinated many large campaigns on MHH, including National Menstrual Hygiene Day. However, moving MHH from WASH to Health is a key recommendation of this section. The advantages of moving MHH to health and out of WASH are many, but the most immediate impact would be to decrease stigma linked to excretion from menstruation, a process that is not equivalent to urination or defecation, but rather forms part of biological, physiological and social processes that go beyond the week of menstruation. This change might also support a move by UNICEF toward more support for gender transformative programming, such as for curricula to more deeply work to eliminate stigma, shame and silence (Bobel, 2019).

UNICEF, the Government of Ethiopia and national and international NGOs dedicate the majority of their action on MHH (outside the construction of WASH facilities) to the marketing and distribution of menstrual ‘management’ products, though UNICEF has not fully developed a programme for delivery of menstrual hygiene kits to schools across the country. As part of previous interventions, UNICEF has supported the development of local women’s groups to produce reusable sanitary pads for sale (Bevan, 2017). With the focus of the 2018 study on regional supply, the fate of these local producers is unclear. Of additional concern is the recent push by donors like the Gates Foundation to imply that reusable pads and other options like menstrual cups, where considered acceptable, are inferior to disposable pads (FSG, 2016), thus exacerbating barriers to access to menstrual ‘best quality’ products for the poor. This hierarchy of materials not only comes with higher costs but also with little empirical support for the need to switch from cloth and reusable pads. In fact, there is also little support for the contention that use of rags presents a higher risk to health than use of disposable pads and manufactured reusables (Bobel, 2019). In sum, the knowledge focus of the MHH indicator and output have been effective by the rubrics chosen to measure them, but that rubric encompasses just a portion of the work being done on MHH. In practice, improvements in efficiency may be gained through loosening the associations between WASH and MHH and by gathering sufficient evidence to justify replacing disposables with local sanitary pad producers.

### 4.3 CHILD PROTECTION<sup>37</sup>

#### Relevance

UNICEF ECO has actively supported the introduction of the **Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS)** system, in line with the UNICEF Child Protection (CP) - Birth Registration Programme, supporting the objectives of the Vital Events and Vital Statistics System of Ethiopia Strategic and Costed Action Plan 2013-2020.

SDG 16 specifies that: “By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration” and Indicator 16.9.1 is “Proportion of children under five years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age” (United Nations, 2019). Given the significant challenges faced by African countries in meeting this target, UNICEF has committed to supporting the agenda of the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS).

UNICEF has worked closely with the Federal Supreme Court (FSC), supporting its ‘Child Justice Project Office’, in alignment with United Nations agencies such as the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) towards meeting international standards through a specialized justice system for children. This joint effort contributes to achieving SDG 16.2: “End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children” and SDG 16.3, “Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all” (United Nations, 2019).

Furthermore, UNICEF strategies are mostly in line with the activities proposed in the ‘FSC Project Office’ document (The Federal Supreme Court, 2019), namely those related to training the judicial and police workforces and strengthening the linkages between sectors and institutions to improve referral mechanisms and avoid double victimization. However, this document does not mention any activities related to changing the minimum age of criminal responsibility, nor to diversion and other alternative measures to detention, which are critical issues (Observation 72) included in the Concluding Observations of the CRC for Ethiopia (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2015).

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<sup>37</sup> See Annex 10.1

ECO addresses child justice needs mainly through references to justice services made through schools, one stop centres, referral pathways, child-friendly benches and diversion centres (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018). This lacks a fully gender-responsive character because it does not have any specific provisions to differentiate between the needs and vulnerabilities of adolescent girls and boys. Rather, all non-adults are lumped together “children” with no special provisions, as seem to be standard for adult females. A gender-responsive provision could include screening for school-based, domestic or stranger sexual and/or physical violence among male child perpetrators, who are less likely to report victimization but may be involved in criminal activity as a consequence of their experience(s) (Sumner, et al., 2016). In failing to create gender-responsive interventions around the potential gender-based justice needs of girls and boys, the ECO strategy is not aligned with national priorities for youth, that call for diversity and youth participation in development activities. However, the focus of action on girls and adolescent girls does align ECO’s work with GAP priorities and with International Mandates<sup>38</sup>.

The Government of Ethiopia’s actions to eliminate child marriage and FGM have accelerated greatly since 2002. In 2004, the GoE issued Proclamation No. 414/2004, also known as The Criminal Code of Ethiopia 2004 (the Criminal Code), a federal act that made it a criminal offence to perform or procure FGM in Ethiopia and increased punishment for performance of Type III infibulation. In the years since the Code came into law, Ethiopia launched a two-year National Strategy and Action Plan on Harmful Traditional Practices against Women and Children in Ethiopia in 2013. And in 2015, a National Alliance to End Child Marriage in Ethiopia (by 2025) was spearheaded by the Ministry of Children, Women and Youth (MOWCY) with the goals of identifying the drivers of child marriage across Ethiopia and locating examples of best practice.

The GoE’s Revised Family Code (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2000) includes provisions on violence against children, including prohibitions of child marriage, FGM and abduction for marriage. The Revised Criminal Code (2005) outlaws harmful traditional practices and includes several articles on violence against children, including the prohibition of statutory rape (Article 576.1) (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), 2005). The Code also “revised the previous Criminal Code to establish an effective legal framework for the protection of women and children by including the following key provisions: Article 565 Female Circumcision; Article 566 Infibulations of the Female Genitalia; Article 648 Early Marriage. Several other articles are related to the punishment of child marriage and FGM including Article 434. Infraction of the Rules Concerning Compulsory Registration; Article 568. Transmission of Disease Through Harmful Traditional Practices; and Article 569. Participation in Harmful Traditional Practices” (Renault, 2019).

In 2015, a National Alliance to End Child Marriage in Ethiopia (by 2025) was spearheaded by the MoWCY, then the Ministry of Women’s and Children’s Affairs (before April 2019), with the goal of coordinating multi-sectoral actors under the leadership of the MoWCA to, “eliminate child marriage and FGM” (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2019).

These efforts culminated in the August 2019 launch of a five-year national costed roadmap to end child marriage and female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C), led by MoWCY and supported by UNICEF (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, 2019). The US\$94 million plan outlines strategies and interventions to be implemented at the federal and regional levels by both the government and partners working towards eliminating both practices in the country by 2025 (Chinyama, 2019).

Ethiopia ratified the two most recent United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolutions on FGM and Child Marriage (UNGA 2013, UNGA 2018), which contain several important recommendations for governments looking to eliminate FGM and child marriage. ECO’s work on FGM and child marriage through the Joint Programme on FGM, Accelerating Change and the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, is aligned with the legal recommendations, mandates and precedents described above, related to raising awareness, community engagement, and increased support for punitive measures to protect children from these harmful cultural practices by religious leaders.

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<sup>38</sup> In **international** law, a **mandate** is a binding obligation issued from an inter-governmental organization (e.g. the United Nations) to a country which is bound to follow the instructions of the organization. Before the creation of the United Nations, all **mandates** were issued from the League of Nations. Example of a mandate could be the Convention of the Right of the Child, the Beijing Rules, etc.

## Effectiveness – Outputs

### *Birth registration*

UNICEF’s support on birth registration includes the following activities: (1) Advocating for a legal framework (Proclamation) that enables implementation of the CRVS system; (2) Providing support to the Government to develop the elements of the system, including infrastructure, standardization of procedures, data collection and analysis; (3) Providing capacity development for officers, registrars and health workers; and (4) Supporting the process of scaling-up birth registration services nationwide, including demand creation from families and communities

The Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Management, Operation and Maintenance (United Nations, 2018) provides a framework that includes a set of dimensions to assess the quality of the CRVS system. These dimensions will be used as follow up to analyse the effectiveness of UNICEF’s strategies in the birth registration programme.

The first dimension is “*civil registration structural design*”, which includes the existence of a legal framework that supports and operationalizes the structural design of the system. According to various sources, UNICEF has been a crucial partner for the GoE in the design and implementation of a civil registration system. This notable achievement is a result of a determined advocacy initiative by UNICEF Ethiopia, which played a crucial role in the amendment of Proclamation 760/2012 by way of new Proclamation No 1049/2017, which made birth registration compulsory nationwide.

This Proclamation assigns duties and responsibilities to determine the procedures of civil status nationwide to the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), which controls the Immigration Nationality And Vital Events Agency – INVEA (former Vital Events Registration Agency - VERA). Including vital events and civil registration with national ID and immigration poses a challenge to the segregation of functions within the agency. Moreover, inclusion of INVEA under the Ministry of Peace, which is a security organization, may have implications for funding as the confidentiality of the information of citizens may be at risk.

The Proclamation also creates a link between the health sector and the CRVS system, which is seen as a critical strategy to ensure birth registration within the first 90 days after birth. To ensure proper interoperability, UNICEF managed to integrate the CRVS agenda into the national health strategy (UNICEF ESARO, 2019). Furthermore, as a result of UNICEF and UNHCR’s joint advocacy, free birth registration and certification for all refugees was included in the amendment as part of the national CRVS system (UNICEF ESARO, 2019, p. 8). This was a critical achievement because civil registration is also essential for strengthening the refugee policy agenda in line with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), of which UNICEF is a crucial partner in Ethiopia.

The second dimension, called “*business process*” defines the relationship between institutions within the CRVS system and their roles. According to the evaluation commissioned by UNICEF ESARO for the period 2014-2018, the CRVS system made significant progress by registering 965,457 children aged 0-59 months (UNICEF ESARO, 2019), including an 80 per cent increase in registration of refugee children. This progress was in the context of a series of achievements and challenges observed in the processes of birth notification, registration and statistical compilation.

Interoperability of the CRVS and health systems has been institutionalized through memoranda of understanding (MoUs) between the two sectors, to ensure that all births are notified to registrars. The ESARO evaluation observed that the MoU stipulates the roles and responsibilities for the institutions at all levels, including federal, regional, woreda and kebele. However, data show that despite the mandate of the health system to provide notifications, only 13.7 per cent of birth registration cases nationwide resulted from automatic referral from the health sector to the CRVS sector. This contrasts with the situation observed in the woredas supported by UNICEF’s programme, where automatic referral of birth registration cases from health institutions increased dramatically, to 74.3 per cent in Afar, 90.3 per cent in Amhara, and 81.8 per cent in Tigray. Despite UNICEF’s success, the overall situation suggests that the connection between the two systems is not being used to its full potential in all regions. The target is that 100 per cent of births should be notified and registered.

One of the strategies used by UNICEF during this CP was to support the Government to scale up birth registration services. In 2016, registration services were available in half of the kebeles nationwide. As of December 2018, 88.5 per cent of kebeles offered birth registration services. Government commitment has been a critical factor in achieving this. Nevertheless, some regions are lagging, such as Somali, which has a geographic coverage of 7 per cent. Raising community awareness of the importance of birth notification and registration has been one of the most critical challenges to creating demand. ECO C4D Programme has worked closely with the Child Protection Programme to achieve this.

UNICEF has supported the Government in the design of materials and procedures used in civil registration and vital statistics activities, ensuring that they meet international standards (United Nations, 2018). UNICEF has provided training to registrars, so they are able to understand and complete the forms correctly. Interviewees, both at UNICEF and regional level, recognize the importance and the positive effect of training thus far. Reports indicate that errors have fallen from 50 per cent during the first six months of implementation to 6.9 per cent today. Nonetheless, the quality of registrars continues to be a key challenge.

Challenges identified with capacity building include high turnover of civil registrars at kebele level. UNICEF needs to work closely with local governments to assure continuity of registrar officers. Moreover, capacity building workshops are financially demanding and time-consuming. With approximately 17,000 civil registrars nationwide, questions have been raised about the feasibility and sustainability of capacity-building efforts.

Civil registration data is currently being collected manually by registrars. It is transferred in paper form to regional and then federal level. This poses unnecessary data security risks, and generates significant transactional costs, in both cost and time. Digitization of this process would be highly valuable as it would avoid these risks and costs. At the point of the evaluation, the Government was piloting an information system. Digitization faces key challenges in terms of technological infrastructure, and the substantial financial investment required to start and maintain the system and train the people in charge of data entry. Neither the informants nor secondary sources indicated how birth registrations are being used for statistical and policy design purposes.

A third dimension is related to the “infrastructure” of the system. This includes three aspects: location, adequacy of registration points, and budgetary allocations. UNICEF’s investment in office space, furniture, communications devices, printers, computers, and other resources for registry offices contributed to the progress of the project, though lack of quality office space remains a challenge (UNICEF ESARO, 2019). The evaluation did not find any information about the quality and impact of these investments.

UNICEF’s efforts to support the Government to scale up the system face several challenges. Ethiopia has a large area and a large population, with more than 80 per cent of people living in rural areas. Although the availability of electric services and road networks connecting kebeles are both progressing, access to registration services is still a challenge throughout the country (Vital Events Registration Agency, 2014). Human rights issues include the requirement for both parents to be present for birth notification and registration services. In addition, although birth registration is free, parents need to pay for the birth certificate. Finally, fiscal restraint hinders implementation of the CRVS system. The Government relies to some extent on UNICEF’s financial resources to keep the system working and expanding.

### *Child justice*

UNICEF’s support for Child Justice includes the following activities: (1) Systems strengthening; (2) Comprehensive response and support to victims/survivors of violence and harmful practices; (3) Capacity building of justice professionals; (4) Technical capacity building support; (5) Improvement of alternatives to detention and use of diversion measures; and (6) Enhanced access to legal aid services.

The United Nations Common Approach to Justice for Children (United Nations, 2018) outlines a set of strategic interventions that entities should follow when working on justice for children issues within the broader context of the United Nations system, a rights-based approach and moving towards achieving the SDGs.

Concerning “*strengthening national justice systems*”, UNICEF has been working throughout the last two CPs in support of a child justice system in Ethiopia. The key partner has been the Federal Supreme Court, which develops its key child justice strategies through the Child Justice ‘Project Office’. The main purpose of UNICEF’s support is to operationalize a justice for children package to ensure that children in conflict with the law, child victims, and child witnesses receive child-friendly justice services while they are going through the process. This has been done using the following strategies,

UNICEF supported the construction and renovation of child-friendly justice facilities and provision of office furniture, CCTV cameras and other supplies at the beginning of the CP. Most of the progress made in this area was in the Somali region, where a DFID-funded project included the renovation and construction of 64 child-friendly justice facilities. There was also support in 22 woredas in 4 regions, where 82 child-friendly justice facilities were renovated, benefiting more than 5,600 children. Five diversion centres were established in Somali Region, where 1,124 children received services. In addition to supporting justice facilities, UNICEF also provided support to build One-Stop Centres for child victims of violence.

Despite this progress, UNICEF decided to stop building and renovating these centres, recognizing that these activities do not reflect UNICEF’s comparative advantage. Moreover, great concern emerged about how UNICEF is having an impact on children as a result of a significant investment in infrastructure. This strategy was more transactional between UNICEF and the Government and less transformative to children’s lives.

The introduction of social workers by UNICEF into the justice system<sup>39</sup> has been a remarkable achievement to advance implementation of a child-friendly approach initiative driven by a child rights-based approach. For example, the police and public prosecution agencies have special investigative units focusing on children which include the support of social workers and psychologists. In other cases, social workers were assisting the judges in courts with special benches and CCTV cameras that allowed children to testify in a friendly setting. UNICEF has supported the federal and regional governments by employing social workers to assist judges, police units and one-stop centres. Regional courts in Somali, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella and Oromia committed the necessary funds to absorb social workers into their payrolls. Other regions are in the process of allocating budgets to integrate social workers into their organizational structures. UNICEF continues to pay their salaries<sup>40</sup> (Addis Ababa University, 2017). The UNICEF child justice programme has also been engaged in capacity building.

Integration of social workers faces several challenges: (1) There is no formal organizational structure for social workers and they are employed on a temporary contractual basis; (2) UNICEF and government salaries are at very different levels, which is a source of frustration (Addis Ababa University, 2017); and (3) there is no global standard defining the average caseload per social worker to ensure timely response and quality care for each child. The police and the FSC need to assess and adjust the system to ensure proper working conditions and the quality of justice services and avoid turnover of social workers.

The UNICEF child justice programme has also been engaged in capacity building. According to UNICEF Country Office Annual Reports, between 2016 and 2018 more than 1,800 justice professionals and social workers at federal and regional levels (mostly in Somali region) took part in the administration of child-friendly justice, the application of children’s best interests and the operation of referral pathways. (COARs 2016-2018).

Interviewees in the Government and UNICEF argue that the training has provided the right tools for justice professionals to deliver child-friendly justice services to children. However, for UNICEF informants, there is too much focus on training through seminars or workshops without a systematic approach to knowledge transfer measured by pre- and post-training assessments. These concerns match those of other sections across ECO. One of the main challenges is improving in-service practices of justice professionals and social workers.

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<sup>39</sup> Social workers in the justice system support children who are in contact with the law as victims, witnesses, offenders, or other parties in legal proceedings. The social workers provide a wide range of services, including case management, support to investigation, trial and post-judicial follow up, counselling, probation, diversion and alternatives to detention for children (UNICEF, 2019, pág. 12).

<sup>40</sup> According to information shared by the Child Protection Unit, in June 2019, of a total of 247 social workers working in the justice system, 28 were paid by UNICEF (Amhara 6, Benishangul Gumuz 3, Federal Government 9, Gambella 1, Oromia 5, SNNP, 4).

When assessing data from available UNICEF reports, there is not much evidence of how children have been benefiting from UNICEF’s support for implementing a child-friendly justice approach in the selected woredas. According to UNICEF, data from the justice and social welfare system is poor and reporting is not systematic. This meant UNICEF lacked data to assess how transformative UNICEF’s strategies are to children’s lives.

Concerning *“Legal empowerment and access to justice”*, in coordination with the Federal Supreme Court, UNICEF provided legal aid to children involved in civil or legal proceedings. The strategy also includes a partnership with pro-bono lawyers and legal clinics in law universities. According to data from the 2016-2019 COARs, almost 8,000 children and adolescents have benefited from this strategy. These actions sometimes demand a significant level of resources. A question may arise about whether or not UNICEF should be supporting a legal aid strategy; if it should, what is the most strategic way to accomplish this?

Justice for Children in Ethiopia has been implemented under a ‘Project Office’ under the leadership of the Federal Supreme Court. According to UNICEF, this operational mechanism does not comply with the rule of law and international standards, under which justice for children should be part of the justice system as a whole. Therefore, UNICEF has communicated to the Government that it cannot and will not continue to support a ‘Project Office’ (UNICEF, 2018).

UNICEF is also concerned that different agencies of the justice system are implementing several initiatives to set up structures and develop procedures to ensure the rights of children within and through the justice system. These efforts are isolated and lack a strategic direction and approach (Addis Ababa University, 2017).

Following the United Nations Approach to Justice for Children, *“Cross-cutting areas of cooperation on justice for children”*, UNICEF needs to begin working with other United Nations agencies with different objectives.

#### *Child marriage and FGM/C*

UNICEF works with partner agencies and the Government to improve enforcement of laws against child marriage and FGM by increasing legal literacy, strengthening special units in the law enforcement bodies, and supporting community-level surveillance to track cases of FGM for better reporting and management. UNICEF is working to enhance the Government’s preventive and response programmes at scale, and through coordination. Chief among these efforts was UNICEF’s advisory and financial support for the development of a national roadmap to end child marriage and FGM with the National Alliance (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018). In addition, UNICEF works to change social norms around the acceptance of FGM and child marriage within communities. A 2019 evaluation of Joint Programme on the Abandonment of FGM (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2019) implementation in Ethiopia found clear alignment between UNICEF’s and UNFPA’s country programmes and a satisfactory tailoring of content to communities, including the inclusion of culturally sensitive methodologies and important alliances with religious leaders.<sup>41</sup> The evaluation concluded that, in Ethiopia, UNICEF’s support for justice programmes through community-level surveillance systems to detect and report cases of FGM and support to the Bureau of Justice (judges, police and prosecutors) and justice coalitions in the field were significant achievements (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2019).

UNICEF also supports the health sector in the Afar and Somali regions to address FGM-related complications by: (1) training health workers; (2) raising communities’ awareness of the health risks caused by FGM; (3) identifying girls and women affected by FGM; (4) developing training materials; (5) recruiting gynaecologists; and (6) equipping selected hospitals with basic FGM care equipment (UNICEF ECO, 2018). ECO has achieved, or is on track to achieve, its targets for the main indicators under child marriage and FGM. ECO and government programming reached 200,000 girls with prevention and protection efforts, and in 2018 305,000 men, women, boys and girls participated in social mobilization platforms promoting the elimination of FGM.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The evaluation also reported, however, that the programme demonstrated difficulty in adapting to the heterogeneity of practices and beliefs and the need to adjust strategies as social norms change (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2019)); that there is not a clear means to explain the change in FGM prevalence statistically due to the lack of detail in the national data collected, and that there is a substantial gap in UNICEF programming’s addressing of refugees and internally displaced persons around issues of child marriage and FGM (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2019).

<sup>42</sup> A 2017 evaluability assessment of the GPECM (Lawry-White, 2017) found shortcomings in the mechanisms to monitor and

Based on current rates of progress it appears that ECO will approach or exceed its 2020 targets of 110,000 girls receiving prevention and care interventions to address child marriage. However, there is little empirical evidence linking the GoE and UNICEF's efforts and any reductions in rates of FGM and child marriage due to baseline and outcome data being unavailable (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2019).

#### 4.4 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT<sup>43</sup>

##### Relevance

Based on selected CP outputs and outcome indicators this section presents an alignment analysis concerning: (1) the Education Sector Development Programme V (ESDP V) and the National Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE Policy Framework) (2010), which was co-launched by the MoE and two other line ministries; (2) the UNICEF Gender Action Plan; and (3) plans and actions of other agencies and donors. The ESDP V includes pre-primary education as a commitment that recognizes the importance of quality learning for young children's development. Meanwhile, the ECCE Policy Framework outlines preschool, community-based non-formal school readiness, and parental education as three of the four "Basic Pillars for ECCE Service Delivery".

Components and strategies related to Early Childhood Education (ECE) are included in two ESDP objectives: (1) General education quality; and (2) General education equity, internal efficiency and access (Federal Ministry of Education, 2015). Both objectives are aligned with SDG 4 (Quality Education), specifically target 4.2: "By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education" (United Nations, 2019).

Second, the Learning and Development (L&D) ECE programme includes the assessment of the formal pre-primary curriculum as well as teacher training and associated learning materials and standards. These strategies are aligned with the ESDP V's pre-primary projections on defining the standards for play and learning equipment for each of the ECE modalities, teacher training for O-Class, and kindergarten. Finally, it is important to note that the ESDP V does not mention any strategy related to ECCE policy development and strengthening in an explicit manner. Nonetheless, UNICEF has included two related strategies in its L&D ECE programme: (1) policy and strategy development; and (2) improved system financing, management and coordination. The achievements and challenges under these strategies will be discussed later in this document.

UNICEF Ethiopia's strategies to address girls' primary school completion are aligned with many of the GoE's strategies to improve access to general education and general education for groups in vulnerable situations. UNICEF's GAP II prioritizes SDGs 4 and 5 and the UNESCO resolution on learning without fear (UNESCO, 2015). ECO's strategies to improve the functionality of girls' clubs, through which multi-sectoral programming (including health, nutrition and justice) as well as educational programming is delivered, reflects emphasis on the need to support specific programmes for girls and others from disadvantaged areas, as well as the Ministry of Education's Gender Strategy's focus on encouraging awareness raising and capacity development on school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). The gender clubs also fulfil the mandate of SDG 5 that calls for the empowerment of women and girls, and UNICEF's GAP II that prioritizes prevention and response to SRGBV, child marriage, and early unions. It also facilitates access to dignified menstrual hygiene management. According to the Overseas Development Institute (ODI (2015)), "girls' clubs – whether at school or other community settings – aim to empower girls by giving them a chance to learn about issues that affect their lives, enabling them to expand their social networks and, in some cases, learn vocational and life skills."

ECO's strategy for girls' primary education employs an ecological and multisectoral approach that includes not only individual drivers and the educational environment, but also community interventions through C4D programming to change norms around girls' school attendance. This focus fully reflects the Ministry of Education's strategy on community mobilization to bring children to school. There are several areas, however, in which ECO's strategy does not emphasize gender, despite its importance to both the GoE's recommendations and international mandates. First, the Ministry of Education's Gender Strategy is not reflected in UNICEF's priority actions. It focuses on the need to improve the gender balance between

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evaluate the effectiveness and reach of the programme. It is not clear whether the knowledge management plan has been improved for this programme since then.

<sup>43</sup> See Annex 10.1

men and women in teaching and leadership in schools as a means to address SRGBV and to encourage girls' attendance. There is also no strategy to support transition between primary and secondary school, as recommended by the GoE Education Gender Strategy. However, UNICEF does measure gender parity at both the primary and lower secondary levels. The ECO Strategy does not build in mechanisms for community participation in intervention design, evaluation and accountability mechanisms, etc.

## **Effectiveness – Outputs**

### *Early childhood and education*

The L&D programme's contribution to early childhood education in Ethiopia has been developed through four strategies: (1) Demonstration of alternative community-based and cost-effective early childhood education programmes; (2) Strengthening parental and community support and engagement in early childhood development and learning; (3) Quality development, including revision of the formal pre-primary curriculum, implementation of service standards, learning materials and capacity development; and (4) Policy development and strengthening (financing, governance and coordination).

The UNICEF L&D programme advanced implementation of non-formal early childhood education programmes as a response to the MoE's ambitious goal of achieving universal access to pre-primary education. UNICEF supported the Government's delivery of ECE services through the Child-to-Child (CtC) programme and the Accelerated School Readiness (ASR) programme, which complement the formal ECE services of O-class and kindergarten. The CtC and ASR together account for more than 130,036 young children in nine regions of the country (UNICEF M&E, 2019). This achievement has led to an increase in the rate of young children's gross enrolment to ECE services.

Although there are two evaluations (one for CtC and one for ASR using cross-sectional data), the Programme needs an additional evaluation to inform on quality learning and development, and the cost-effectiveness of CtC and ASR in comparison with formal ECE services, particularly O-class. Second, quality issues may arise, given that the Programme's sole purpose is to enhance school readiness, attendance and learning outcomes of children. Although these programme outcomes are promising, especially from an equity perspective – UNICEF is providing access to children who cannot access formal pre-primary education – it falls short when trying to meet a comprehensive approach to child development.

The parental engagement component is included in the national policy framework. This establishes that parental education is a cross-cutting intervention that must be incorporated into the three other basic components (early education, health and nutrition). According to UNICEF, parental support has been predominantly oriented to 'parenting education' within the context of ECE services. The Programme needs to move forward to provide family support – including other aspects such as health, nutrition, WASH, and child protection – in order to move toward an integrated and multisectoral approach to early child development. In addition, the Ethiopia ECE Diagnostic Workshop Report (1-4 May 2019) identified additional challenges related to limited family and community participation, a lack of a strategy for parental and community involvement, and limited capacities of teachers and institutions to advance this purpose (Baysah, 2019).

In 2016, the MoE and the World Bank came together to design a curriculum package for pre-primary services that focused on implementation of the General Education Quality Improvement Programme (GEQIP) II and was based on the successful approach and materials of ASR. This initiative resulted in a revised O-Class curriculum, with learning materials developed and translated into 42 languages for implementation in different groups.

However, it is critical to note that in the current context, the O-Class is overcrowded and, aside from six-year-old children, for whom this service is intended, children aged three to five are also accessing this modality. This situation poses a severe challenge for teachers when implementing the curriculum. Furthermore, the Ethiopia ECE Diagnostic Report highlights other challenges, such as the limited dissemination of the curriculum, inadequate teaching materials, poor infrastructure, poor adaptation and limited monitoring of curriculum implementation (Baysah, 2019).

The ECE programme/output also contributed to advancement in capacity development as a decisive strategy to support implementation of the curriculum for ASR and O-Class modalities. This strategy has

resulted in two achievements. First, with UNICEF support, between 2016 and 2018, more than 10,000 teachers across the three ECE modalities (CtC, ASR, and O-Class) were trained on curriculum implementation and pedagogical approaches. School directors, supervisors, and woreda experts also received training on supervision, community engagement and ECE policy appropriation. Refugee teachers in Benishangul-Gumuz region were also trained, improving the quality of ASR delivery in this region. Second, based on the results of training of O-Class teachers, UNICEF Ethiopia also supported the MoE to develop a pre-service training course on ECE for teachers, in line with the O-class curriculum. However, more information is needed on how and to what extent the pre-service training course on ECE is being used in colleges of teacher education (CTEs). Despite recognition by the Government of the quality and impact of training provided by UNICEF for teachers and ECE specialists, high turnover at district level has led to inefficiencies and waste in the administration of human and financial resources

Concerning monitoring and data collection, the CPE identified issues related to the applicability of the EMIS to ECE services. In some cases, ASR children are counted as O-Class in the EMIS, and ASR is not included in the National Education Statistics as a modality of ECE service. Thus, information on the provision of O-class may be overestimated in the regions and at federal level. UNICEF would have to provide support and training to EMIS experts to include the specific variables that enable the capturing of specific data on children accessing ASR. Additionally, the lack of a system structure for monitoring and supporting quality improvement (Baysah, 2019) could jeopardize the investments made by UNICEF in the training and delivery of learning materials.

There have been changes after the National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and the subsequent ESDP. UNICEF advocacy actions played a key role in increasing the Government's commitment to investment in the education of young children. However, the public funding dedicated to pre-primary education is still low, increasing from 2 per cent to 3 per cent of the national education budget (UNICEF M&E, 2019). Financing for ECCE is also inadequate in the regions as the MoE does not have an advocacy strategy to boost local government participation and financing (Baysah, 2019). This is a critical challenge, especially as the Government has set such an ambitious goal of providing universal access to the first year of pre-primary education while ECE services have poor and unevenly distributed quality.

#### *Planning and knowledge management*

As planning is a continuous process, UNICEF also supported the MoE and the RBoE to prepare their annual operational plans, including activities to continue towards achieving the goals and mid-term objectives set in the ESDPs (federal and regional). These annual operation plans also define in which activities the Government would invest UNICEF's financial resources. Some interviews at federal and regional level indicate that RF and the annual operations plan were unrealistic, as they did not consider government capacities and the budget needed to achieve targets.

Strategic education planning also needs to be “*result-oriented*”. This concept emphasizes shifting away from compliance monitoring to performance monitoring (UNESCO IIEP, 2010). As a starting point, it is essential to consider that in 2016, GIS-based EMIS and SMIS Web Application systems were ready for collection, storing, analysis and dissemination of resulting data and information. From 2016 to 2017, UNICEF provided training for more than 1,300<sup>44</sup> EMIS and planning experts on EMIS data collection, analysis and utilization of these MISs. Woreda education offices and zonal ARRA offices developed capacities for crisis-sensitive education data analysis. As a result of this training, in 2016 a total of 86 primary, secondary and preparatory schools in three regions (Harari, Amhara and Addis Ababa) launched the web-based SMIS system and, in 2017, 248 schools in Amhara region, and 3,927 schools in Oromia region were included in regional EMIS systems. UNICEF Ethiopia supported the piloting of a digitalized education data collection and management tool in 365 refugee and host community schools in Somali, Afar, Tigray and Benishangul-Gumuz.

Capacities of education sector human resources are inadequate to collect and process data properly at woreda and school levels, leading to inaccuracy, lack of timeliness and poor quality of data. School record keeping is highly fragmented due to lack of awareness of the importance of data. This affects policy

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<sup>44</sup> This number of experts trained includes experts trained in 2016 and 2017 according to the COAR in both years. This training included experts from Tigray, Amhara, Oromia, SNNP, Benishangul-Gumuz, Afar and the federal MoE.

decision and planning processes, putting continuous improvement of the education sector at risk (UNESCO, 2016).

### *Girls' participation in primary school*

UNICEF Ethiopia is committed to assisting the GoE to continue to improve the educational outcomes of girls throughout the country. UNICEF is working closely with the MoE and other development partners to implement its education programming. Through the utilization of the education sector's pooled fund, the General Education Quality Improvement Programme, and external resources and investments, UNICEF is dedicated to improving the effectiveness, efficiency, and quality of education for girls in Ethiopia (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2018). On the other hand, UNICEF interventions aim to address gender inequality in education, particularly inequalities that disadvantage young girls.

Through interviews with UNICEF staff across regions, it became clear that gender clubs, and usually girls' clubs in particular, play a unique, important and central role in the delivery of UNICEF's programming for adolescent girls. Interviews with UNICEF staff demonstrate the success that the use of gender clubs has entailed, with the opening up of spaces for the discussion of social norms, health, violence and justice.

These positive results remain anecdotal, however, as the ECO 2019 Integrated Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (IMEP) (UNICEF Ethiopia, 2019) does not include evaluation of the impact of gender clubs on any of the sectoral outcomes for which they serve as a principal delivery mechanism. UNICEF's efforts, however, continue to expand, having added gender clubs in 1,090 primary schools between 2016 and 2018. Interviews with staff also suggest that there will also be emphasis in the future on increasing the number of boys' clubs in schools in addition to girls' clubs.

A central accomplishment of UNICEF's work in education, specifically with regard to school safety, has been the publication and dissemination of an updated Code of Conduct for schools.

ECO's inclusion of improving bathroom facilities in schools as a step towards improving girls' enrolment and primary school completion has led to very different outcomes in primary and secondary schools. According to a 2018 review report on Ethiopia's One WASH National Programme (Wilson, Faris, Getaneh, & Admasu, 2018), in 2015/2016 "only 38 percent of primary schools [had] access to water supply... [and] about 69 percent... of these primary schools reported that water is available ...for 5-7 days...About 45 percent of the schools have access to improved latrines compared with the 2012 figure of 34 percent." In total, only 3.2 per cent of primary schools had access to the full contingent of WASH facilities including "functional improved water source plus improved toilets and hand washing facilities" (Wilson, Faris, Getaneh, & Admasu, 2018). The situation in secondary schools was slightly better than that of primary schools, with 9.6 per cent access to the full complement of WASH facilities.

Finally, ABE, mentioned above, is one of the primary mechanisms through which UNICEF is supporting the provision of educational flexibility to girls and others unable to travel to receive education at primary schools. The ABE curriculum is based on the national education system but has made changes to some facets wherever necessary to make it feasible for the pastoralist context. The accelerated ABE curriculum is intended to support girls and children in situations of vulnerability to complete their education in three years rather than in four or five. UNICEF Ethiopia has supported expansion of the ABE to over 124,000 girls over the past two years.

## **4.5 SOCIAL POLICY AND EVIDENCE FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION (SPESI)<sup>45</sup>**

### **Relevance**

As outlined in SPESI's MTR strategy notes, generation of evidence to support policy-making decisions is vital to promote improved policy environments that are conducive to safeguarding children's rights in Ethiopia. The strengthening of capacities in national and local governments to foster evidence-based policymaking is crucial for meeting that general purpose.

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<sup>45</sup> See Annex 10.1

Between 2014 and 2018, UNICEF had a US\$12 million budget devoted primarily to quasi-experimental evaluations and qualitative studies.<sup>46</sup> Between 2014 and 2017, SPESI focused on piloting a revised design of the PSNP. In 2018 and 2019, the evaluation activities emphasized urban and rural Integrated Safety Net Programmes (ISNPs)<sup>47</sup> through the development of a baseline that already exists for Amhara region. In most interviews with GoE ministries, United Nations agencies, and donors, there was strong recognition of the importance and utility of the research done by UNICEF. The fiscal space analysis and Impact Evaluations by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), financed by UNICEF<sup>48</sup> are highly valued and at the forefront of the minds of stakeholders.

During the current CP, one of the key interventions set out in the Federal Social Protection Action Plan is developing standards and designing a social management information system (MIS) “to serve as a joint and single registry (reference) in the beneficiary selection, payment, and monitoring at all levels.” Similarly, regional action plans in regions such as Amhara, Tigray, and Oromia include efforts to promote productive safety nets in their focus areas. They all include the establishment of management information systems as one critical intervention (via the creation of databases) to monitor activities and progress made in these programmes. Another relevant example is MoWCY’s work with UNICEF in a national case management system framework for child protection, “to connect and coordinate all service providers working with children across the different sectors of Education, child protection, HIV/health, social protection, social welfare etc.” (MOWCY, 2019, p. 1).

Investment in cooperation projects in the country by donor agencies addresses the generation of capacities to use evidence in policymaking processes. For example, objective three of the Improved Nutrition Through Integrated Basic Social Services Social Cash Transfer (IN SCT) initiative, funded with resources from the Government of Ireland’s official international development aid programme (Irish Aid), was intended to generate information on the feasibility, cost-effectiveness and impact of multi-sectoral interventions in social protection in rural Ethiopia. Such initiatives include a nutrition-sensitive social cash transfer scheme administered by the Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs (BoLSAs). In that same line, SIDA provided a US\$13 million grant for Building an Integrated Safety Net System for the Most Vulnerable Women and Children in Rural and Urban Ethiopia between 2017 and 2023. Critical interventions here include support for and strengthening of the MoLSA and BoLSA’s capacity to implement a Social Cash Transfer Programme in Amhara and Addis Ababa regions and to support the establishment of a National Social Protection Registry and a Direct Support Management Information System by MoLSA, among others.

It is important to consider that, according to the OECD (2019), “[a] rapid decline in donor support for social protection is likely to lead to major financing gaps and [will] make it very difficult for the GoE to implement the NSPS” (p. 92). In fact, 70 per cent of respondents to the online survey from UNICEF staff in Ethiopia and ESARO (see the survey report Annex 15) agreed with the statement: “Government finances will not be able to replace the declining funding from donors. Hence, the work of the SPESI team in evidence generation is essential to generate more sustainable policy initiatives in the country”.

A remaining challenge for SPESI to make its actions more relevant is to strengthen the involvement of communities in policy debates. Participants in focus group discussions with adolescents, mothers and fathers in the Somali, Oromia and Amhara regions declared that they had never been consulted by government officials about service delivery initiatives.<sup>49</sup> The relatively low level of agreement (50 per cent) by survey respondents to the statement that ‘UNICEF contributes to the promotion of child and youth participation in decision-making processes’, supports this perception. Likewise, the CPE provided evidence that social protection priorities included in the CP do not directly refer to actions meant to improve gender inequality or address social norms that impact vulnerability and the need for receipt of social protection interventions.

## Effectiveness – Outputs

The current CPE draws upon two selected outputs for SPESI: *Public finance for children* and *Child sensitive social protection*. However, the presentation of results covers both outputs in one overall analysis. Throughout the fieldwork stage of the project, it became evident that various stakeholders at the regional, national, international levels hardly distinguish the activities or processes led by UNICEF’s specialists as

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<sup>46</sup> Interview with SPESI specialist.

<sup>47</sup> Through a robust evaluation that is being conducted by Frontieri with the support of Innocenti office

<sup>48</sup> However, there are some complaints about the quality of data for the impact evaluation.

<sup>49</sup> This claim refers to actual policy debates, and not to the consultations with beneficiaries of public interventions as part of evaluation research projects.

linked to particular outputs.<sup>50</sup> The structure of SPESI's strategy notes, which were shared with the consultancy team, help to understand and validate that perception. In contrast to the strategy notes of other programmes, this document introduces a set of strategies that speaks in parallel to all of its outputs.

The CP document also establishes the general goal of “evidence-based advocacy and technical assistance to promote rights-based and equity-focused policies, laws and budgets for children” as transversal to UNICEF's general strategy in Ethiopia. This section of the report emphasizes the general perceptions expressed by key stakeholders about the actions of this programme to generate evidence and the capacities in public offices to use it in policy-making processes. The sections on the results of the other programmes of the CP include comments on the relevance of available information and data to monitor their specific outcomes.

#### *Public finance for children and Child sensitive social protection*

The African Report on Child Wellbeing 2018, published by the African Child Policy Forum, states that Ethiopia is in the group of countries that “have been locked into the less or least child-friendly [governments] categories for a decade” (ACPF, 2018, p. xxiii). According to the trend in the Child-Friendliness Index rankings of African countries, the country has remained consistently in the lower positions in this measurement for the years 2008, 2013 and 2018 (42/50, 37/52 and 43/52, respectively)<sup>51</sup>. While it is clear that UNICEF has limited control over the GoE, this may reflect the effectiveness of UNICEF's advocacy to bring about such transformations in the country.

As noted, the studies and the pilots conducted by SPESI's team are well recognized because of their technical quality standards. For example, one of UNICEF's donors highlighted as a strength of the organization that it displayed more flexibility in searching for alternative solutions than other institutions working on children's rights in Ethiopia. The staff's knowledge of how institutions and political structures in the county work and the trust they hold of the institutions in the GoE are key factors. The positive perception expressed by interviewees in federal and regional levels of progress made in pushing for child-sensitive public finance supports this overall vision.

However, the analysis of policy documents and interviews with key informants revealed that, while UNICEF operations have enabled some government processes to begin, there are still challenges with implementation of SPESI initiatives and completion of their goals. For instance, while several interviewees recognized UNICEF's contribution to capacity building by hiring highly qualified experts to train public servants and officials, UNICEF's staff only moderately agreed (64 per cent) with the effectiveness of the change strategy, ‘*Capacity development to strengthen national institutions and systems*’, suggesting that there is room for improvement. The change strategy, ‘*strengthening national-capacity in monitoring, evaluation and evidence-based planning*’, had lower endorsement, at just 59 per cent agreement.

Similarly, in the survey of UNICEF's professional/technical staff, respondents expressed contrasting opinions (nonetheless, most of them positive) about the effectiveness of evidence-based advocacy and technical assistance provided to the GoE to promote rights-based and equity-focused policies, laws and budgets. There is general agreement that, while UNICEF actively advocates for the rights of children at different levels, the organization could make greater use of its good relations with the Government to increase its leverage in keeping children's rights on the public agenda. UNICEF's regional initiatives have raised awareness in the communities about furthering issues regarding the rights of children, e.g. child marriage, showing the organization's power to shape discussions in Ethiopia. However, as an ESARO staff member suggested, there is “too much focus on research/evidence (theoretical) and not enough focus on practical analyses and TA/systems strengthening support to the government on public finance and social protection issues”.

This last issue can be partly explained by how some federal and regional government officials expressed concern about the lack of post-training initiatives, leaving regional stakeholders feeling that some capacity building processes are incomplete. One local government official commented, “*Capacity building provided to*

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<sup>50</sup> In some cases, when respondents were asked for their opinions about one of these outputs, after having been asked about the other output, they answered “the same response as that provided about the other output”.

<sup>51</sup> According to the cited report, “The Child-friendliness Index (Cfi), developed by the African Child Policy forum, uses quantitative data to monitor and assess governments' progress towards realising the rights and wellbeing of children. The Cfi is based on the three pillars ...: Protection, Provision and Participation, often referred to as the ‘3Ps’, they enshrine government obligations to children as laid down in the two conventions” (ACPF, 2018, p. xxi).

*woreda is individual capacity building; that is, training provided to sector experts in offices and this has worked well. It should be kept but accompanied by institutional capacity building as well*'. Some interviewees considered that the training focuses too much on high-level officials rather than other local actors. The lack of some context considerations (such as the different languages spoken across woredas, which is a challenge for training) is another challenge.

Lack of quality data presents a challenge to SPESI's advocacy efforts. UNICEF reported, "that government budget allocations for data and information systems are inadequate to support quality data. This funding gap may indicate a lack of understanding of human and technological resource needs for data collection, management, and analysis" (UNICEF, 2019a, p. 2). Survey respondents gave a strong endorsement (75 per cent) to the statement '*Poor quality in data limits analysis and policymaking.*' It is also important to note a lack of clear data on the gender impacts of social safety net programmes. Anecdotally, traditional gender norms continue to exclude women from certain types of work. The lack of exemptions from work for pregnancy leave shows little gender sensitivity, despite UNICEF-supported delivery of training on the subject.

Another strategic focus of SPESI is forging working partnerships between different government offices to coordinate their actions for social protection policy implementation. Some interviewees consider that these efforts have led to better results but a recent academic study on "Policy coherence and social protection schemes in Ethiopia", considers cross-ministry coordination "a critical issue to be addressed" (Dejene & Cochrane, 2019, p. 8). Further efforts and new ways of addressing coordination between the interventions of government offices to protect children rights. Survey respondents agreed (72 per cent) that, '*Ethiopia has sufficient laws, policies and plans to uphold children's rights: the challenge for the future is implementation.*' The challenge is generating *more* political will for closer collaboration across public institutions.

## 5 EMERGING EFFICIENCY ISSUES

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Efficiency is not one of the evaluation criteria for this evaluation. However, some issues are discussed below, given their importance for effective programme delivery.

### Supply and procurement

UNICEF's procurement capacity is well recognized by United Nations organizations, donors and government agencies which value the logistical support, the bonded warehouse and especially the lead role in procurement and supply of goods during emergencies. ECO is the only agency with this capacity. The arrangement negotiated with the Government allows UNICEF to receive programme supplies, avoiding demurrage charges. Currently, the focus of procurement and supply is on the health, nutrition and WASH clusters. There are Long Term Agreements (LTAs) in place and joint efforts are being made with the Government and donors to implement a more efficient strategy.

UNICEF's engagement has been mainly focused on: (1) Strengthening the Government's planning capacity by mapping existing plans to future systems; (2) Supporting the Government to implement a strategic transition plan to include international commodities into the government's supply chains; and (3) Scoping for domestic production and domestic supply chains for economic stimulation, sustainability and equipment maintenance, using UNICEF's supply management experience and coordinating with the Government and partners to ensure complementary work on systems strengthening (UNICEF, 2019). UNICEF is working closely with the Ethiopia Pharmaceutical Supply Agency (EPSA), the FMoH, MoWS, MoF, Customs commissions, USAID, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and UNFPA, among others.

Supply and procurement face challenges and obstacles based on the Ethiopian context. Being a landlocked country is the main obstacle, and results in costly and complex logistics processes, and problems of clearance of goods for service delivery and timeliness for proper supply of goods. These challenges are further exacerbated by the fact that Ethiopian regulations and customs clearance are demanding, and transit permits take a long time. Accuracy of forecasting is low, due to limited data from sub-national level (particularly health centres and health posts) on needs and usage to inform this process (ECO, 2019).

Supplies may take up to 45 days by air and 90 days by sea.<sup>52</sup> In the recent EPSA, Revised Pharmaceutical Supply Transformation Plan (2018-2020), one of the main findings was that improvements are not yet being seen in all locations, and there continue to be very long lead times for procurement, and significant stock-outs of pharmaceuticals, reagents and equipment (EPSA, 2018).

On the other hand, UNICEF ECO recognizes that it, “does not currently have specific financial resources designated for Procurement and Supply Chain Management system (PSCM) strengthening, and only limited staff resources are available. Given this situation, additional human and financial resources will be required for UNICEF to move forward”, and the accuracy of forecasting is limited as data is insufficient, particularly in health centres and health posts (ECO, 2019).

UNICEF ECO does not have a supply and procurement strategy. However, in May 2019, a Roadmap was elaborated which integrates a joint plan with the Government and related agencies to improve the PSCM systems as a step for a takeover of processes by the Government. The roadmap states that: “UNICEF does not intend to try to do everything. Rather, it has selected areas where it has comparative advantage – namely, where there is clearly identified need; limited support from other DPs, and where UNICEF has on-going engagement, expertise or leadership” (EPSA, 2018).<sup>53</sup> A strategy for moving upstream and advocacy requires reinforcement for different line ministries to fast track processes.

### **Human resources (HR)**

The CPD design determined the skills and kind of functions required for its implementation, and thus the foundation for recruitment. During implementation, training needs were determined in various assessments and human resources development plans. In general, in the surveys held for the CPE, UNICEF was recognized as strongly qualified and committed.

Efforts have been made to strengthen and empower mid-level staff for programme implementation and leverage senior staff in strategy. ESARO was recognized for three consecutive years with the Annual Award for efficiency of human resources.

The MTR brought new challenges to the CP, with the outcomes related to early childhood and adolescence that require specialized personnel, experience and a new portfolio of skills that have not been fully absorbed. Other gaps identified by HR are specialized personnel for learning and development, adolescence gender programming, public finance, and results-based management (RBM); as well as proper skills to attend to emergencies (particularly at local level).

For more than a semester, strategic positions were vacant, mainly in the Health and Nutrition sectors. There is a staff balance gap between the regional and federal levels, and the fieldwork structure needs to be reinforced, especially for emergencies. The main challenge is the turnover of staff. For a future multi-sectoral approach, teamwork needs to be reinforced within ECO sections and with key strategic partners.

In the evaluation’s online survey, UNICEF Ethiopia staff squarely disagreed with the opined statement, ‘UNICEF in Ethiopia lacks personnel with the right expertise.’ Associated survey comments stated that all the necessary skills were available but that, “*the enabling environments may limit full application of skill and knowledge*”; “*we have many qualified colleagues, the problem is being overworked, overstretched, and no work life balance*”. UNICEF needs to map out the skills it will need to implement the new CP. The following are most likely to alleviate problems:

- Programming for adolescents (there is no specialist in this area in ECO)
- C4D in the regions (which is already under discussion)
- Mentoring and accompanying skills to support capacity development
- Ability to plan and implement across sectors
- Human capital management, for a more motivated workforce

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Supply and Procurement division; there is no report with process indicators.

<sup>53</sup> In this roadmap UNICEF focus on seven areas: 1) Vaccines further integrated into EPSA systems, and the cold chain expanded and improved; 2) Nutrition commodities integrated into EPSA systems; 3) EPSA and EPSA hub capacity for quantification, procurement, warehouse and inventory management increased, particularly for vaccines, maternal child health and nutrition commodities, equipment and supplies; 4) Sustainable financing plan developed for Maternal and Child Health programme commodities, including vaccines; 5) PSCM systems (including distribution/transportation, warehousing, stock management, and information systems) operationalized at the sub-national level; 6) Emergency PSCM systems strengthened, and 7) Refugee health/PSCM systems integrated into MoH/EPSA systems.

- Project management skills, including the ability to build an investment case (ESARO Annex, 2019) p.3<sup>54</sup>

## 6 EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND RESILIENCE

### 6.1 SCOPING FOR A FUTURE EVALUATION OF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

The scope of this evaluation – the outputs selected for detailed review in Phase 1 – largely excluded the humanitarian side of UNICEF’s work, even though it currently accounts for more than 40 per cent of UNICEF funding in Ethiopia. As a result, the evaluation team’s field work did not collect relevant data or undertake interviews addressing emergency preparedness and response at field or regional level. To partially close the gap this leaves, some interviews were added at federal level during Phase 2. Despite raising more than US\$350 million in emergency funding since 2016, ECO has undertaken no independent evaluation of its emergency preparedness and response during the plan period, nor has such an evaluation been planned. This represents a significant accountability gap, that should be remedied in 2020 by undertaking an evaluation. An inter-agency humanitarian evaluation (IAHE) is underway of the HCT drought response in Ethiopia,<sup>55</sup> which will only slightly substitute for UNICEF’s own evaluation because it only covers the HCT drought response until 2018 and does not cover the internal displacement or refugee responses.<sup>56</sup>

As an evaluation of the emergency response was not part of the ToR, this section serves as a partial Scoping Study for a future evaluation, highlighting issues raised during this evaluation and posing some of the questions a future evaluation might address.

### 6.2 CONTEXT

In 2015/2016 Ethiopia was hit with by of its worst droughts in decades, leading to a nutrition emergency across large areas of the country. By August 2016, there were 2.5 million cases of severe acute malnutrition and an estimated 12,000 cases of acute watery diarrhoea. Because of conflicts in neighbouring countries, there were new influxes of refugees, with the total peaking at over 900,000. From October 2017, there was a significant increase in internal displacement driven by drought and conflict. As of March 2019, 3.19 million people were internally displaced, including 1.59 million children (See Figure A14.1 in Annex 14).<sup>57</sup> Stakeholders agree that internal displacement, refugees and drought- and flood-related crises will continue to affect Ethiopia, driven by rapid population growth, climate change and, potentially, continued ethnic conflict. This is a chronic issue and UNICEF needs to be prepared.

### 6.3 SCOPE OF UNICEF’S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Table 1 shows the principal elements of UNICEF’s emergency response during the plan period:

**Table 1 – Key elements of UNICEF emergency response**

Sector	Principal activities
Nutrition	Treatment for severe acute malnutrition, vitamin A supplementation
Health	Immunization of children, life-saving curative interventions for acute watery diarrhoea; children under five accessing essential maternal and child health services
WASH	Sufficient water of appropriate quality and quantity for drinking cooking and maintaining personal hygiene; key messages on hygiene practices; ‘resilient’ water and sanitation infrastructure
Child protection	Psychosocial support for girls and boys, including child-friendly spaces with multi-sectoral programming interventions; reunifying unaccompanied and separated girls and boys with their families and/or placement in alternative care; risk mitigation, prevention and response to gender-based violence
Education	School-aged children, including adolescents, accessing quality education in a safe environment.

Source: UNICEF ECO situation reports 2016-2019

<sup>54</sup> ESARO also commented on the need for ECO to ‘nurture and support the growth of all staff, demonstrating UNICEF’s core values of care, respect, integrity, trust and accountability. Attention should be paid to capacity building, equal opportunities for women, career development, safe spaces, a speak-up culture and family-friendly workplaces.’

<sup>55</sup> The evaluation commissioned by the IASC covers the Humanitarian Country Team’s collective humanitarian response to the recurring droughts in Ethiopia between 2015 and 2018. The draft report is due in September 2019 and so may be available to the evaluation team before this report is finalized. The final report should be available by the end of 2019.

<sup>56</sup> In any event, inter-agency evaluations seldom provide agency-by-agency performance information for adequate accountability

<sup>57</sup> The number of internal displacement sites grew from 317 in October 2016 to 1,197 in January 2019

Table 2 shows the emergency funding by sector and year over the plan period.<sup>58</sup>

**Table 2 – UNICEF Ethiopia emergency funding 2016-2019 (June)**

Available Funding* by sector	2016	2017	2018	2019 (to June)	Total by sector
Nutrition	26,158,645	31,100,591	33,013,279	61,200,000	151,472,515
Health	20,411,187	14,384,824	6,008,566	3,600,000	44,404,577
WASH	52,307,256	38,393,866	23,441,242	15,800,000	129,942,364
Child Protection	4,179,286	1,277,079	4,895,830	4,200,000	14,552,195
Education	5,661,359	5,456,855	4,757,319	1,700,000	17,575,533
<b>Total by year</b>	<b>108,717,733</b>	<b>90,613,215</b>	<b>72,116,236</b>	<b>86,500,000</b>	<b>357,947,184</b>

\*Available funding = Funding received in the year plus funds carried forward from previous year

Source: UNICEF ECO situation reports December 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019

UNICEF has three main sources for its humanitarian fundraising in Ethiopia:

- The UNICEF Global Humanitarian Appeal for Children
- The Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund and the Global Central Emergencies Response Fund (CERF)
- Bilateral aid donors (ECHO, DFID, OFDA, Japan, etc.).

UNICEF has received very significant emergency funding. Nevertheless, UNICEF’s emergency response has been underfunded, by more than 50 per cent in some sectors. The drought response in 2016 was better funded, in percentage terms, than the internal displacement response in 2018 (See Figure A14.2 in Annex 14). Despite these shortfalls, several interviewees referred to the generosity of donors. There is some indication that donors’ use of ‘crisis modifiers’ released additional emergency funding from development projects/budgets (Generation El Niño, 2018).<sup>59</sup>

Emergency funding declined between 2016 and 2018 but has shown a significant increase in 2019, with the total for the year likely to exceed total funding in 2016. In a sign of growing financial support from the Government for disaster response, Ethiopia has become the largest single donor to the multi-stakeholder Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), providing just under half of the total funds received for HRP 2019, as of June 2019 (USD 288 million out of USD 584 million).

For implementation, emergency funds are allocated to the programme sections in UNICEF, with overall programme coordination and grant management provided by the Deputy Representative’s office.

#### 6.4 PERCEPTIONS OF UNICEF’S CONTRIBUTION TO EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Overall, UNICEF’s emergency response and its support for cluster coordination is highly rated by UNICEF’s partners and is a source of pride for UNICEF staff. Many survey comments on UNICEF’s large-scale emergency response were very positive, with staff praising UNICEF for having saved thousands of lives in recent emergencies. UNICEF seems to have adapted progressively over the plan period to work through and support government structures to mount emergency response, with the GoE as the preferred implementing partner. UNICEF is a respected member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and plays a constructive, neutral role between the NGOs and other United Nations agencies.

Most, but not all, UNICEF-supported clusters are seen to be effective in coordination, including in their information management function at capital level. Performance at regional level is much more varied.

#### 6.5 COMPREHENSIVE REFUGEE RESPONSE FRAMEWORK (CRRF) IN ETHIOPIA

The CRRF was agreed on as part of the New York Declaration on Refugees in September 2016, that is, after the current CPD had been approved. In February 2017, Ethiopia agreed to become a CRRF focus country.<sup>60</sup> Ethiopia is benefitting from a US\$100 million injection from the World Bank under the

<sup>58</sup> Source for this table and figure on over underfunding taken from various ECO Humanitarian Situation reports 2016-2019

<sup>59</sup> (p6): ‘there was widespread use of flexible funding and crisis modifiers in development and resilience projects supported by various donors, especially USAID, EU and DFID’.

<sup>60</sup> On 20 September 2016, the day after the adoption of the New York Declaration on Refugees, Ethiopia made the following nine pledges:

1. To expand the “out-of-camp” policy to benefit 10 per cent of the current total refugee population;
2. To provide work permits to refugees and those with permanent residence ID;
3. To provide work permits to refugees in the areas permitted for foreign workers;
4. To increase enrolment of refugee children in preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education, without discrimination and within available resources;

Development Response Displacement Impact Program. The CRRF in Ethiopia seeks to build resilient government systems for the provision of social services for both refugees and host communities.<sup>61</sup>

UNICEF Ethiopia reports that it has applied an integrated multisectoral approach to service delivery across refugee and host communities through the ‘Building Self-reliance for Refugees and Vulnerable Host Communities by Improved Sustainable Basic Social Service Delivery’ programme (BSRP). (COAR, 2017)p6. How successful this integration has been and the benefits it has brought need to be examined.

UNICEF has adapted itself to support the CRRF<sup>62</sup> and it is now one of the most active partners with UNHCR in its implementation, with UNHCR giving positive feedback on UNICEF’s contribution to the CRRF and to other refugee care and maintenance programmes. UNHCR is looking for further work to be done on social protection, access to legal support, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and psychosocial support, for which UNICEF is seen as the strongest partner.

In 2019, ESARO led a lesson learning exercise on UNICEF’s engagement with the CRRF in Ethiopia. The following lessons can be identified from ‘Internal Review: CRRF in Ethiopia, UNICEF’s engagement – January 2019’:

- While the Ethiopia CRRF has enabled some progress towards strengthening coordination between the Agency for Refugee and Return Affairs (ARRA) and relevant line ministries, the lack of clarity between their respective roles remains a challenge and needs to be resolved.<sup>63</sup>
- NGO engagement in the CRRF discussion has been very limited and may lessen in the future, as government agencies undertake more of the implementation.
- The DFID-supported Building Self-Reliance Project (BSRP) is regarded as well aligned with the CRRF vision, aiming to strengthen the integration of service delivery for both refugees and host communities.
- The UNICEF/UNHCR/ARRA WASH pilot of the public-utility based model in Gambella allows for more sustainability as it uses the management structure of service for urban areas as per the GoE WASH Implementation Framework. The model was found to be five times cheaper than comparable NGO-managed systems.
- The CRRF has the potential to increase investment in developing regions of Ethiopia, as part of the effort to integrate refugees. [This implies that the CRRF draws in development funding for programmes that might have had to be covered only by humanitarian funds.]<sup>64</sup>

## 6.6 UNICEF RESPONSE TO THE INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT CRISIS

The mass internal displacement of persons was not anticipated in UNICEF’s emergency scenario planning and the response has placed a strain on UNICEF capacity and staff. Some survey respondents consider that the major emergency response by ECO and its partners has diverted attention and resources away from ECO’s main mission of strengthening national systems.

The return of internally displaced persons to their place of origin proved contentious when the GoE urged internally displaced persons to go home as quickly as possible. Figures on the numbers of returnees are disputed. There are concerns that human rights may have been contravened by forced return and that children were put at risk as a result (OCHA, 2019).<sup>65</sup> UNICEF and other partners considered that the

5. To make 10,000 hectares of irrigable land available, to enable 20,000 refugees and host community households (100,000 people) to grow crops;

6. To allow local integration for refugees who have lived in Ethiopia for over 20 years;

7. To work with international partners to build industrial parks to employ up to 100,000 individuals, with 30% of the jobs reserved for refugees;

8. To expand and enhance basic and essential social services for refugees; and

9. To provide other benefits, such as issuance of birth certificates to refugee children born in Ethiopia, and the possibility of opening bank accounts and obtaining driving licenses.

<sup>61</sup> The CRRF in Ethiopia aims to take an integrated multi-sectoral approach that includes water, sanitation, health, nutrition, education and child protection.

<sup>62</sup> The management of UNICEF’s engagement in the CRRF was placed directly under the Deputy Representative.

<sup>63</sup> This is understood to relate, in part, to United Nations agencies providing ARRA to provide services, rather than holding to its coordination mandate, leading to role confusion and competition with line ministries

<sup>64</sup> It was reported that new funding is coming on stream to support the CRRF from the German government and from the World Bank International Development Association.

<sup>65</sup> “Ongoing insecurity and active hostilities in some parts of the country, notably Western and Southern Oromia region, continue to impede humanitarian access. While 70 per cent of the return areas are in areas where conditions are relatively viable for return, the remaining 30 per cent are in areas experiencing security and other constraint, threatening the sustainability of the returns.” P,2

United Nations could have done more to highlight the risks to children’s rights presented by the return process. Other partners expressed appreciation for UNICEF standing up for the human rights-based approach.

The following lessons can be taken from the Internal Review of our Internal Displacement Response in 2018 (IDP Internal Review, 2019):

- There is an increasing risk and perception that UNICEF’s response is not impartial because the response is largely government-led. ‘UNICEF must uphold principles of equity and do no harm, engage the affected population in response prioritization, follow a core set of programming principles, and diversify partnerships.’
- Education has struggled, especially in timeliness, coverage, and access to funding.<sup>66</sup>
- The scaling up of the numbers of community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) monitors and Mobile WASH teams was felt to be positive for the monitoring of interventions.
- Third party contractors proved an efficient vehicle for rapid scale up, though they cannot represent UNICEF effectively
- The numbers of internally displaced persons returns and host community members were hard to confirm at any given time, with the displacement tracking matrix the most reliable tool.
- Both internally displaced persons and host communities must be considered in needs assessments, as most people are not displaced outside their original zones (and are often within 10 km of their place of origin).
- There was little buy-in from local government bodies to co-lead coordination, and frequent turnover of Cluster Coordinators was a challenge (especially in WASH / Child Protection) in all regions, making it harder to find solutions to issues of access and prioritization of sites for responses; Government counterparts complained that the cluster systems did not raise the resources needed and chose not to participate (indicating that GoE sees the clusters as a fund raising tool more than a coordination mechanism)
- GBV integration was not considered in all sector responses and their systems for prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) systems are yet to be properly implemented.
- In the internally displacement response, the lack of consultation with the affected population and the fact that they did not have a role in determining UNICEF’s response prioritization and implementation was acknowledged by all.
- A comprehensive communications and advocacy strategy with key messages is needed.

Building on these lessons, UNICEF developed a UNICEF Internal Displacement Strategy for 2019, costed at US\$143.5 million. The Strategy puts cross-cutting issues front and centre, as they have been relatively neglected in the internal displacement response so far: Protection, GBV, PSEA, mental health and psychosocial response, community-based approaches (including engagement with C4D), and Accountability to Affected populations (IDP Strategy, 2019)<sup>67</sup>. The 2019 Strategy could feed into a longer-term humanitarian strategy for the period 2020-2025 (See also Strategic Issues, Chapter 7).

## 6.7 SCOPING A FUTURE EVALUATION OF UNICEF’S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE<sup>68</sup>

While the general image of UNICEF’s emergency response is positive, more detailed analysis afforded by an evaluation will be required to properly understand shortcomings in the humanitarian response. The lessons listed above point to areas for review. The survey comments also point out challenges: “*Sometimes the emergencies are beyond capability to respond effectively*”; “*we are slow, except on health and disease outbreaks*”; “*we need to review the RRM [rapid response mechanism]*”. “*Recruitment for emergency has been too protracted in some cases*”.

A future evaluation could consider the following points within its scope:

<sup>66</sup> OCHA’s situation report for June 2019 notes similar shortcomings for the combined education response

<sup>67</sup> The Internal Displacement Strategy also includes: 1) Emergency interventions are to be guided by the EHCT Guidelines for Targeting, 2) Sensitization of kebele and woreda officials, 3) inclusion of host communities in line with Do No Harm principles and conflict sensitive programming.

<sup>68</sup> See Annexes 13 and 14

- Before emergency projects are approved, government and NGO partners have to come forward with funding proposals. Some government partners have weak capacity and therefore are slow to assemble a good proposal. This then feeds into slow implementation and use of funds for short-term grants where donors are pressing for funds to be used. In parallel, some informants expressed concern about slowness/inefficiency in UNICEF's grant management process. How much of this is down to delays caused by partners and how much to UNICEF's internal management deserves further investigation.
- UNICEF's response depends on timely recruitment of extra staff for field offices, but this has not always been timely. The process used to be the responsibility of technical sections, but appointments are now made between the field office and the relevant technical section. The capacity of regional offices for emergency response and the speed and quality of appointments could usefully be reviewed.
- There are limits placed on coverage because UNICEF and its partners cannot access communities where the Government does not allow access because of ongoing violence. There are major humanitarian issues in border areas where UNICEF and NGOs have limited reach.
- The operating environment can be very difficult, especially in lowland areas and others affected by conflict, leading to various challenges including limited access because of security or physical obstruction (e.g. roads cut by floods). A future evaluation could review how much impact these factors have compared with other systems deficiencies.
- Poor quality of data gathered from the emergency response was highlighted several times as an issue. Some of this is down to lack of access by UNICEF and its partners and third-party agents for monitoring and to constantly shifting figures for internally displaced persons. There is a general view that insufficient monitoring of the response prevents proper understanding of the quality of the services delivered and of how well the most vulnerable have been targeted.
- According to UNICEF staff feedback, sources of delay to emergency response included:
  - Time needed to verify numbers of affected children and gender disaggregation of data
  - Time taken to enter into new MoUs with other humanitarian organisations
  - UNICEF having to work with the GoE-owned commercial bank, which is slow and does not have branches in some parts of the country (workarounds were found)
- While there has been some progress on the formation of a Rapid Response Mechanism, it does not seem to be fully functional. (UNICEF SP, 2018)<sup>69</sup> ECO is aware that it needs to revisit its emergency HR strategy to make it more predictable and quicker.<sup>70</sup>
- Overall coverage figures are impressive but misleading as, in reality, much lower numbers of beneficiaries receive a comprehensive package of support over a period of time.
- Clusters are not always able to meet Sphere Standards because of limited financial resources and a lack of competent partners.
- The deployment of qualified cluster coordinators depends heavily on the global clusters based in Geneva. It is not always easy to find funding for the coordinator posts.<sup>71</sup>
- In some of the documentation, interviews and survey comments, UNICEF's performance in emergency education and in the coordination of emergency education were rated less highly than other sectors. This needs further investigation.<sup>72</sup>
- Globally UNICEF has been a prime mover and advocate for Accountability to Affected People (AAP) but how far has this been implemented in Ethiopia?
- UNICEF has played a very active role in the recent multi-agency PSEA training effort but effective systems for PSEA at field level seem not to have yet been established.
- Both UNICEF documentation and interviews raised concern about dependency being generated by long-term humanitarian aid. The future evaluation could usefully consider the evidence for and against such assertions.

## 7 STRATEGIC ISSUES

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This section of the report draws on the findings of the evaluation to highlight issues that UNICEF ECO may wish to consider as it prepares for and enters its new country programme period from June 2020.

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<sup>69</sup> 'A mobile, versatile workforce, enabled by agile deployment arrangements, will also help to strengthen implementation capacity where it is most needed, including in sudden-onset emergencies', para 127.

<sup>70</sup> According to ECO's 2019 IDP Strategy, 'Due to the need for rapid scale up of operations, UNICEF has used third party contractors to meet additional HR capacity needs. However, staff recruited under this modality have limitations in terms of a representative role to speak on the behalf of UNICEF...' 'In order to better prepare for the HR needs of the response, a national roster of eligible candidates for local surge needs will be developed.'

<sup>71</sup> There has been some but limited 'double-hatting' of cluster coordinators, where a sector team member acts as cluster coordinator while performing their normal role. For example, the WASH Cluster was supported by a P3 staff member between permanent coordinator deployments.

<sup>72</sup> For education, the Government has insisted that emergency coordination should sit within the Ministry. This may have influenced cluster performance.

UNICEF ECO is well advanced in its planning for 2020-2025 and has been reviewing and preparing the new programme for most of 2019. These observations are therefore offered as a contribution to the finalization of the CPD, and especially to the further strategy development that UNICEF will, in our view, need to undertake during the first half of 2020 to make the new CPD a success.

## 7.1 OPERATING CONTEXT FOR UNICEF IN ETHIOPIA

Stakeholders remarked on the Government's commitment to improving public services and, with the country's rapid economic growth, investment in social sectors has increased significantly. The formation of a new Government in April 2018 under Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has brought a new sense of optimism and openness to the country and a series of new laws and policies that, if implemented, have the potential to enhance fulfilment of children and women's rights.

The high rates of poverty, coupled with relatively strong governance, the government's readiness to recognize weaknesses and to welcome international support to national development efforts, mean that Ethiopia remains an attractive destination for foreign official development assistance (ODA). At the same time, total international development aid for Ethiopia is declining and will fall further over the new plan period,<sup>73</sup> as will the level of UNICEF's Regular Resources for Ethiopia.<sup>74</sup> Donors are reportedly becoming more demanding: *'There is a paradigm shift now. Donors do not want to continue funding without impact'* (GoE interview). Trends in humanitarian funding are uncertain but have been below the levels required to meet total humanitarian need in all the years under evaluation (as discussed in Section 6).

While the arrival of a new administration is seen to be positive overall, there has also been disruption to 'business as usual', with political instability, disturbance to the functioning of local government, and increased communal violence and displacement. Further trouble may accompany the elections in 2020.<sup>75</sup> Parts of the country remain highly insecure, and there are many locations that UNICEF cannot access. There has been mass internal displacement and Ethiopia is surrounded by fragile states from which a significant new influx of refugees has taken place since 2016, taking the total at its peak to more than 900,000, now reduced to just over 700,000.<sup>76</sup> More frequent droughts and extreme rainfall events are affecting displacement and also agricultural yields, with chronic food insecurity. The chronic levels of vulnerability across the country mean that individuals and communities have limited coping mechanisms and are easily impacted by shocks.

The upsurge of violence and forced displacement within and into the country during the current plan period is a threat to the improvement of children's lives, especially in the affected areas. Meanwhile, increasingly frequent droughts and floods place great strain on livelihoods, social cohesion, and even the traditional way of life in lowland regions.

Achievement of the SDGs will require Ethiopia to increase its fiscal commitments. According to UNICEF research, this is achievable: "although this commitment implies a costing that is three times the size of the Government's current commitment, this is affordable given the decade-plus time horizon [to achieve the SDGs]". (ECO Policy Brief, 2018)p7. At the same time, the Government is reportedly not meeting some of its commitments to increase funding to essential services,<sup>77</sup> and survey respondents gave a moderately strong endorsement (70 per cent agreement) to the opinion statement: 'Government finances will not be able to replace the declining funding from donors'.

In light of these factors, steady and sustained progress towards the realization of children's rights and reduction of inequities as Ethiopia moves towards middle-income status cannot be taken for granted, especially with the rapid population growth expected.<sup>78</sup> UNICEF's CPD should avoid over-optimistic assumptions about UNICEF's ability to support the completion of 'unfinished business' and to implement 'exit strategies' that assume Ethiopia will have full capacity to assure the fulfilment of children's rights.

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<sup>73</sup> ODA fell from 4.7 per cent of GDP in 2009, to 2.5 per cent in 2019 (although GDP also increased).

<sup>74</sup> ECO predicts that levels of Other Regular Resources will be maintained

<sup>75</sup> Perhaps to be held on 20 May.

<sup>76</sup> 703,957 according to <https://im.unhcr.org/eth/> on 18 October 2019. UNHCR Ethiopia has undertaken a series of verification exercises on refugee numbers. Many Eritreans returning home was one reason for reduced numbers.

<sup>77</sup> For example, to increase its contribution to the Productive Safety Net Programme in line with commitments.

<sup>78</sup> By 2050, Ethiopia will have 58 million children under 18 years: <https://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/children-ethiopia>.

For UNICEF, Ethiopia is a country of strong interest as its country programme is one of the ten largest in the world and the second largest in Africa. It is therefore in the UNICEF ‘spotlight’ and needs to demonstrate impact commensurate with the major funding inputs it receives.

## 7.2 CHALLENGES WITH NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

UNICEF is mandated to support national implementation and – if fully committed and engaged with national implementation – the Government is its primary means of implementation of the CP. However, in interviews and the survey, UNICEF staff expressed a series of concerns about how well national implementation is working in practice, as summarized in Table 3:

**Table 3 – Perceived weaknesses in national implementation**

Weakness	Description
Poor accountability	There are significant worries about the lack of accountability of government counterparts for the use of UNICEF funds. Very significant funds are channelled to GoE departments but there is inadequate follow-up, reporting and testing of results. <i>“there is very limited reporting expected from partners, which does not create a culture of documentation and accountability for results”</i> (survey). This is a risk to both outcomes for children and UNICEF’s reputation for financial probity. The organization might appear not to be taking value for money seriously by being too ‘soft’ on its government partners.
Weak monitoring	Staff see the UNICEF network as being spread too thinly to be able to monitor programme results properly (geographically and in terms of numbers of activities). Some also raised concerns about UNICEF’s internal management systems for funding to GoE partners, e.g. <i>“Grants are poorly managed”</i> (survey)
High turnover	Government officials are regularly reassigned to new locations, which means that induction and training have to be repeated. <i>‘The current government rotation does not facilitate sustained investments’</i> (survey). There was 78 per cent agreement with the survey opinion statement ‘Rapid turnover of government counterparts reduces the effectiveness of UNICEF support’.
Financial commitment	Regional governments may not allocate resources to the agreed objectives but use them for other activities.
Low motivation	Officials are often insufficiently motivated to implement policy that has been agreed at national level and, <i>“In some cases, UNICEF ends up doing the work of the regional government instead of pushing them to do it themselves”</i> (survey).

Source: Interviews, online survey, MTR and SMR documentation

There is a concern that UNICEF is paying more attention to using funds and to reaching as many people as possible than to the quality of services delivered. Similarly, in emergency response, there is a sense that reaching target numbers takes precedence. UNICEF wants to be as effective as possible at helping the Government to improve the quality of services delivered but there is pressure to achieve the right ‘burn rate’ (survey) to use up the funds in time, given the difficulty the Government has in using and accounting for UNICEF funds. For their part, government counterparts complain that the turnaround time for HACT is just too short.

UNICEF needs to recognize and mitigate the challenges listed above in its next CPD. (See Recommendations, Section 10).

## 7.3 NARROWING THE PROGRAMME FOCUS

In preparation for Phase 2 of this evaluation, the Country Representative posed an additional question to be added to the evaluation Terms of Reference:

- *“How well has the Country Programme done in terms of focusing on a few key strategic results for children in Ethiopia, and how could we do better?”*

Given all the sources of evidence for the evaluation, including primarily UNICEF’s own self-assessment, the overall answer to the question is ‘Not well’. UNICEF has supported its partners to achieve significant results during the current country programme period, as documented in the Section 7 findings above. However, if the breadth of activity in sector and geographic terms was considered appropriate in 2016, the current country programme is now considered by ECO and its partners to be too broad and fragmented. The evaluation supports this assessment. UNICEF and all types of partners agree that UNICEF needs to pursue fewer activities in each sector and, possibly, a narrower geographic spread. *‘UNICEF needs to focus because funds are limited’* (GoE interview). UNICEF has already made progress in reducing the very large number of annual workplans and it should go further. This should reduce transaction costs for UNICEF

and its partners. While discussions are not yet concluded, the ECO is working to narrow down to a set of ‘flagship’ interventions.<sup>79</sup>

While UNICEF is seeking to rationalize, government expectations for UNICEF support are increasing. Several new national policies, strategies, road maps etc. have been agreed in the past 12-18 months, several of them developed with UNICEF support. These are already moving, or will soon move, into an implementation phase that will demand extra UNICEF financial support. This makes it all the most important for UNICEF to explain its resource allocation decisions when negotiating the country programme with the Government.

#### 7.4 REINFORCING A RESULTS FOCUS

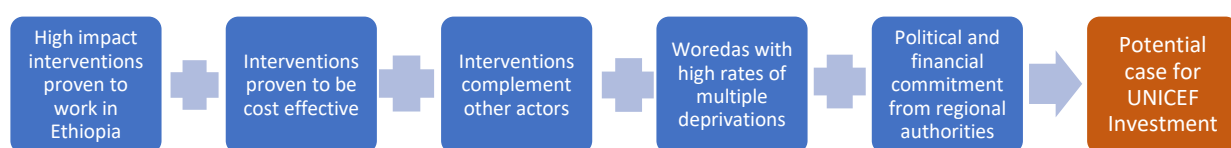
Inefficiencies in national implementation are one of the driving forces behind UNICEF staff’s desire to put a greater focus on the results in the next country programme.<sup>80</sup> This theme appears in the several preparatory exercises for the new country programme (MTR, SMR, PSNs). The 2019 Strategic Moment of Reflection (SMR) concluded that “there is a need for greater and more effective investments in order to achieve child-related SDGs...” because “88% of the country’s children remained deprived in at least three of six fundamental development dimensions”. (SMR, 2019) These changes cannot be addressed “unless UNICEF adjusts its way of working including through increased prioritisation as well as realising major gains in effectiveness and results orientation.” (p1) Survey comments indicate where the priorities may lie: ‘the greatest probability of UNICEF resources making an impact’ and ‘financial resources are directed to initiatives proven to work and where costs and benefits are known’.

#### 7.5 MOVING FROM FUNDING DECISIONS TO INVESTMENT DECISIONS

In making investment decisions for the next five years, ECO needs to clarify the criteria by which the investment decisions are to be made. Some of the possible criteria are illustrated below in Figure xx. A programme might qualify for UNICEF investment if it includes:

- Interventions proven to work in Ethiopia
- Interventions proven to be cost effective
- Interventions that complement to other actors
- Interventions targeted to woredas with high rates of inequity and multiple deprivations
- Interventions enjoying political and financial commitment from the regional authorities.

**Figure 4 – Potential Investment criteria**



Source: Econometría S.A.

If UNICEF can choose to invest in regions demonstrably committed to change, then it can decide to work with regions that are ready to co-fund the programmes that UNICEF is investing in. The investment approach provides a rationale that has the funding preferences of Government as only one of several criteria.

While the bulk of investment should go to high-impact interventions, other investments are required to ensure that the following functions are well supported, given their established value to the country programme: research, innovation, advocacy, coordination, convening and networking. In particular, functions that are not so well developed also require significant resources, especially strategy development, performance monitoring, and cross-sectoral programming. However, core to UNICEF these functions may be, each needs the appropriate logic and case for investment.

<sup>79</sup> The ongoing Perception Study commissioned by ECO may also bring further clarity on future programme focus.

<sup>80</sup> In our discussions with UNICEF, results focus appears to carry two meanings: 1) ensuring greater results are achieved; and 2) greater capacity to measure whether results are achieved.

ECO also needs to bear in mind how donors view the value for money UNICEF is seen to provide. We received some feedback that donors have concerns about UNICEF’s cost base, though without explanatory detail.<sup>81</sup> According to the 2018 MTR, “donors are becoming increasingly reluctant to fund operational and staff costs”.<sup>82</sup>

## 7.6 DATA MANAGEMENT

A series of challenges around data collection and management were noted:

- The Government says that it targets its resources by ‘equity’, but this does not mean targeting by vulnerability, in part because this is not possible without greater data granularity.
- Government data on the status of children and women are not reliable. Different systems may generate different results for the same indicator. In turn, poor-quality data are a major challenge for programme planning and accountability. Gender- and age-disaggregated data are not always available
- UNICEF is providing a very important function through its research studies that provide extra data through high-quality independent studies. At the same time, UNICEF does not want to create parallel sets of data, at least not for public use, and uses official government statistics for planning purposes and resource allocation. UNICEF is also investing in the development of government management information systems (MIS).
- SPESI recognizes that more use could be made of the data that are gathered. *“ECO has excellent data, but are we using it effectively?” (survey)*. This indicates a need for more knowledge management to match the generation of evidence.

UNICEF must be able to monitor progress better as a way to improve accountability and to learn which improvement processes increase efficiency and effectiveness and which do not. This points to a greater proportion of resources in the new CP going to distillation of learning and good practice, monitoring and independent research and evaluation, compared with the current CP.

## 7.7 CHANGE STRATEGIES REQUIRING DEVELOPMENT

The current CPD includes a set of eight Change Strategies. Survey respondents did not rate the effectiveness of any of these strategies very highly, but considered advocacy and technical assistance/capacity development to have been effective, and child and youth participation borderline effective/ineffective. (See Annex 15 on survey results for further details). In preparing the next CPD, most of UNICEF’s effort so far has gone to into six sector-based Programme Strategy Notes (PSNs) for 2020-2025. Change Strategies for the new CPD are assumed in the PSNs but have yet to be developed. The success of the new country programme depends on development of the strategies set out in Table 4 below. Each one corresponds to a challenge or concern identified by the evaluation.

**Table 4 – Change strategies required for the new country programme**

STRATEGY REQUIRED	CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED
<b>Systems strengthening / Capacity development</b>	<p>Every aspect of the country programme includes development of the capacity of national counterparts, mostly in government. UNICEF’s success is entirely dependent on the success of its investments in strengthening institutions and the capacity of their staff. The documents reviewed, interviews and survey responses all point to perceived shortcomings in approaches to capacity development. Back in 2014, the MTR noted that a “more strategic approach to capacity building” had been identified as a focus area. In the online survey there was moderate agreement (58 per cent) with the statement ‘Strategies for building national capacities are too simplistic’. UNICEF’s approach to capacity development was a persistent concern in survey comments: <i>[We need to] ‘Learn and use professional approaches rather than endless ineffective workshops’; ‘We need to move away from individual training and target institution capacity’; ‘All the technical assistance we put into the government is not sustainable’; ‘We need to identify and document and then design an effective capacity building approach’. ‘Traditional approaches to training do not work.’ (interview)</i>. The 2019 SMR noted that, “The challenge for UNICEF is how to ensure that systems strengthening activities are reducing child mortality and morbidity” (p7).</p> <p>UNICEF employs a range of capacity development initiatives: training, workshops, exchanges, provision of supplies, mentoring etc. but does not seem to employ evidence-based models for: 1) how systems strengthening increases the capacity of partners; and 2) how that capacity translates into impact, for example, reduced child mortality and morbidity. Without a conceptual and evidence-based foundation and means of measuring progress, UNICEF cannot judge the value of its investments in system strengthening. ECO does not distinguish between its own performance in contributing to change and</p>

<sup>81</sup> One donor reported that 8 per cent overhead is too high when UNICEF is acting as a pass-through mechanism for funding, rather than as project implementer (which may be a fair objection).

<sup>82</sup> MTR 2018, p5

STRATEGY REQUIRED	CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED																		
	<p>the end results achieved. This is an important weakness at the core of the country programme.<sup>83,84</sup> UNICEF needs to collect performance data systematically to demonstrate which parts of its systems development activities are effective. See <i>Annex 11 for further discussion</i>.</p>																		
<p><b>Multi-sector outcomes</b></p>	<p>Both internal and external commentators are dissatisfied with the way that UNICEF, and also the Government, work in sector silos. A key theme of the online survey is the need for a multi-sector approach and a frustration that this is only happening to a limited extent. <i>'Multi-sector projects could be comparative advantage for UNICEF, but it is not', 'even the adolescent program, stunting and IECD, which by nature require multi-sectorality, are implemented vertically'</i> (survey). <i>'Multisectoral response is critical: we have to have all sectors converging at interdisciplinary and geographic level'</i> (interview).</p> <p>The June 2019 SMR observed that; "Generally, there are nascent multi-sectoral nutrition approaches, but more integration between health, WASH and nutrition responsible line ministries is necessary, as is strengthening accountabilities between them" (p.6). The SMR comment highlights the importance of integration being achieved within the services offered by government ministries, not just by UNICEF. <i>'Ministers are expected to coordinate; they should know what each other are doing'</i>. (GoE interview). In nutrition, "the current government structure lacks a mechanism to hold each member sector accountable to deliver on its commitment: (PSN Nutrition, 2019), in part because no single office in government is responsible for doing so.</p> <p>There are several possible dimensions to the multisector approach, as illustrated below. There is a tendency to muddle these dimensions / purposes together but in practice each requires a separate strategy, or strategies might be combined. ECO needs to decide what it aims to achieve through multi-sector approaches and then determine which of the following are most appropriate:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="483 981 1472 1741"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="483 981 667 1024">Purpose/Focus</th> <th data-bbox="675 981 1472 1024">Description/example</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="483 1026 667 1104"><i>Multi-sector outcome</i></td> <td data-bbox="675 1026 1472 1104">Multi-sector initiatives to achieve an outcome – improved nutrition, ECD, IYCF, adolescent development – that cannot be achieved by one sector alone.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="483 1107 667 1185"><i>Geographical convergence</i></td> <td data-bbox="675 1107 1472 1185">Integrated services in a place, a school, a community, referred to as 'convergence', with potential for both greater efficiency and greater effectiveness.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="483 1188 667 1292"><i>Cash-based assistance</i></td> <td data-bbox="675 1188 1472 1292">Providing beneficiaries with multi-purpose cash transfers empowers the people affected to make choices about their greatest needs, as long as the relevant services are available.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="483 1295 667 1400"><i>Institution</i></td> <td data-bbox="675 1295 1472 1400">Where institutional development requires a common approach to developing government departments / bureau / systems from various sectors, and/or various organizations.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="483 1403 667 1481"><i>Delivery by focal persons</i></td> <td data-bbox="675 1403 1472 1481">Using for example, the health extension system in Ethiopia as a delivery platform for multiple sectors; health, nutrition, C4D, child protection etc.</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="483 1483 667 1588"><i>Delivery to persons</i></td> <td data-bbox="675 1483 1472 1588">Whereby case management draws together various service inputs for one or more groups of vulnerable people for, for example, persons with disabilities not well served by the PSNP)<sup>85</sup></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="483 1591 667 1642"><i>Messaging</i></td> <td data-bbox="675 1591 1472 1642">A common set of behaviour change messages and a shared means of delivery</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="483 1645 667 1741"><i>Efficiency</i></td> <td data-bbox="675 1645 1472 1741">Multi-sector approaches may be considered more efficient if a smaller number of staff can monitor several programmes at once, so reducing the burden on the field network.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>UNICEF country offices are often tempted to put the cross-sector approach into the 'too difficult' category because the power, accountability and incentive structures within UNICEF work against the inter-sector approach.</p> <p>UNICEF Ethiopia needs a strategy for realizing the <i>outcomes for children that can only be achieved through a multi-sector strategy</i>. This is not an optional add-on or secondary to the sector-based strategies. For a multi-sector approach to succeed, ECO will require new structural solutions with accountability, revised reporting lines, and virtual (or some form of matrix) teams. The current focal point system for multisector integration does not and cannot work. <i>Formal accountability needs to be assigned at senior adviser/Representative/Deputy Representative level</i> for the achievement of cross-sector outcomes. If they are not, the current frustrations and poor cross-sector results are likely to persist. (See <i>Annex 12 for further details</i>)</p>	Purpose/Focus	Description/example	<i>Multi-sector outcome</i>	Multi-sector initiatives to achieve an outcome – improved nutrition, ECD, IYCF, adolescent development – that cannot be achieved by one sector alone.	<i>Geographical convergence</i>	Integrated services in a place, a school, a community, referred to as 'convergence', with potential for both greater efficiency and greater effectiveness.	<i>Cash-based assistance</i>	Providing beneficiaries with multi-purpose cash transfers empowers the people affected to make choices about their greatest needs, as long as the relevant services are available.	<i>Institution</i>	Where institutional development requires a common approach to developing government departments / bureau / systems from various sectors, and/or various organizations.	<i>Delivery by focal persons</i>	Using for example, the health extension system in Ethiopia as a delivery platform for multiple sectors; health, nutrition, C4D, child protection etc.	<i>Delivery to persons</i>	Whereby case management draws together various service inputs for one or more groups of vulnerable people for, for example, persons with disabilities not well served by the PSNP) <sup>85</sup>	<i>Messaging</i>	A common set of behaviour change messages and a shared means of delivery	<i>Efficiency</i>	Multi-sector approaches may be considered more efficient if a smaller number of staff can monitor several programmes at once, so reducing the burden on the field network.
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<p><b>Advocating for children's rights</b></p>	<p>All categories of UNICEF ECO stakeholders interviewed want to see UNICEF speaking out more clearly about children's rights. UNICEF's ability to advocate comes directly from its ability to generate high-quality analysis. (ECO has an advocacy plan that is being updated to reduce the target areas.)</p> <p>On advocacy, <i>'we could do much better, we need to be more bold'</i> (survey). While it is acknowledged</p>																		

<sup>83</sup> Key informants were not able to point to another donor or agency in Ethiopia with a more advanced approach to capacity development from which UNICEF could learn

<sup>84</sup> UNICEF seems not to be the only United Nations agency with an underdeveloped approach to capacity development. For example: "The evaluation concluded that WFP is supporting capacity development processes in a wide range of geographic and thematic contexts despite limited corporate support, resources, guidance and tools. Continuing 'business as usual' given the Agenda 2030 and new Strategic Plan commitments will lead to considerable reputational risk", Evaluation Brief, Evaluation of WFP's Policy on Capacity Development, 2017, p2

<sup>85</sup> "By analysing these processes and systems, social service actors such as UNICEF should be able to begin coordinating these systems to form the basis of an integrated case management programme: 2018 Briefing Note: Improving integrated service delivery for people with disabilities and for homeless people in Addis Ababa. p.4.

STRATEGY REQUIRED	CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED
	<p>that the Government is very sensitive to criticism, bringing about change in the country relies on ordinary citizens having greater understanding of the challenges and levels of deprivation faced by children. Government counterparts also want to see UNICEF explaining the current situation of women and children in the country and advocating for greater action via the media and otherwise.</p>
<p><b>Resilience/ Risk reduction/ Humanitarian-development nexus</b></p>	<p>The 'Generation El-Nino' report included recommendations for "the development of a comprehensive strategy for building children's resilience across sectors and strengthening institutional and strategic foundations for child-sensitive disaster risk management". ECO has a well-developed approach to resilience that can be built on to create a humanitarian-development nexus strategy for Ethiopia.</p> <p>UNICEF needs a resilience strategy that combines long-term risk reduction and short-term emergency response capacity development. UNICEF has already invested in early warning systems, especially for nutrition, and in the development of Regional Emergency Preparedness and Response Plans (EPRPs), which would form part of the strategy. Long-term and short-term cash-based assistance needs to be combined in an emergency response approach to cash-based assistance.<sup>86</sup> ECO should explicitly address the risk that long-term humanitarian aid can increase dependency and reduce resilience.<sup>87</sup> Once agreed, UNICEF's network of field offices can tailor the strategy to the differing needs of the eight regions. (See Annex 13 for further details)</p>
<p><b>Social and behaviour change, including communication for development (C4D)</b></p>	<p>UNICEF has enjoyed success in building awareness on key issues on for example, child marriage and on menstrual hygiene, <i>'building up national awareness and movement from scratch has been amazing'</i> (survey). Key informants expressed concern that communication for behaviour change needs greater and wider application across sectors. Commenting on the draft ECO PSNs, ESARO advisors noted, 'the translation of [C4D] into strategies with clear results and ways to measure progress remains sub-optimum and requires additional work.'<sup>88</sup> (The PSNs have been updated since).</p> <p>Some survey comments reflect the same concern: <i>"I don't feel that UNICEF is influencing in terms of communication"; "we need to rethink our approach in this area"; [C4D] "needs a complete overhaul and new partners"; "it [needs] more joint C4D (across sectors) and measurement of results in social norms change". C4D 'requires a multisectoral integration of messages to maximize the impact of our efforts.'</i> (interview).</p>
<p><b>Civil society development</b></p>	<p>Over the past decade, the role of CSOs has declined in the country in response to government restrictions imposed on the sector. <i>'The CSO sector has been cut to the bone'</i> (interview). New legislation offers the possibility of reversing this decline.</p> <p>All categories of key informants expressed surprise that UNICEF is not doing more to promote and build the capacity of CSOs, and they expect UNICEF to do more. Some survey comments implied that investing in CSOs is a diversion from the main path of supporting the development of government capacity. However, national development is more than government development and, globally, UNICEF has a strong track record of supporting civil society as a sector in its own right to play important roles in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• monitoring the realization of children's rights, including adherence to the CRC;</li> <li>• holding governments and UNICEF to account;</li> <li>• providing feedback from community level;</li> </ul> <p>providing additional capacity in remote areas, and, when rapid emergency response is required, that is beyond government capacity.</p> <p>UNICEF ECO needs a targeted strategy for engagement with civil society, starting with mapping of current and potential partners and their capacities.</p>
<p><b>Social accountability</b></p>	<p>The evaluation found a widely held concern that UNICEF is not sufficiently consulting women, adolescents and children in planning or in feedback on the effectiveness of programmes. Consultation with children is limited and may even be resisted by local authorities. Participation as a change strategy was poorly rated by survey respondents: <i>'There is no active participation of beneficiaries in our programmes. We currently lack feedback mechanisms'</i>, is a representative survey comment.</p> <p>Evaluation focus groups at village level confirmed that officials had never asked participants' opinion. However, there is also good practice to build on: <i>'Children take over' was the best example of how we can coordinate and work with children'</i> (survey).</p>
<p><b>Emergency response</b></p>	<p>Systems strengthening of line ministries to respond to emergencies is at the heart of UNICEF's approach. A cross sector approach would help to see where the gaps in response capacity lie. Annual EPRPs are not an adequate basis for UNICEF's strategic approach to emergency capacity development. UNICEF has itself identified the need for GoE to achieve cross-sectoral integration, adapted service models for remote populations, integrated commodity supply chains, flexible staff deployment and surge budgets, and emergency preparedness planning. In addition to supporting GoE, UNICEF may need to reorganize its own human resource strategy to be able to respond to emergencies more quickly. (See also Annex 14 on Resilience)</p>
<p><b>Gender mainstreaming</b></p>	<p>UNICEF's focus on gender in the current country programme focuses mainly on support for multi-</p>

<sup>86</sup> The issue of coordination between the PSNP and the cash-based humanitarian response was raised by informants. There is scope for improved coordination, given that both initiatives disburse relief assistance, and that the PSNP's contingency budget is explicitly designed to scale up assistance in the context of a disaster.

<sup>87</sup> For example: "As regards longer-term resilience and how this will inter-play with children's well-being, humanitarian aid is not helping people to build safer and more productive lives. This is a problem that is recognised in the academic literature and was reflected by key informants in this research, who suggested that repeated provision of aid was creating dependency, with direct implications in terms of reducing prospects for resilience." Generation El Niño: Long-Term Impacts on Children's Well-being, Oxford Policy Management and the Horn Economic and Social Policy Institute, 2018, p18

<sup>88</sup> Joint Trip Report, Ethiopia Country Office, SMR 6-7 June 2019, p.7

STRATEGY REQUIRED	CHALLENGE TO BE ADDRESSED
	<p>sectoral programming for in-school adolescent girls to the exclusion of non-adolescent girls, boys of all ages and out-of-school adolescents. Efforts to reach adolescent girls have converged mainly in primary schools, through girls' clubs that deliver health, nutrition, WASH, referrals to justice services, educational reinforcement and life skills with relative success. UNICEF's strategy with adolescent girls also aims to reach the most excluded girls in rural pastoralist and displaced communities. School-based programming with adolescent girls has resulted in increased knowledge around menstruation, increases in girls' access to justice services and increased coverage of nutritional interventions for those who have access to functioning clubs. ECO's interventions for adolescent girls also employ an ecological approach that involves communities in recognizing and denouncing the harms inherent in some long-standing cultural norms for girls, such as child marriage and FGM. However, not all of these interventions encourage the transformation of gender norms identified as drivers of harmful traditional practices nor do they all address the drivers of early marriage. In fact, only direct work on FGM and child marriage through the joint and global programmes provides a truly gender transformative approach in their design and execution. Concentration on adolescent girls in primary schools has overshadowed the need to support girls' ascent into secondary school and to address overall low primary completion rates for both girls and boys now that gender parity in enrolment is close at hand. UNICEF also supports few interventions for the more than 1.6 million adolescent girls who are out of school. The missed opportunity to support gender transformational interventions is also evident in UNICEF's addressing of menstrual health and hygiene through the WASH sector, rather than as a purely health topic.</p> <p>Taking a gender-transformative, rather than solely gender-sensitive or gender-responsive, approach necessitates i) the inclusion of adolescent boys (as has been begun through the creation of boys' and mixed gender clubs); ii) the de-stigmatization and "de-invisibilization" of menstruation; iii) the participation of adolescents in the design and evaluation of services and outcomes to ensure that transformation takes place; and iv) address the roots of the harmful cultural practices that disadvantage adolescent girls.</p>
<b>Private sector</b>	<p>In Ethiopia, UNICEF's engagement with the private sector has been limited up to this point, with the exception of the WASH sector.<sup>89</sup> The Government is strongly encouraging foreign investment by international companies, but it is not clear that the operating environment is sufficiently favourable for investment to be maintained or increased. They face various challenges in operating in Ethiopia, with limits on foreign currency movement being the most obvious.</p> <p>Stakeholders do not consider corporate social responsibility to be sufficiently advanced in Ethiopia for the private sector to make significant financial contributions to social causes. However, the greatest potential for UNICEF engagement with the private sector may lie in ensuring that the private sector is providing essential goods and services to disadvantaged communities, for example fresh food, or improved toilets. Using its convening power, UNICEF could map out the main private sector actors, initiate a child-centred public-private sector dialogue on advancing children's rights (year 1), and develop a programme of practical steps companies could take (years 2 and following).</p>
<b>Peacebuilding</b>	<p>There is no peacebuilding strategy associated with the current CPD.<sup>90</sup> From 2012-2016, ECO was part of a global Dutch-funded Peacebuilding Education and Advocacy programme (PBEA). A 2016 evaluation found that little progress had been made and that, while peacebuilding featured in the MoE's five-year Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP V), "ECO field officers are unclear how best to take this forward beyond June 2016". At that time, ECO was contemplating the development of a cross-sectoral UNICEF ECO strategic note on conflict prevention and response, but this was not produced. The draft PSN for education for 2020-2025 states that "UNICEF seeks to integrate conflict prevention and mitigation within the education system..., based on the programme's substantive prior experience in peace-building approaches" but this has so far not been developed further in the Education PSN or elsewhere.<sup>91</sup></p>

Source: Econometría S.A.

## 7.8 MAKING UNICEF'S FIELD OFFICE NETWORK FIT FOR PURPOSE

UNICEF has field offices in all eight regions of the country. These are seen both internally and externally as a strong asset. It is likely that the Government will implement further regional decentralization, though to what extent and at what pace are unclear given current political uncertainties. The regions are distinct and have their own specific natures and needs. Building the skills, capacity and performance of these offices should be a priority for UNICEF ECO management so they can strengthen regional partners. There are concerns that the field offices do not always consistently ensure the quality of the UNICEF programme. In her February 2019 letter to the country Representative, the UNICEF Regional Director requested the Representative to pay particular attention to continuing to ensure that field offices were 'fit for purpose'.

<sup>89</sup> Examples of private sector engagement include: 1) the WASH sector, in contracting service providers for water supply and the on-going UNICEF-LIXIL Ethiopia partnership on access to safe sanitation, 2) SPESI has engaged local and international consultants and research institutes for research and impact evaluations.

<sup>90</sup> The CPD has one mention of "build community capacity for conflict-sensitive preparedness and response" under disaster risk reduction (p.7).

<sup>91</sup> UNICEF could consider partnering with UNDP, which is anticipating an expansion of its peacebuilding work with the Ministry of Peace, supported by a Swiss government-supported senior peace and development advisor.

There are differences of view and interpretation of the respective roles and responsibilities between the CO and the field offices, though perhaps no more than is typical for centre-satellite dynamics, with the centre wanting to retain control and field offices wanting greater autonomy.

During the current CP period, there has been a degree of decentralization of functions to field offices:

- Funding is now allocated by regions according to the annual work plans and is transferred directly to the regions.
- Field offices have more control over staff appointments than before.
- Field offices have been consulted over the preparation of the new CP, which did not happen for the current CP

Survey comments and interviews revealed concerns that decision-making is overcentralized in ECO and is not sufficiently transparent. At the same time, ECO management has greatly increased field office participation in the planning of the new country programme.

The UNICEF Ethiopia Accountability Framework includes accountabilities<sup>92</sup> for field offices. An examination of centre-periphery accountabilities was not part of Phase 1 of the evaluation when the evaluation team visited three regions, so our analysis of the respective roles of country versus field offices is necessarily under-developed. However, a few observations can be drawn from Phase 1 and 2 data collection.

- Region-based planning is increasingly important for responding to the specific needs of each region and for increasing the accountability of regional government officials for effective utilization of UNICEF funding. Regional strategy notes were first developed in 2018, based on the country office programme strategy notes. We heard feedback that regional plans are not always fully adapted to the specific regional context. Field offices may require further support, given that ensuring coherence with the UNICEF CP, sectoral priorities, cross-cutting priorities, national priorities and ‘Regional government’s Growth and Transformation Plan targets’ is a demanding task.
- Field offices are overburdened in their monitoring roles, which a narrower programme scope should ease.
- Demand for technical assistance at regional level is growing

Opinion is divided within ECO about whether UNICEF is striking the right balance of resources between the centre and the regions. In response to the survey statement ‘UNICEF’s resources are too concentrated in Addis Ababa, not enough in the field’, there was 45 per cent agreement, almost exactly the proportion of UNICEF Ethiopia staff working in the regions (53 per cent staff in Addis, 47 per cent in the field).

Making sure field offices are fit for purpose may require greater investment in certain functions in the regions – for example social policy analysis and behaviour change communication – and relocation of some of the relevant expertise to field offices. In any event, ongoing communication between federal and regional levels, and sharing of experience between regions is important. *“Frequent regional federal strategic meetings are needed to avoid delays in resolving hindrances to implementation.” (survey)*

## Partnerships

UNICEF has multiple partnerships across government, NGOs and with donors. UNICEF is seen to play a very constructive role convening and coordination, providing intellectual input, and taking a balanced approach. UNICEF has intelligently joined the management of pooled funds by making modest contributions, relative to bilateral donors, which has gained it influence through having a seat at the table.<sup>93</sup> For the United Nations, Ethiopia is a ‘One UN’ country. Work is underway to develop the United Nations Common Country Assessment (CCA) and the new United Nations Common Sustainability Development Framework (UNCSDF), the successor to the UNDAF planning framework. UNICEF is an active

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<sup>92</sup> As set out in UNICEF Ethiopia Country Office Accountability Framework, 21 February 2017. In summary, UNICEF Field Offices are responsible for the following results: Ensuring regional programmes are consistent with UNICEF CP, sectoral priorities, cross cutting priorities, but are also aligned with national priorities and ‘Regional government’s Growth and Transformation Plan targets’; Ensuring systematic technical support; Ensuring work plans are agreed and implemented, with KPIs being met; Timely reporting and feedback on field level delivery, including mid-year and end year reviews, and human interest stories; Timely disbursements of funds; Effective supply management; Timely humanitarian response and reporting; Facilitation of donor missions.

<sup>93</sup> These pooled funds mechanisms that include ‘Education cannot Wait’; the PSNP; and the Sustainable Development Goals Performance fund (SDGPF) managed by FMOH.

participant in many of the associated subgroups. UNICEF is held in high regard as a member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the United Nations Humanitarian Country Team (UNHCT).<sup>94</sup> Future partnership considerations include:

- How UNICEF works closely with other United Nations agencies on areas that require a joint United Nations position and advocacy to government, including in support of the United Nations Resident Coordinator. Common areas may include: Ethiopia’s adherence to human rights treaties, increasing national budget allocations to social sectors, peacebuilding, and joint approaches to systems strengthening. (UNDP CPE, 2019)p43<sup>95</sup>
- On human rights, UNICEF needs to continue to work with UNFPA, UN Women and other rights-based United Nations and non-United Nations organizations, but may also consider strengthening partnerships with the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the Ethiopian Institution of the Ombudsman, and with human rights CSOs as they emerge.
- Both internal and external informants are keen to see UNICEF strengthening its partnership with the World Bank. The World Bank Ethiopia team is ready to work with UNICEF at a strategic level especially on fiscal analysis and advocacy for greater funding in support of children’s rights.

### **Maintaining networks of frontline workers**

Over the past ten years plus, the Government succeeded in building extension networks into rural and hard-to-reach areas of the country. The success of national programmes for social protection and health and nutrition are heavily dependent on successful implementation of such extension work. The network of health extension workers is vital to ensuring “that all 13 million children under five years old in Ethiopia receive high impact child health interventions to reduce morbidity and mortality rates fragile”. (Concept Note Gates, 2019) All parties agree that there are not enough health extension workers to meet the needs of the communities where health clinics and posts are located, and there are far too few social workers.<sup>96</sup> These networks of front line workers are fragile and the workers need to be given the skills, support and motivation to be successful in, and to stay in, their roles. Studies have found that health extension workers are overburdened with many demands from many quarters. (COAR, 2018)p17 UNICEF needs to understand their experience fully, and how their work can be made as tenable and sustainable as possible.

UNICEF has used employment agencies to hire Technical Assistants (TA’s) at field level. The TAs mentor front line health and health extension workers and undertake monitoring. The TAs provide important additional capacity, but their role may not be sustainable as currently they depend on external funding and many of the TAs are employed using humanitarian funds.<sup>97</sup> UNICEF and its government partners need a strategy for both expanding and sustaining the field-based networks.

## **8 EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED**

The following conclusions are based on the evaluation findings and the strategic issues identified in Sections 4-7 above. As stated in Section 3.5 Limitations, the evaluation’s focus is on selected outputs, which means that conclusions cannot be comprehensive across all outcomes.

### **8.1 SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE BUT INDICATORS FOR CHILDREN REMAIN POOR**

Ethiopia has made significant improvements in key indicators related to child well-being over the past decade. For example, rates of child mortality, stunting, and child marriage have all declined. Government spending on social sectors has increased by 40 per cent in the past five years. However, many of the key indicators for children are still very poor and the rate of improvement has slowed or, in the case of neonatal mortality, stopped. There are also significant equity gaps between regions that are not closing significantly, based on disparities in wealth, levels of education, and the rural-urban divide, as UNICEF’s own research has shown. (State of Equity, 2018).

### **8.2 UNICEF IS WELL-POSITIONED IN ETHIOPIA**

*A strong foundation:* In Ethiopia, UNICEF is building on a strong foundation. The organization is very well-

<sup>94</sup> By the nature of the United Nations’ funding model, there is inevitably a competitive element. [On interagency relationships] “there is an issue of mandate competition for resources that hinders harmonious collaboration” (survey)

<sup>95</sup> On the latter, UNDP is a natural partner for UNICEF. UNDP’s Governance and Democratic Participation Programme (GDPP) for Ethiopia includes: i) Advancing democratic governance and participation, ii) Conflict resolution and peace building, iii) Justice reform, and iv) Public sector and local governance

<sup>96</sup> It is reported that the Government has recently agreed that should now be three health extension workers per health clinic rather than two.

<sup>97</sup> The salary of TAs was said to be several times higher than that of the local government counterparts

regarded by all types of stakeholders. Name recognition of UNICEF is strong across the country. The organization's long history in Ethiopia and sustained support to the GoE, coupled with its acknowledged contributions to children in Ethiopia, and the scale and reach of its operations, including in emergencies, make it highly rated by the Government and other partners and peers. UNICEF is valued for its convening power, its ability to bring together disparate actors into coalitions of the willing. Among United Nations agencies, UNICEF is relatively well-resourced and it is seen as an important funding source by the Government.

*Strong assets:* Therefore, UNICEF has a powerful set of assets on which to build the level of trust it enjoys with its government counterparts. They see UNICEF as a reliable, flexible, and constructive partner. UNICEF is respected for its competence and its role as a 'critical friend'. It is seen as both pragmatic and impartial. Its research is seen to add high-quality evidence about women and children in the country, which other partners cannot or do not provide to the same extent. Among the United Nations agencies, UNICEF is considered to have unparalleled reach across the country, thanks to its network of field offices in all eight regions of the country and its reach at community level.

*Strategic alignment:* UNICEF is very well-aligned with, and supportive of, the Government of Ethiopia's development agenda. UNICEF's shift towards systems strengthening as its main strategy for its Ethiopia programme started from at least 2005 but has accelerated in the current plan period. This is crucial to UNICEF's very high level of engagement with its counterparts in government departments. During the evaluation period, UNICEF has supported implementation of Ethiopia's Growth and Transformation Plan (GTPII) 2016-2020. GTP III is currently being prepared. The country programme has also aligned itself with the SDGs and is also consistent with the current UNICEF Strategic Plan (2018-2021) in terms of sector focus and its change strategies. The GoE knows that UNICEF will align itself with GTP III when it is completed in 2020. The GoE will continue to look to UNICEF as one of its most reliable sources of technical support and financial support.

### 8.3 UNICEF ETHIOPIA'S WELL-DEVELOPED APPROACH TO RESILIENCE

UNICEF has progressively established its approach to building the resilience of communities to the frequent shocks caused by disasters and conflict, and to protecting vulnerable children and families from the corrosive effects of repeat disasters. UNICEF has worked with other actors and has influenced how resilience is approached by the HCT. Examples of initiatives that illustrate UNICEF's resilience approach include (among others, *see Annex 13 for further details*):

- With support from the United Nations' Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), UNICEF supported the piloting of the Sustainable Outreach Strategy (SOS) in the Somali region;
- The 2018 multi-sectoral response to the acute watery diarrhoea outbreak in collaboration with WHO, which is reported to have reduced the number of cases tenfold.
- Multi-village water schemes for long-term resilience of drought-prone communities, using geo-hydrological mapping and remote sensing to target potential drilling sites;
- Multi-sectoral interventions to improve nutrition security and resilience, with the FMoH, the National Disaster Risk Management Commission, UNICEF and WFP working together on integrated management of acute malnutrition;
- ECO, backed by UNICEF Supply Division and ESARO, is supporting the improvement of national capacity for supply chain management, through a 'strategic roadmap'.

### 8.4 COMMON CHALLENGES

While UNICEF is very well positioned, it faces a series of challenges common to all sectors:

1. **National implementation.** There are substantial challenges concerning the model of national implementation that are undermining the UNICEF programme. Some relate to the challenging operating context, while others require UNICEF to revisit the way it works with government partners to strengthen both accountability and performance.
2. **Turnover.** There is high turnover of human resources, and a lack of consultation with and motivation of frontline workers such as teachers, health extension workers and others. Finding solutions for greater continuity will enhance results and reduce wasted expenditure on training, planning and implementation.

3. **Data quality.** Government statistics are often missing or unreliable, especially at sub-regional level. This reduces the effectiveness of planning, monitoring of results, lesson learning and evaluation. The statistics generated from relatively accurate data collection exercises, such as UNICEF-supported surveys and research projects, cannot be reconciled with the data from the national health, education, social welfare or justice systems. UNICEF is investing in improving all the relevant government management information systems, but much remains to be done to make them effective.
4. **Unrealistic expectations.** One downside of UNICEF's presence across the country is that partners of all kinds expect UNICEF to be working at scale in all regions and on all challenges to children's rights. GoE counterparts expect the organization to address all challenges and invest still more funds. As a result, UNICEF may face challenging discussions with GoE as it narrows its focus in the new country programme

## 8.5 CHANGE STRATEGIES

UNICEF adopted a set of eight change strategies in its CP for 2016-2019. While all can be considered to have been appropriate, they were never fully developed, and the Programme was probably less successful as a result. For UNICEF to achieve its intended results in the country programme for 2020-2024 will require a set of fully developed change strategies for: Systems strengthening/ Capacity development, Multi-sector outcomes, Advocating for children's rights, Resilience/Risk reduction/The humanitarian-development nexus, Social and behaviour change including C4D, Civil society development, Child and youth participation, Emergency response, Gender mainstreaming, Private sector engagement and Peacebuilding and social cohesion. Of these, strategies for systems development and multi-sector outcomes are the priorities. UNICEF has no corporate strategies for either, and therefore regional and HQ-level support may be required.

## 9 OUTPUT LEVEL CONCLUSIONS

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### 9.1 HEALTH

#### *Conclusions*

1. UNICEF's Health Programme and the outcome set for the 2016–2020 period were relevant as they supported the Government's interests related to services and interventions for new-borns, children, adolescent girls, and women. Reviewed documents and interviews with stakeholders at the federal and local levels, within and outside UNICEF, endorsed this assertion. UNICEF aimed to contribute to closing gaps and improving the figures for *births delivered in a health facility*, *maternal mortality ratio*, *child mortality*, and *adolescent fertility*, which reflect, in part, UNICEF's contributions. There is a challenge, however, related to the large **variations among regions** within those aggregates.
2. The Programme is also aligned with the various global goals and key stakeholders' agendas for the country. With regard to the population's needs, public perceptions are that, in general, the coverage of health services is better than four years ago. However, there are challenges regarding the quality of care services with issues concerning lack of compassion, equity and timeliness (mainly because HEWs, HWs and the Women Development Army (WDA) are overburdened, have limited opportunities to upgrade, and have poor incentive structures). The results of the outputs evaluated show that the achievements mainly relate to the provision of essential supplies and coverage of services, but **quality lags behind**. For the last couple of years, though, UNICEF has recognized and improved service quality by supporting the country to implement national strategies for quality of care.
3. The Government has a **weak procurement system** that makes it difficult to procure essential supplies on time and at a competitive cost. UNICEF's procurement system has tried to fill the gap; however, shortages of essential supplies still put sustained coverage and the timeliness of provision of health services at risk.
4. **Adolescents seem to be a missing link** within UNICEF's Health Programme. UNICEF's strategic actions to improve adolescent maternal health do not fully align with national, international and UNICEF GAP priorities for adolescent health. Moreover, they are not clearly considered in the Theory of Change and the RF, so it is difficult to monitor and to be accountable for the results achieved for that demographic. In the regions, adolescents seem to lag behind children in terms of their participation and the interventions oriented to them.
5. UNICEF's **monitoring and evaluation system** for the CP has not been effective enough at

measuring progress made and supporting implementation of the programme. The chosen indicators have not always been measured, either because information was not available to measure them, or for other reasons. Corporate indicators are insufficient for measuring the actual work and results accomplished by UNICEF Ethiopia. Additionally, it is difficult to follow a logical connection across the Theory of Change; there are no clearly defined **activity indicators** that account for the activities and how UNICEF ECO is going to achieve the results.

*Lessons learned:*

- With the formulation of the PSN for **Health** it is difficult to follow a logical connection across the Theory of Change; there are no clearly defined **activity indicators** that account for the activities and how UNICEF ECO is going to achieve the results. This generated difficulties for the consultancy firm when assessing specific activities in its operation.
- With its Health Programme, UNICEF gives great support to the GoE that is not visible when reviewing the accountability tools designed for the CP. Other sources of information, like the COAR, are reports that describe what has been done, but the RF for the CP falls short for this purpose.
- Cross-cutting components should not be left to be measured as independent outcome in the design as they could lose importance or not feature when the implementation phase begins (e.g.: adolescent girls).

## 9.2 NUTRITION

*Conclusions*

1. UNICEF's Nutrition Programme and the outcome set for the 2016–2020 period was relevant as it supported the Government's interests related to upstream nutrition policy support, multi-sectoral engagement and strengthening systems for nutrition service delivery. The Programme is also aligned with the various global goals and key stakeholders' agendas for the country. Reviewed documents and interviews with stakeholders at the federal and local levels, within and outside UNICEF endorsed that. UNICEF aimed to contribute to closing gaps and improving figures on *stunting, severe acute malnutrition, exclusively fed with breast milk, and vitamin A supplementation* which reflected, in part, UNICEF contributions. However, aggregates uncover the differences among regions, like stunting, for which there is a 30 per cent gap between Addis Ababa and Amhara, the most affected region, while wasting has the greatest burden in Somali. Regional stakeholders agree that there is challenge in each region and that the needs exceed UNICEF's support.
2. UNICEF has been successful at promoting nutrition-sensitive social protection programmes, such as the integration of nutrition-sensitive interventions in the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) IV. However, the quality of the care services is affected by the health system challenges lack of compassion and being inadequately equitable and timely.
3. During this CP 2016-2020, UNICEF has been successful at **strengthening multisectoral engagement** and the accountability framework by advocating for the Government to recognize the importance of a multi-sectoral approach to reducing malnutrition, and compromises to reduce it. UNICEF has contributed to improving nutrition programming as it has *built commitment, strengthened leadership and strengthened governance*; this resulted in the launch of the NNPII, the approval of the Food and Nutrition Policy, the Food Fortification Standards, the School Health and Nutrition Strategy, and the Nutrition-Sensitive Agriculture Strategy, which, at the end, provided a legal framework that enhanced the nutrition system in Ethiopia. However, enactment of this legal framework is in an early stage and faces risks in terms of implementation. Political instability has generated staff turnover, and the current governance structure lacks a mechanism to hold each member sector accountable for delivering on its commitment; none of them has the competencies required to take on leadership. The UNISE initiative is incipient, and staff turnover also generates a risk to implementation because it is uncertain if the qualified staff will keep their positions.
4. Donors are not as interested in supporting **adolescent programming** as they are in supporting programmes for children. ECO is attempting to increase the evidence base for adolescent nutrition to appeal to funders and improve training. However, there is still a problem when addressing adolescent programming, as the natural stakeholders for adolescent nutritional programming lack insight into the need for differentiated interventions for adolescents.

*Lessons learned:*

- Although there have been advances in the multisectoral engagement, there is an acknowledgment inside UNICEF that its sections work in silos, which affects their effectiveness when delivering the planned interventions.
- The formulation of indicators in numbers rather than in percentages reveals the great effort and resources that UNICEF puts in to meeting the indicators as it is not easy to read and evidence the work done.

### 9.3 WASH

#### *Conclusions*

1. UNICEF's WASH Programme and the outcome set for the 2016–2020 period was relevant as it supported the Government's interests related to use of affordable, safe, reliable, sustainable and adequate water supply, sanitation and appropriate hygiene practices in households, communities and institutions in rural and urban areas. Reviewed documents and interviews with stakeholders at the federal and local levels, within and outside UNICEF, endorsed this. The Programme is also aligned with the various global goals and key stakeholders' agendas for the country. As for the population needs, the public perception is that, in general, UNICEF does fill a gap in providing WASH services, but that the resources are insufficient to fulfil the high demand in terms of the coverage of services needed and the areas it reaches. In this particular case, consulted members of the public, as well as federal and regional (government) stakeholders, have a perception of UNICEF more as a donor than as an international organization. In that sense, expectations about what UNICEF should do fail to match what it actually can do and provide.
2. The work UNICEF has done on WASH is clearly recognized internally and externally, especially the introduction of a climate resilience component to the One WASH National Programme (OWNP). In OWP Phase I, much was achieved towards the SDGs and the GTP I targets, as well as the fulfilment of the short-to-medium term objectives of the GTP II. However, key areas, such as the low capacity of implementing partners and low resource mobilization, affected UNICEF's performance and, in general, implementation of the OWP, which was designed with little involvement of actors in the regions and woredas.
3. The private sector contributes over 80 per cent of GDP and participates in providing WASH services in Ethiopia, including the informal sector, but its expansion into water and sanitation services is limited.
4. As for adolescent programming, much of the work on knowledge around menstrual health and hygiene (MHH) is being revealed under the health sector (Bevan, 2017), rather than under WASH, though WASH has coordinated many large campaigns on MHH, including National Menstrual Hygiene Day.
5. UNICEF's monitoring and evaluation system for the CP has not been sufficiently effective at measuring progress made and supporting programme implementation, as it fell short on making UNICEF accomplishments visible. The chosen indicators have not always been measured, either because the information was not available to measure them, or for other reasons. The RAM reported difficulties in terms of monitoring the progress of the indicators identified through the analysis. In some cases, the reported results do not correspond to the RF indicators and their definitions; for instance, the knowledge focus of the MHH indicator and output have been effectively covered by the rubrics chosen for their measure, but that rubric encompasses but a portion of the work being done on MHH. The other indicators do not reflect what MHH is doing.

#### *Lessons learned*

- The role of the private sector in the strategic note for the sector is secondary and generic. There are no specific activities defined to address it. In the analysis, this generated difficulties for the consultancy firm when assessing private sector participation.
- With its WASH Programme, UNICEF gives support to the GoE that is not visible when reviewing the accountability tools designed for the CP. Other sources of information, such as the COAR, are reports that describe what has been done, but the RF for the CP is not adequate for this purpose. For example, the building of Itang water utility was identified as one of five global best practice examples for UNICEF, but despite such achievements, *according to the target set for the year*, the results do not meet the targets set.

## 9.4 CHILD PROTECTION

### *Birth registration*

#### *Conclusions*

1. UNICEF's joint advocacy actions have had a strategic impact on the CRVS system of Ethiopia. By influencing the legal framework through the amendment of Proclamation 760/2012, UNICEF, in coordination with other stakeholders, has succeeded in including free birth registration certification for all refugee children and the linkage between the health sector and the CRVS system. Advocacy challenges persist to addressing in-system barriers by removing the payment for the birth registration certificate and the requirements for both parents to be present when registering their child.
2. The Government's commitment at national and sub-national levels have led to increased access to birth registration. However, because the CRVS system is decentralized, expansion of services would require increased commitment by the regions. This would lead to challenges in increasing budgetary allocations at all levels to progressively reduce the UNICEF resources that the system currently depends on.
3. Despite the significant efforts made to increase access, the registration rate is still very low. Only 15.5 per cent of the 3.4 million children who are born every year in Ethiopia are being registered.
4. Besides the discussion on how to increase coverage of registration services and improve the efficiency of the system, birth registration is not being internalized by all sectors as a critical instrument to advance children's right to access social services such as health, education, nutrition, and child protection.<sup>98</sup>
5. The way capacity building is being done, even today, has been very costly and unsustainable when facing the complexity of the CRVS system and the number of registrars and health workers involved. This situation becomes more complex when considering the high turnover of registrars.

#### *Justice for children*

1. UNICEF is making a significant effort to position itself as a strategic government partner for strengthening the child justice system. This will require ending the implementation of strategies in which UNICEF does not generate value and finding others where it can take more advantage of its technical capacity.
2. The introduction of social workers into the justice system and their progressive integration into the government payroll has been one of UNICEF's most important contributions. Nevertheless, the absence of a labour framework for the social welfare workforce could be one of the causes of wage differences and excessive caseloads, which could result in high turnover of social workers.
3. UNICEF is aware that child justice under a 'Project Office' is no longer viable and sustainable. Therefore, the continuity of its support is, in some ways, conditioned to integration of child justice into broader justice reform.
4. The absence of disaggregated, sufficient and systematic gender data on child victims of violence and witnesses of crime, as well as children in conflict with the law, who are getting into the system and the services that have or have not been provided are a critical issue that must be addressed urgently. Without this information, UNICEF will not have evidence to advocate for and monitor the impact of its strategies.

#### *Child marriage and FGM/C*

1. ECO is an influential and trusted partner to the GoE and has had a deep impact on the national policies and initiatives that address child marriage and FGM.
2. ECO's contributions to the Joint Programmes on Child Marriage (GPECM) and FGM are the main vehicles by which UNICEF intervenes with communities to eliminate these harmful practices. However, there is some opinion, expressed in the January 2019 evaluation of the Joint Programme on FGM (UNICEF and UNFPA, 2019), the 2017 evaluation of the GPECM (Lawry-White, 2017) and through interviews with staff (2019) that community professions of changed attitudes may not align completely with changed practices. This is most likely true not only in Ethiopia but also in other countries in which these programmes are being developed.
3. ECO's weakness around community participation and consultation in the areas of child marriage

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<sup>98</sup> "Birth registration is a human right and can strengthen children's access to legal protection and basic social services while also improving national data, planning, policy and budgets" UNICEF Child Protection Strategy. United Nations Economic and Social Council (2008)

and FGM may reflect an overall institutional lack of strategies and tools to effectively engage the Government to elevate the status of children and adolescents to partners in policy, plan and programme design and monitoring. United Nations resolutions clearly call for children and youth to be active collaborators in issues that affect them, but ECO's CP does not prioritize their involvement on these issues.

4. Community interventions and communication campaigns to raise awareness of the harms of child marriage and FGM that lead to community declarations of abandonment seem not to consider the factors that drive family decisions around child marriage and FGM.

### *Lessons Learned*

- Government ownership and commitment has resulted in a scaling up of registration, resulting in 87 per cent geographic coverage nationwide. However, some regions still show significant gaps to ensuring that families have access to birth registration services.
- The engagement of community-based platforms is useful for advocating for registration and identifying women who are expecting to deliver, along with those who have recently delivered.
- UNICEF's support for strengthening the link between the health system and CRVS system has proven to be a critical strategy for increasing birth registration in the first 90 days. Best practices from this experience could usefully be scaled up in other regions to increase the birth registration rate.
- It is critical to advance a comprehensive assessment and a strategic plan informed by the Africa Programme on Accelerated Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (APAI-CRVS).
- Justice for children cannot be approached without being part of wider justice-sector reform, otherwise the results would be less far-reaching and sustainable.
- There is a need for better understanding of the scope of justice for children, which includes child victims and witnesses and children in conflict with the law
- Building and renovating facilities needs to focus on producing positive changes and results for every child in the system, as well as creating transformations that lead to implementation of international standards.
- Ongoing discussion with the United Nations system on justice sector reform and the rule of law is an opportunity for UNICEF to become a technical partner for the Government and provide technical support to become compliant with international standards. Following the United Nations Approach to Justice for Children, cross-cutting areas of cooperation on justice for children, UNICEF needs to begin working with other United Nations agencies.
- Using the new Civil Society Organization Law is critical for engaging with civil society to build awareness of the right to access to a quality child justice system for all child victims and witnesses and children in conflict with the law.
- In the Strategic Note it is not easy to identify the activities that took place to achieve each of the outputs. Furthermore, each output is defined in a linear way and does not have many links with other outputs. This raises the question of how systemic the Child Protection Programme is in supporting the development of a child protection system that is complex and comprises interconnected strategies.
- The activities proposed for each of the outputs do not have a clear vision of how they are going to transform children's lives. In other words, there is not much evidence about the relationship between the output and outcome indicators. Thus, some activities could be perceived as not having a child focus and being transactional rather than transformative to children's lives.

## 9.5 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

### *Early childhood and education*

#### *Conclusions*

1. UNICEF's ECE support has been implemented as part of the National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). While this policy is required to frame pre-primary and ECE services, the country needs to move towards a national policy on Early Childhood Development, which, from a child-centred approach, integrates all sectors, programmes and services to ensure comprehensive development.
2. Although there is strong commitment to ECCE services, budgetary allocations are still insufficient,

- both at national and subnational level, and there is a lack of expenditure tracking.
3. Accelerated School Readiness (ASR) has been used to address two specific government objectives: increasing pre-primary enrolment numbers and enhancing school readiness. Quality in ECE services should support children to develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. A two-month programme may fall short of meeting this.
  4. Family and community engagement have been successful in increasing awareness of the importance of ECE services for young children. However, ECE services still have the challenge of increasing the participation of families in their role to contribute to child development.
  5. The UNICEF ECE programme has been beneficial in the use of demonstrative models to produce strategic changes to the policy development and implementation process. The use of the ASR material and approach to influence the O-Class curriculum is considered an outstanding achievement in this by this evaluation. However, poor curriculum implementation is still a challenge due to lack of dissemination of the curriculum, inadequate training, insufficiency of learning materials, and deficient capacity to monitor and support teachers.
  6. UNICEF support for capacity development has had significant effects on the number of teachers that have been trained. Although the Government recognizes the quality of training, this evaluation did not find any evidence to support positive changes in teacher pedagogical practices. The evaluation also found high turnover rates of teachers trained by UNICEF to be a significant challenge.
  7. Insufficient data within the UNICEF M&E system and government EMIS makes it more difficult to monitor and evaluate what is being done and what is needed.

#### *Policy planning & knowledge management*

1. The collaboration between UNICEF and UNESCO IIEP to support the Government in the development of the Results Framework (RF) and the annual operational plan was a critical achievement. The challenge for the next CP is to support the MoE to develop the RF alongside the ESDP VI.
2. UNICEF and UNESCO IIEP's support to the MoE and RBoE in cri-sensitive planning is highly relevant in a context with increasing humanitarian emergencies resulting from conflicts and natural disasters. Support has also been provided in collaboration with UNHCR to include ARRA as a key stakeholder in delivering education services to refugee children. A question may arise about the level of integration between the ESDP and the Ethiopia National Refugee Child Protection Strategy (2017-2019).
3. Supporting the strengthening of education management information systems has been a critical strategy for improving planning and education sector analysis capabilities in planning experts from the MoE and RBoE. However, information from this evaluation suggests that critical challenges persist in implementation of the EMIS and SMIS Web Application systems.

#### *Adolescent girls' participation in primary education*

1. ECO's priority actions to improve adolescent girls' primary school completion are multi-sectoral and address the social ecology of girls' lives and influences, from the individual (self-esteem, knowledge and life skills) to the community context (community campaigns to raise awareness of the consequences of child marriage, for example), thus increasing the strategies' probability of success in terms of programme uptake, coverage and gender parity;
2. One area of weakness within the ecological vision of girls' education success is the attention given to the interpersonal and role-modelling effects of improving parents' and – in particular – mothers' education, skills, and economic opportunities as an element of reducing the obstacles to girls' completing primary education;
3. Similarly, important to the ecological approach is the inclusion of community, not only as a recipient of information but also as a co-creator of priorities and as a mechanism for accountability for the impacts of interventions that affect their regions and communities.
4. Ethiopia is quickly moving closer to gender parity in enrolment at primary level, no doubt in large part thanks to UNICEF Ethiopia's support for legislative and policy changes as well as direct interventions to convince families to send girls to pre-primary and primary school. The ecological approach requires that girls and boys be seen both as individuals and as part of communities, regions and countries, and political, economic and social contexts.

### *Lessons learned*

- High-level advocacy has been a key strategy for ensuring that the Government integrates the results of UNICEF support into the education policy and sectoral plan.
- Giving the leadership to the Government when implementing the demonstrative models along the process (designing, implementing, monitoring and supervising) has been critical to ensuring the sustainability of UNICEF's support.
- It is critical that the ESDP results framework, along with the results chain and results matrix, should be prepared in parallel with the preparation of narratives of the main ESDP documents, as this will give room for better alignment with the programme's theory of change.
- According to the Government, the results framework planning process should consider government capacities in order to assure the extent to which implementation is timely and proper.
- Capacity development and system strengthening should always be ongoing processes in educational planning and management, given the fact that continuous staff turnover and reshuffling of experienced staff prevails at different levels of education administration.
- The theory of change clearly identifies the activities that took place to achieve each of the outputs. However, each output is defined in a linear way and does not have much relation to other outputs. This situation raises the issue of how systemically the L&D programme is supporting the development of an education system that is complex and comprises interconnected strategies.
- The activities proposed for each of the outputs do not have a clear purpose on how they will transform children's development. In other words, there is not much evidence about the relationship between the output and outcome indicators. Thus, some activities could be perceived as not having a child focus and being transactional rather than transformative to children's lives.
- From the information gathered, it is not possible to conclude whether the Results Framework and the crisis-sensitive planning are considering pre-primary education and ECE services. This raises the question of the level of integration between programmes in the learning and education section, especially between the early education and policy planning outputs, as those are the ones that this evaluation is aiming to strengthened.

### 9.6 SPESI

1. As the evidence presented suggests, different policy officials and partners of UNICEF in Ethiopia have a high regard for the quality standards and technical skills of the organization and its members. There is also a clear perception that it has a close and trusting relationship with the GoE, giving UNICEF a privileged position for shaping public debates around the protection of the rights of children and women.
2. However, interviewees would like the balance between theory and practice in UNICEF's work to be reconsidered. They claim there is a need to strengthen efforts devoted to advocacy to meet the goals for the outputs.
3. Currently, UNICEF has some initiatives in progress to address problems related to lack of M&E information. SPESI's work in generating data (i.e. through pilot studies and research) is crucial to compensate for the lack of overall information to support evidence-based policymaking. Nonetheless, there seems to be a lack of a general public understanding of how the evidence produced in pilot studies is transformed into practical advice for policymakers and communities on how to increase the efficiency of policy processes.
4. The limited participation in policy and service delivery debates highlighted by communities may help to understand the existence of that gap.<sup>99</sup> Interviewed experts also suggested that capacity building processes tend to be *simplistic*, in the sense that there is an overriding focus on individuals and not on creating capacities at an institutional level. Such a claim calls for revision of the methods and the strategies employed by UNICEF in these processes.

### *Lessons learned*

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<sup>99</sup> In focus groups with children, the consultancy team ask questions such as: "To what extent do you feel that you can participate in the decisions that affect yourself and those that affect your community?" The overring answer was that they feel excluded from participating in those decisions.

The strategy notes for SPESI are quite generic. There are no specific strategies for each output, but these are generally presented to all of its outcomes, a situation that made it difficult for the consultancy firm to assess specific activities involved in its operation.

That lack of specific strategies makes it difficult to analyse and understand the positive panorama expressed in the outcome indicators presented in the RAM report. Some of the critical comments presented in the analysis of SPESI should invite UNICEF to revise those indicators and define if they are suitable for monitoring the progress of its different initiatives.

## 10 STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS <sup>100</sup>

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### 10.1 REVIEW AND REVISE UNICEF ENGAGEMENT WITH NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

Section 7.2 above sets out a series of challenges UNICEF experiences in implementation of the country programme through national implementation. These challenges are undermining the effectiveness of the country programme and UNICEF's ability to be accountable for the results of some aspects of its funding for the GoE (see Table 3 above).

In particular, the GoE is not sufficiently accountable for the US\$ hundreds of millions per year that it receives through UNICEF. The GoE does not report adequately or in a timely manner on the results it is achieving with UNICEF funding. A second challenge is that the GoE policy of rapid relocation of officials between duty stations is undermining capacity development, as government staff require constant reorientation and training.

UNICEF should work with the GoE to address the challenges within the scope of the current Basic Cooperation Agreement. Making the necessary changes will take time and it is recommended that UNICEF sees this as a 2-3-year change programme. It is proposed that ECO starts by documenting the implementation challenges for discussion with GoE, starting with the Ministry of Finance, and leading to a consultation with all the relevant ministries and departments.

This discussion could also be approached via the Resident Coordinator as a joint United Nations initiative, given that other United Nations agencies may face similar challenges, but if that does not prove possible, UNICEF should carry forward agency-specific discussion with the GoE.

### 10.2 NARROW THE SCOPE OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME

UNICEF Ethiopia is well advanced in its planning for the new CP, including narrowing the scope of the activities within each sector and the geographic scope. This evaluation supports these efforts, which are consistent with the feedback from all parties that the current programme is too broad and diffuse. In addition to other criteria for narrowing scope – for example, focusing on areas with a prevalence of multiple deprivations, or where partnerships are sufficiently advanced to deliver results – it is recommended that the scope of the CP is kept to activities that can: 1) be well supported (see also systems strengthening below); and 2) where accountability for results (not just for finance) can be assured.

### 10.3 INVEST FOR IMPACT

It is recommended that UNICEF Ethiopia transitions from a model of funding of key initiatives to investment for results, applying a deliberate set of investment criteria in favour of, for example, interventions that: are proven to work in Ethiopia; are cost effective; target woredas with high rates of multiple deprivations; and have the required political and financial commitment from the relevant regional authorities. This recommendation can stand alone but is also a supporting strategy to a reformed approach to national implementation, as set out in Recommendation 1 (See Section 7.5 for further discussion).

While the bulk of UNICEF's investment will continue to go towards national sector-based programmes, it is recommended that UNICEF increases its funding to high value-added functions where UNICEF has an established reputation in Ethiopia, including high quality research and advocacy. The organization needs to strengthen the ECO knowledge management function to draw lessons from these exercises.

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<sup>100</sup> Output level recommendations can be found in Annex 17.

## 10.4 DEVELOP CHANGE STRATEGIES

This recommendation is to be read and understood in conjunction with Section 7.7, which sets out how the current CP has suffered from a lack of well-developed change strategies and provides the argumentation for their future development.

During 2019, in preparing the new CP, ECO has prioritized the progressive development of six Programme Strategy Notes. These strategy notes are intended to cover programme content (the What) and change strategies (the How). However, the How elements are not sufficiently well developed, and ECO needs to redress this balance to ensure that the planned results of the new CP can be delivered. It is recommended that, rather than assuming change strategies can be covered in the programme strategy notes, ECO develop separate change strategies for application, as needed, across all the programme strategies. It may be unrealistic to expect all the change strategies listed below to be developed at once, and sequencing may be required. While all are important, the first two are most fundamental:

- **Systems strengthening and capacity development**, based on proven models and evidence-based approaches. Given that UNICEF has no technical section or guidance on systems strengthening, UNICEF Ethiopia will require support from ESARO, and perhaps also from HQ. *Please also see Annex 11.*
- **Multi-sector approach to programming**, starting with an agreed position on how child-centred outcomes are achieved through multi-sector programming, supported by new structural solutions within ECO, with formal accountability for cross-sectoral outcomes assigned to senior managers, with revised reporting lines, and a matrix team working. ECO must determine what it means by ‘integration’ and ‘convergence’ and determine which multi-sector approaches to use and in which circumstances. This cannot be left to section chiefs, as they may lack sufficient incentives to implement cross-sector working. As UNICEF has no technical section or guidance on multi-sector programming, UNICEF Ethiopia will need support from ESARO, and perhaps also from HQ. *Please also see Annex 12.*
- **Social and behaviour change** needs its own strategy, including communication for development, building on a better researched and developed understanding of social change. The core model and strategy should first be developed at an office-wide level and then interpreted for each sector. Further support may be required from ESARO.
- **Children and youth participation**, through CSOs and ‘demonstration’ approaches that show local authorities what is possible and how interventions become more relevant when the voices of children and youth are heard.
- **Peacebuilding and social cohesion**, learning from peacebuilding interventions that predate the current country programme, working with the Ministry of Peace and, potentially, in partnership with UNDP.

## 10.5 FURTHER STRENGTHEN UNICEF'S FOCUS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

It is recommended that UNICEF Ethiopia exploit the improved political environment for greater openness to discussion of human rights and protection. In particular UNICEF should:

- Advance its engagement with national print and local social media to increase public understanding of and dialogue around the multiple deprivations faced by the children of Ethiopia.
- Increase public attention to GBV, FGM and other rights violations, including the protection of internally displaced persons and refugees, in partnership with national institutions (human rights commission/ombudsman) and rights-based United Nations agencies and NGOs.
- Increase the engagement of civil society in following up on selected conclusions from [the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#) and the United Nations Human Rights Commission’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR) for Ethiopia.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> The Concluding Observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Ethiopia were issued by the [UN Committee on the Rights of the Child \(CRC\)](#) on 3 June 2015. The result of the UPR were due to be considered at the Human Rights Council’s Forty-second session, 9–27 September 2019.

These elements should be built into ECO's advocacy strategy, which is currently under review.

## 10.6 EXTEND UNICEF PARTNERSHIPS

It is recommended that UNICEF strengthen its partnerships with:

- **Civil society organizations**, to develop their capacity to: hold government to account for quality service delivery, speak out on children's rights, play a role in rapid emergency response, and help provide the missing community voice in UNICEF programmes. The first step is to map the relevant civil society actors.
- The **private sector**, mapping out the main private sector actors, starting a child-centred public-private sector dialogue on practical steps to advance children's rights, and work with interested companies to extend the reach of essential services and goods that benefit children into more deprived areas.
- The **United Nations**, with United Nations agencies and the Resident Coordinator on common areas, to be determined in development of the UNCSDF, including, for example: adherence to human rights treaties, increasing national budgetary allocations to social sectors, peacebuilding and social cohesion, and joint approaches to national implementation and systems strengthening.
- The **World Bank** office in Ethiopia, which is ready to welcome increased engagement with UNICEF on fiscal analysis and advocacy for greater national resources to support children's rights, going beyond the long-running engagement on the PSNP. Partnership should be extended and strengthened with other international financial institutions.

## 10.7 AIM FOR STABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN CRITICAL NETWORKS OF FRONTLINE WORKERS

It is recommended that UNICEF should continue to analyse the bottlenecks to the productivity and continuity of essential frontline workers – in particular, health extension workers, health workers and social workers, whose performance and job satisfaction are key to the success of several of the major national programmes supported by UNICEF. Recognizing that the creation of truly sustainable and stable national networks of such workers is challenging, UNICEF should work with the GoE and other partners to chart a path to achieving national capacity based on national resources, and with reduced reliance on technical assistance subsidized by international aid. Frontline workers require manageable workloads, adequate remuneration and living conditions, access to transport, and systems for ongoing advice and encouragement.

## 10.8 ENSURE UNICEF ETHIOPIA FIELD OFFICES ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE

It is recommended that UNICEF Ethiopia further empowers its field offices to support national decentralization, especially at regional level:

- Review and rebalance the level of UNICEF human resources between UNICEF Addis Ababa office and the regional field offices in favour of the regions, aiming to have more staff outside Addis than inside, initially reversing the current ratio of 53:47 capital/field<sup>102</sup> to 47:53, and potentially moving to a 40:60 capital/field ratio in staff numbers over the period of the plan, depending on the scale of decentralization required;
- Provide technical support to ensure consistent quality across the regions
- Ensure that each field office has tailored its plans and programmes to its regional context
- Consider the functions that may require extra capacity in field offices; for example social policy analysis and social and behaviour change;
- Once responsibilities have been reviewed and adjustments agreed, revise the UNICEF Ethiopia Accountability Matrix accordingly
- Ensure regular communication between UNICEF in the capital and the regions, and the sharing of experience between regions

## 10.9 REVIEW AND REVISE UNICEF ETHIOPIA'S SKILLS MIX

The capacity and quality of UNICEF Ethiopia personnel is well recognized. However, UNICEF should

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<sup>102</sup> Not counting TAs and other third parties

look to the future and not assume that its current capabilities meet all its future requirements. It is recommended that UNICEF Ethiopia review its skills mix to close skills gaps and enhance the skills that will be at a premium for implementation of the new country programme. These skills may be acquired or reinforced: 1) By targeted training of existing staff and; 2) by ECO seeking out these skills in new recruits:

- ECO needs at least one **fully dedicated specialist in adolescent programming**; it is already considering how to close this capacity gap.
- ECO needs increased **Communication for Development (C4D) capacity in the regions**; this is already under discussion by ECO.
- As ECO reviews the effectiveness of its training programmes, **mentoring and accompaniment skills** are likely to be in increasing demand to support development of the capacity of partners.
- ECO needs more personnel able to **plan and implement projects and programmes across sectors**.
- If the survey results are reliable, there is some demotivation and frustration in the workforce that could be mitigated through better **people management** skills.
- If UNICEF Ethiopia moves to an impact investing approach, an enhanced set of project management skills will be needed, including the ability to **build and defend an investment business case**.
- ECO needs **greater capacity to respond quickly to emergencies** and, potentially, specialists in the technical sections that understand rapid response as a part of UNICEF's Core Corporate Commitments for Children in Emergencies (CCCs) (this remains only a general observation pending completion of the humanitarian evaluation recommended below).

#### 10.10 EVALUATE UNICEF ETHIOPIA HUMANITARIAN RESULTS

Whatever the Level (L1, L2, L3) at which the UNICEF Ethiopia humanitarian response has been classified since 2016, the expenditure of more than US\$350 million on humanitarian response over the current CP period indicates the need for a standalone evaluation of the drought, refugee and internal displacement responses. There has been no external evaluation since the beginning of the drought response in 2015. The two internal lesson learning exercises undertaken by ECO, the global Complex High Threat Environment (CHTE) evaluation recently completed by UNICEF HQ, and the evaluation of the Ethiopia HCT Drought Response commissioned by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), soon to be completed, will all provide helpful background to UNICEF Ethiopia's own evaluation. However, taken together they are no substitute for a standalone external evaluation of UNICEF Ethiopia's humanitarian response over the current country programme period.

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## ANNEX LIST

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