

EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT

# EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

FINAL REPORT

EVALUATION OFFICE

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# EVALUABILITY ASSESSMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION

## FINAL REPORT

## **Evaluability Assessment of Child Protection in Humanitarian Action**

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Three United Nations Plaza  
New York, New York 10017

October 2019

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This report, ‘Evaluability Assessment of Child Protection in Humanitarian Action’, was prepared by Virginia Thomas (team leader), Julia Freedson (external team member) and Tina Tordjman-Nebe (internal team member). Tina Tordjman-Nebe, Evaluation Specialist at the Evaluation Office, managed the overall evaluability assessment process with support from Beth Ann Plowman, Senior Evaluation Specialist at the Evaluation Office.

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# PREFACE

Humanitarian crises are increasingly protracted and climate-related shocks are more intense and frequent. Both contribute to a cycle of vulnerability with long-lasting, devastating effects on children's lives. Key child protection risks include family separation, recruitment into armed forces or groups, physical or sexual abuse, psychosocial distress and mental illness, economic exploitation, injury and even death. Before, during and after crises, effective child protection builds on existing capacities and strengthens preparedness. Timely interventions support the physical and emotional health, dignity and well-being of children, families and communities. Humanitarian action, development programming and peacebuilding can no longer be understood as serial processes: they are all needed at the same time.

Assessing evaluability or “the extent to which an activity or project can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion” (OECD-DAC 2010; p.21) can help an organization get ready for future evaluations of a theme or set of interventions. The central idea is comparison of the intended programme design (evaluability in principle) with the actual theory-in-use (evaluability in practice), including the availability of relevant data and the capacity of management systems. Assessing evaluability has the potential to take some of the guess work out of implementation choices and shed light on the utility and practicality of a potential corporate evaluation, given the views and availability of relevant stakeholders.

It is my hope that this evaluability assessment of child protection in humanitarian action will help ensure that all the pieces are in place to credibly demonstrate results by the time an evaluation is conducted. The evaluability assessment is meant to reduce “evalophobia” or fear of evaluation and promote a culture of evidence; help with ongoing management and implementation of programmes; and, in this particular case, encourage stakeholder involvement – beyond those with “Child Protection” in their job titles – in achieving protection results for children in humanitarian action.

Every child has the right to a healthy childhood free from fear. To help make that happen, all girls and boys need safe, peaceful and nurturing environments at home, in school and in their communities. I hope that the evidence and learning from this evaluability assessment will help improve the work of UNICEF and partners in humanitarian action and beyond.

George Laryea-Adjei  
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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to affected populations
<b>AoR</b>	Area of Responsibility
<b>CCCs</b>	Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action
<b>CCPM</b>	Cluster coordination performance monitoring
<b>CPD</b>	Country programme document
<b>CPHA</b>	Child protection in humanitarian action
<b>CPiE</b>	Child protection in emergencies
<b>EA</b>	Evaluability assessment
<b>EMOPS</b>	Office of Emergency Programmes (UNICEF)
<b>HPM</b>	Humanitarian performance monitoring
<b>IASC</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental health and psychosocial support
<b>OCHA</b>	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>PD</b>	Programme Division (UNICEF)
<b>PIDB</b>	Programme Information Database
<b>PSN</b>	Programme strategy note
<b>RAM</b>	Results Assessment Module
<b>SMART</b>	Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound
<b>SMQ</b>	Strategic monitoring question
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

# GLOSSARY

Term	Definition
<b>Accountability</b>	<p>In the context of this evaluability assessment, accountability is an assurance that an actor (individual staff or organizational unit) will be evaluated on the tasks, performance or actions for which they have accepted responsibility. The term is related to ‘responsibility’ but also includes the concept that there are consequences/sanctions if the responsibility is not met.</p> <p>Accountability means that an actor is held responsible for successfully meeting mutually agreed upon expectations and must at least explain why, in the case that they fail to do so. Institutional accountability involves being answerable to an organization’s stakeholders for commitments, actions and results.</p>
<b>Assumptions</b>	<p>Assumptions are variables or factors which need to be in place for a result to be achieved. Examples: Other partners will successfully implement their own plans. The national economy will improve as predicted.</p>
<b>Causal linkages</b>	<p>The salient events or conditions necessary (or likely to be necessary) for a particular causal link in a theory of change to be realized. If the assumption does not hold, then the expected effect from that link will not occur. This can be a very demanding requirement, if interpreted literally. It can be considered in probabilistic terms, whereby causal link assumptions can be thought of as likely necessary assumptions, events and conditions that almost always have to occur for the causal link to work.</p>
<b>Cluster approach</b>	<p>Under humanitarian reform, sector coordination among the wider humanitarian country team is guided by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee cluster approach. The aim of the cluster approach is to strengthen system-wide preparedness and technical capacity to respond to humanitarian emergencies by ensuring that predictable leadership in the main sectors leads to predictable and effective humanitarian response, and to avoiding gaps and duplications. UNICEF promotes the principles of the cluster approach for humanitarian coordination, even where clusters have not been formally established.</p>
<b>Child protection in humanitarian action</b>	<p>The prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children in humanitarian action. Effective child protection builds on existing capacities and strengthens preparedness before a crisis occurs. During humanitarian crises, timely interventions support the physical and emotional health, dignity and well-being of children, families and communities. Child protection in humanitarian action includes specific activities conducted by local, national and international child protection actors. It also includes efforts of non-child protection actors who seek to prevent and address abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children in humanitarian settings, whether through mainstreamed or integrated programming.</p> <p>For the purpose of this evaluability assessment, child protection in humanitarian action or CPHA is defined as UNICEF’s rights-based approach to protecting children in humanitarian settings, including conflicts, natural disasters, health epidemics and other humanitarian situations, such as displacement or migration crises that can occur both outside or within stable development settings.</p>
<b>Coverage</b>	<p>The extent to which major population groups facing life-threatening suffering are being (or were) reached by humanitarian action, both geographically and demographically (e.g., sex, age, disability).</p>



<b>Emergency</b>	A situation that threatens the lives and well-being of large numbers of people and requires extraordinary action to ensure their survival, care and protection.
<b>Equity</b>	In the context of this evaluability assessment, equity means that all children have an opportunity to survive, develop and reach their full potential without discrimination, bias or favouritism. The equity-based approach in UNICEF's programmes and policies seeks to understand and address the root causes of inequity so that all children, particularly those who suffer the worst deprivations in society, have access to education, health care, sanitation, clean water, protection and other services necessary for their survival, growth and development.
<b>Evaluability</b>	Evaluability is the extent to which an activity or programme can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. Assessing evaluability involves verifying if there is clarity in the intent or purpose of the subject to be evaluated (evaluability in principle) and whether there are sufficiently measurable indicators and associated data (evaluability in practice) with which to conduct a credible evaluation.
<b>Evaluation</b>	An evaluation is an assessment, as systematic and impartial as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, institutional performance, etc. It focuses on expected and achieved accomplishments, examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality, in order to understand achievements or the lack thereof. It aims to determine the relevance, impact, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the interventions and contributions of the organizations of the United Nations system. An evaluation should provide evidence-based information that is credible, reliable and useful, enabling the timely incorporation of findings, recommendations and lessons into the decision-making processes of the organizations of the United Nations system and its members.
<b>Gender equality</b>	Gender equality means that women and men and girls and boys enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections.
<b>Humanitarian access</b>	The ability of humanitarian actors to reach populations affected by crisis, as well as an affected population's ability to access humanitarian assistance and services.
<b>Humanitarian action (in UNICEF)</b>	Humanitarian action is a core part of UNICEF's work and encompasses interventions focused on effective preparedness, response and early recovery in order to save lives and protect child rights, as defined in the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs).
<b>Humanitarian principles</b>	Principles that underline all humanitarian action, including humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. These principles, derived from international humanitarian law, have been taken up by the United Nations in General Assembly Resolutions 46/182 and 58/114. Their global recognition and relevance are furthermore underscored by the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief and the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability. The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action are grounded in humanitarian principles and UNICEF is committed to applying humanitarian principles in its humanitarian action.
<b>Humanitarian-development(-peace) nexus</b>	The 'nexus' refers to the linkages needed to coherently address people's vulnerability before, during and after crises. The UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 includes the organization's clearest commitment to date for strengthening the linkages between its humanitarian and development mandates. In this regard, the Strategic Plan states that UNICEF programmes will foster the coherence and complementarity between humanitarian and

	development actions to strengthen systems that deliver essential services to the most vulnerable and marginalized populations. Increasingly, “peace” is added as a nexus issue.
<b>Impact pathways</b>	Causal pathways showing the linkages between a sequence of steps in getting from activities to impact. An intervention may have several pathways to impact. A theory of change adds to an impact pathway by describing the causal assumptions behind the links in the pathway—what must happen for the causal linkages to be realized. Theories of change are models of how change is expected to happen (ex ante case) or how change has happened (ex post case).
<b>Indicator</b>	Quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a simple and reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention or to help assess the performance of a development actor.
<b>Intervention</b>	In the context of this evaluability assessment, intervention describes specific activities undertaken to make a positive difference in outcomes and impacts related to child protection in humanitarian action. It covers policies, programmes and projects.
<b>Minimum Standards of Child Protection in Humanitarian Action</b>	The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action specify the minimum qualitative levels to be attained in humanitarian action. They are intended to: establish common principles among those working in child protection and strengthen coordination between them; improve the quality of child protection programming and its impact for children; improve accountability within child protection work; further define the professional field of child protection; provide a synthesis of good practice and learning to date; and enable better advocacy and communication on child protection risks, needs and responses.
<b>Outcome</b>	The likely or achieved short- and medium-term effects of an intervention’s outputs.
<b>Output</b>	The products, capital goods and services that result from a development intervention; may also include changes resulting from the intervention that are relevant to the achievement of outcomes.
<b>Preparedness</b>	The knowledge and capacities developed by governments, professional response and recovery organizations, communities and individuals to effectively anticipate, respond to and recover from the impacts of likely, imminent or current hazard events or conditions. Emergency preparedness consists of the mechanisms and systems put in place in advance to enable an effective and timely emergency response to humanitarian crisis, based on analysis of the risks in a particular context, considering national and regional capacities and UNICEF’s comparative advantage. Preparedness includes: building national capacities for preparedness and response; ensuring country offices’ preparedness to respond; developing headquarters and regional office capacities to support country offices; and contributing to inter-agency preparedness. The combination of these elements varies according to context. Preparedness is part of risk-informed programming (which also includes disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, peacebuilding and social protection).
<b>Programme integration</b>	The intentional combining of one or more sector interventions to achieve improved humanitarian outcomes. Integration by consolidation refers to the development of a comprehensive set of multi-sector initiatives combined into one plan. Integration by convergence refers to the geographical co-location of services. Integration by contribution occurs when one sector has the primary responsibility for delivering results, but other sectors contribute to that achievement. Integration by outcomes occurs when interventions are intentionally combined in order to achieve

	humanitarian outcomes, not for reasons of efficiency, but because, without doing so, it will not be possible to reach the intended outcome.
<b>Quality</b>	In the context of child protection in humanitarian action programming, quality refers to the extent to which UNICEF is adhering to key standards and benchmarks (e.g., benchmarks of its Core Commitments to Children in Humanitarian Action, technical standards for humanitarian programming such as Sphere, and Grand Bargain commitments, as reflected in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021). Quality also refers to the value placed on services by rights-holders and the extent to which such services have improved the quality of their lives.
<b>Recovery</b>	The restoration and improvement, where appropriate, of the facilities, livelihoods and living conditions of disaster-affected communities, including efforts to reduce disaster risk factors.
<b>Response</b>	Emergency services and public assistance provided during or immediately after an emergency (e.g., natural disaster, armed conflict, public health crisis) to save lives, reduce negative impacts, ensure public safety and meet the basic subsistence needs and protection of the people affected.
<b>Result statement</b>	The exact text used to describe an expected result.
<b>Results</b>	This includes outputs, outcomes and impacts, where impacts are the final outcomes affecting well-being.
<b>Results framework</b>	The programme logic that explains how the development objective is to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions.
<b>Risk-informed programming</b>	An approach to programming that aims to reduce the risk of hazards, shocks and stresses on children's well-being, their communities and systems, contributing to resilient development.
<b>Theory of change</b>	A theory of change is a planning framework to identify the causal pathways that lead from a current situation to the intended results of a project, programme or intervention and what needs to be considered to move from one to the other. Theories of change help to design more realistic goals, clarify accountabilities and establish a common understanding of the strategies to be used to achieve the goals.
<b>Theory of action</b>	A theory of action is the operationalization of a theory of change in a specific context. It is the delivery model for the (more abstract) theory of change.
<b>Theory of change statement</b>	The 'if-then' causal relationship used to describe the intended ultimate outcome or results.
<b>Third-party monitoring</b>	This is when an organization/institution is engaged to carry out systematic field monitoring on behalf of UNICEF or potentially on behalf of UNICEF and partners, contracted under a programme cooperation agreement or institutional special service agreement.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In anticipation of a future evaluation of this workstream, the UNICEF Evaluation Office conducted an evaluability assessment (EA) of the organization's work on child protection in humanitarian action (CPHA). According to the *Guidance Note for Conducting Evaluability Assessments in UNICEF*, an EA is a quality assurance tool for good programme design. It is a tool to help managers bring early adjustments and corrections to programme design and implementation as needed. The purpose of an evaluability assessment is to provide programme staff and partners with evidence on the extent to which results can be demonstrated in the near, medium and long term based on programme documentation and the monitoring systems being established.

This EA assesses the current level of evaluability or "evaluation-readiness" of UNICEF's work to protect children in humanitarian action. It analyses how robust UNICEF's tools are for measuring and verifying CPHA performance and the extent to which UNICEF is fully and effectively utilizing such tools, including relevant theories of change, performance monitoring systems and performance indicators. The EA takes a comprehensive approach to CPHA, covering work at the global, regional and country levels by a range of UNICEF business units, primarily the UNICEF Programme Division (PD) and Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS), and includes UNICEF's operational CPHA-activities and its child protection coordination function and advocacy role.

This report presents the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the EA, which was conducted between November 2018 and July 2019. The Evaluation Office recognizes the exceptional effort made by UNICEF to develop, maintain and consistently update and improve the relevant CPHA performance monitoring structures; and the work of country level staff to make these structures available even while operating in some of the world's most complex and dangerous environments. The EA is expected to add value to UNICEF's ongoing efforts by illuminating relevant strengths and challenges in the current system and providing practical suggestions for strengthening CPHA evaluability in the future.

The EA was framed around the following three parameters:

- **Parameter 1: Programme design – addressing evaluability in principle**  
Through this parameter, the EA assessed the coherence of programme impact pathways and the appropriateness and clarity of the associated results frameworks. This included the overarching theory of change and results frameworks for Goal Area 3 of the UNICEF strategic plan, 2018-2021, for the substantive work streams under the child protection in emergencies (CPiE) portfolio and for the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs).
- **Parameter 2: Financial and programmatic monitoring data – addressing evaluability in practice**  
Through this parameter, the EA ascertained the existence and availability of relevant financial and programme monitoring data and its accessibility. This did not include a review of data quality in terms of the actual data points entered.
- **Parameter 3: UNICEF's CPHA accountabilities – addressing evaluability in principle and in practice**  
Through this parameter, the EA determined the extent to which there are shared and documented corporate goals and work arrangements around CPHA and mapped UNICEF business units that are directly or indirectly contributing to the achievement of humanitarian aspects of Goal Area 3. Work on this parameter also included identification of key evidence gaps and information needs in view of a potential future evaluation.

The EA differentiated between two dimensions of evaluability: On the one hand, evaluability in principle based on the internal logic of a programme as represented by its theory of change, and on the other hand, evaluability in practice, as represented by the measurement approach, tools and indicators used to reflect performance and results achieved. A mix of methods and tools were used to promote data standardization and analysis, and additional qualitative information was considered to contextualize and nuance the findings. Drawing on good and emerging practice from related exercises within the UNICEF Evaluation Office, the EA developed and used rubrics to enhance the review of various forms of data. The EA was approached as a desk-based review of the internal and external literature, supplemented by selective key informant interviews intended to clarify or supplement information obtained during the desk review and identify gaps in documentation. While the EA did not include regional or field visits, it did include an in-depth case study on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was carried out through document review and telephone interviews (see *Annex 10*).

The following provides a summary of the overall findings that emerged from the EA.

### Findings for evaluability in principle:

At the **corporate level**, there are marked limitations in the evaluability in principle of UNICEF's CPHA work: This is mainly because there is no meaningful conceptual framework for measuring the results of UNICEF's CP (and hence CPHA) interventions. The goal area 3 theory of change included in the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 is a corporate template for advocacy purposes and flawed in its logic and structure for the purposes of making CPHA evaluation-ready. The CCCs lack clear causal pathways that link outputs to higher level outcomes and hence pose a significant monitoring challenge for CPHA. Only three of the six CPiE work streams have dedicated theories of change; among those, MHPSS and gender-based violence in emergencies are strongest, but with different degrees of linkage to the Strategic Plan theory of change. Inconsistencies in regard to how child protection work figures into regional frameworks complicates CPHA evaluability in principle at the corporate level.

The evaluability of UNICEF's CPHA work at the **country level** is highly variable. Most country cases examined fall within the limited to moderate categories Both UNICEF's cluster coordination and advocacy work for CPHA have low levels of evaluability in principle. None of the country-level ToCs are presented as "theories action" that relate to a broader corporate theory of change. Only a subset of country programmes is aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan at any given time. Most country-level CPHA indicators are not fully comparable with Goal Area 3 results indicators. Few country office theories of change provide assumptions, risks and mitigation measures that are either specific to CPHA or internal to UNICEF; rather, they present risks and assumptions that focus on external actors and factors.

### Findings for evaluability in practice:

Complex corporate **performance monitoring systems** are in place and broadly functioning but could benefit from streamlining. **Accountabilities** for generating and reporting on CPHA-related results are reportedly widespread but largely undocumented. Given that almost all performance monitoring data is self-reported by country offices to headquarters, country offices must be able to understand the definitions of indicators and supply the information requested by headquarters in order for global data to be valid. The mixed quality of data, due to aggregation from the field to the country office and from the country office to headquarters, limits evaluability in practice. Evaluability in practice of UNICEF's **cluster coordination** role in the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (AoR) is adequate; while

UNICEF's CPHA-related **advocacy work** is not evaluation-ready due to the lack of concrete indicators.

The analysis culminated in the following conclusions, recommendations and suggested areas for future evaluation:

**Overarching conclusion:** UNICEF's CPHA work is not currently evaluation-ready for the type of comprehensive, corporate evaluation exercise typically commissioned by the Evaluation Office. This is despite the fact that UNICEF has made important investments towards developing and improving CPHA-related performance monitoring systems and recognizes the continued need to advance this work.

- **Conclusion 1:** The evaluability in principle of UNICEF's CPHA interventions is limited. The conceptual underpinnings of this work are not explicit and translation into coherent results chains and planning documents encompassing the work of all relevant business units is missing. The CCCs are not integrated into an overarching child protection/CPHA theory of change.
- **Conclusion 2:** Accountabilities for CPHA-related results are disbursed widely throughout UNICEF and are not well documented.
- **Conclusion 3:** The evaluability in practice of UNICEF's CPHA interventions is moderate. The organization's complex corporate monitoring mechanisms are mostly functional but need to be streamlined. UNICEF is currently working to improve systems and indicators, but data aggregation from the field to country office and headquarters levels remains questionable, hampering the validity and comparability of data, and contrasting with UNICEF's corporate equity focus.
- **Conclusion 4:** As an area of work, CPHA is not currently able to demonstrate full contribution to either humanitarian results or results across the humanitarian-development nexus, supporting longer-term impact.

**Overarching Recommendation:** UNICEF should develop a comprehensive CPHA programme impact pathway and associated results framework with indicators at different levels. All CPIE work streams should fall within its scope, with particular attention to the children and armed conflict agenda.

- **Recommendation 1:** UNICEF should strengthen the coherence of its programme design tools.
- **Recommendation 2:** UNICEF should clarify CPHA-related accountabilities.
- **Recommendation 3:** UNICEF should simplify CPHA performance monitoring mechanisms.

The EA has identified **evidence gaps and future information needs** in five areas relating to CPHA:

- Formative evaluation on UNICEF's contribution to the children and armed conflict agenda (2022);
- Summative evaluation of UNICEF's work on mental health and psychosocial support (2023);
- Evaluation or strategic review of the centrality of protection in UNICEF's work in humanitarian settings;
- Evaluation or operational review on UNICEF's children on the move programming; and
- Evaluation of the contribution of Child Protection AoR coordination to the achievement of UNICEF's accountabilities as an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principal and its broader CPHA agenda.

An internal process could prioritize one or two of these for inclusion into the Executive Board approved UNICEF Plan for global evaluations, 2022-2025.

# RESUMEN EJECUTIVO

En previsión de una futura evaluación de esta corriente de trabajo, la Oficina de Evaluación de UNICEF llevó a cabo una evaluación de la evaluabilidad (EA, por sus siglas en inglés) de la labor de la organización en materia de protección de la infancia en la acción humanitaria (PIAH). De acuerdo con la *Nota de orientación para la realización de evaluaciones de evaluabilidad en UNICEF*, una EA es una herramienta que ofrece una garantía de calidad para el buen diseño de los programas. Es una herramienta que sirve de ayuda a los gestores para introducir ajustes y correcciones en la etapa inicial del diseño y la ejecución de los programas, según sea necesario. El propósito de una EA es proporcionar al personal del programa y a los asociados pruebas sobre la medida en que los resultados pueden demostrarse a corto, medio y largo plazo sobre la base de la documentación del programa y de los sistemas de seguimiento que se están poniendo en práctica.

Esta EA evalúa el nivel actual de evaluabilidad o “preparación para la evaluación” del trabajo de UNICEF para proteger a los niños en la acción humanitaria. Analiza la solidez de las herramientas de UNICEF para medir y verificar el rendimiento de la PIAH y la medida en que UNICEF está utilizando plena y eficazmente dichas herramientas, incluidas las teorías de cambio pertinentes, los sistemas de monitoreo del rendimiento y los indicadores del rendimiento. La EA adopta un enfoque integral de la PIAH, que abarca el trabajo a nivel mundial, regional y nacional de una serie de unidades institucionales de UNICEF, principalmente la División de Programas de UNICEF (DP) y la Oficina de Programas de Emergencia (EMOPS), e incluye las actividades operativas de la PIAH de UNICEF, así como su función en la coordinación de la protección de la infancia y su papel en la promoción.

Este informe presenta los resultados, conclusiones y recomendaciones de la EA, que se llevó a cabo entre noviembre de 2018 y julio de 2019. La Oficina de Evaluación reconoce el esfuerzo excepcional realizado por UNICEF para desarrollar, mantener y actualizar y mejorar sistemáticamente las estructuras pertinentes de supervisión del desempeño de la PIAH, así como la labor del personal de los países para que esas estructuras estén disponibles incluso cuando las operaciones se realizan en algunos de los entornos más complejos y peligrosos del mundo. Se espera que la EA agregue valor a los esfuerzos en curso de UNICEF al iluminar los puntos fuertes y los problemas pertinentes en el sistema actual y proporcionar sugerencias prácticas para fortalecer la evaluabilidad de la PIAH en el futuro.

La EA se enmarca en los tres parámetros siguientes:

- **Parámetro 1: Diseño del programa – abordar la evaluabilidad en principio**  
Mediante este parámetro, la EA evaluó la coherencia de las vías de impacto del programa y la idoneidad y claridad de los marcos de resultados asociados. Esto incluyó la teoría general del cambio y los marcos de resultados para el grupo de objetivos en 3 del plan estratégico de UNICEF para 2018-2021, para las corrientes de trabajo sustantivas de la cartera de protección de la infancia en situaciones de emergencia y para los compromisos básicos para la infancia en la acción humanitaria (CCC, por sus siglas en inglés).
- **Parámetro 2: Datos de monitoreo de fondos y programas – abordar la evaluabilidad en la práctica**  
Por medio de este parámetro, la EA determinó la existencia y disponibilidad de datos de monitoreo de los fondos y los programas pertinentes y su accesibilidad. Esto no incluyó un examen de la calidad de los datos en términos de los puntos de datos reales introducidos.



- **Parámetro 3: Responsabilidades de la PIAH de UNICEF – abordar la evaluabilidad en principio y en la práctica**

Mediante este parámetro, la EA determinó en qué medida existen objetivos institucionales y acuerdos de trabajo compartidos y documentados en torno a la PIAH y trazó un mapa de las unidades institucionales de UNICEF que contribuyen directa o indirectamente a la consecución de los aspectos humanitarios del grupo de objetivos 3. El trabajo sobre este parámetro también incluyó determinar las principales lagunas que se reflejan en las pruebas y las necesidades de información con miras a una posible evaluación en el futuro.

La EA establece diferencias entre dos dimensiones de la evaluabilidad: Por una parte, la evaluabilidad en principio, basada en la lógica interna de un programa, tal como se refleja en su teoría del cambio, y, por otra, la evaluabilidad en la práctica, tal como se refleja en el enfoque de medición, las herramientas y los indicadores utilizados para reflejar el rendimiento y los resultados obtenidos. Se utilizó una combinación de métodos e instrumentos para promover la normalización y el análisis de los datos, y se tuvo en cuenta otro tipo de información cualitativa adicional para contextualizar y matizar las conclusiones. Sobre la base de las nuevas prácticas satisfactorias de los ejercicios conexos de la Oficina de Evaluación de UNICEF, la EA elaboró y utilizó rúbricas para mejorar el examen de diversos tipos de datos. La EA se abordó en forma de examen documental de la bibliografía interna y externa, combinada con entrevistas selectivas a informantes clave con la intención de aclarar o complementar la información obtenida durante el examen documental y determinar los posibles vacíos en la documentación. Si bien la EA no incluyó visitas regionales o sobre el terreno, sí incluyó un estudio de caso en profundidad sobre la República Democrática del Congo, que se llevó a cabo mediante el examen de documentos y entrevistas telefónicas (véase el Anexo 10).

A continuación se ofrece un resumen de las conclusiones generales a las que se llegó en la EA.

### **Conclusiones sobre la evaluabilidad en principio:**

A **nivel institucional**, existen marcadas limitaciones en la evaluabilidad en principio del trabajo de la PIAH de UNICEF: Esto se debe principalmente a que no existe un marco conceptual significativo para medir los resultados de las intervenciones de UNICEF en materia de protección de la infancia (y, por lo tanto, de la PIAH). La teoría de cambio del grupo de objetivos 3 incluida en el Plan Estratégico para 2018-2021 es una plantilla institucional con fines de incidencia política y tiene fallas en su lógica y estructura para el propósito de valorar la evaluabilidad de la PIAH. Los CCC carecen de vías causales claras que vinculen los productos con los resultados de mayor nivel y, por lo tanto, plantean un desafío significativo de monitoreo de la PIAH. Sólo tres de las seis corrientes de trabajo de la protección de la infancia en emergencias disponen de teorías de cambio dedicadas a este asunto; entre ellas, las esferas de la salud mental y el apoyo psicosocial, y de la violencia de género en emergencias, son las más sólidas, pero con diferentes grados de vinculación con la teoría de cambio del Plan Estratégico. La falta de cohesión con respecto a la forma en que la protección de la infancia figura en los marcos regionales complican la evaluabilidad a nivel institucional de la PIAH en principio.

La evaluabilidad del trabajo de la PIAH de UNICEF a nivel de país es muy variable. La mayoría de los casos de países examinados se encuentran dentro de las categorías limitadas a moderadas. En principio, tanto la coordinación de los grupos temáticos como el trabajo de promoción de la PIAH de UNICEF tienen bajos niveles de evaluabilidad. Ninguna de las teorías del cambio a nivel de país se presenta como una “teoría de la acción” relacionada con una teoría institucional más amplia del cambio. Sólo un subconjunto de los programas por países está alineado con el Plan Estratégico de UNICEF en un momento

dado. La mayoría de los indicadores de PIAH a nivel de país no son totalmente comparables con los indicadores de resultados de la esfera de objetivos 3. Pocas teorías de cambio de las oficinas en los países proporcionan hipótesis, riesgos y medidas de mitigación que sean específicas de la PIAH o internas de UNICEF; más bien, presentan riesgos y supuestos que se centran en agentes y factores externos.

### Conclusiones sobre la evaluabilidad en la práctica:

Aunque se han establecido **sistemas complejos de monitoreo del desempeño** institucional que funcionan en líneas generales, sería conveniente racionalizarlos. Las responsabilidades para generar y notificar los resultados relacionados con la PIAH están muy dispersas, pero en su mayoría no están documentadas. Dado que casi todos los datos de monitoreo del desempeño son comunicados por las oficinas en los países a la sede, las oficinas deben poder comprender las definiciones de los indicadores y proporcionar la información solicitada por la sede para que los datos globales sean válidos. La calidad mixta de los datos, debido a la agregación entre el terreno y la oficina en el país, y entre la oficina en el país y la sede, limita la capacidad de evaluación en la práctica. La evaluabilidad en la práctica de la función de coordinación de los grupos temáticos de UNICEF en la esfera de responsabilidad de la protección de la infancia es adecuada; mientras que el trabajo de promoción relacionado con la PIAH de UNICEF no está preparado para la evaluación debido a la falta de indicadores concretos.

El análisis culminó con las siguientes conclusiones, recomendaciones y esferas sugeridas para la evaluación futura:

**Conclusión general:** La labor de la PIAH de UNICEF no está actualmente preparada para una evaluación del tipo de ejercicio de evaluación global e institucional que suele encargar la Oficina de Evaluación. Esto se produce a pesar de que UNICEF ha realizado importantes inversiones en el desarrollo y la mejora de los sistemas de monitoreo del rendimiento relacionados con la PIAH, y reconoce la necesidad de seguir avanzando en esta labor.

- **Conclusión 1:** La evaluabilidad en principio de las intervenciones de la PIAH de UNICEF es limitada. Los fundamentos conceptuales de esta labor no son explícitos y no se han traducido en cadenas de resultados coherentes ni en documentos de planificación que abarquen la labor de todas las unidades institucionales pertinentes. Los CCC no están integrados en una teoría de cambio global sobre la protección de la infancia en general, y la PIAH.
- **Conclusión 2:** Las responsabilidades por los resultados relacionados con la PIAH se reparten ampliamente en todo UNICEF y no están bien documentadas.
- **Conclusión 3:** La evaluabilidad en la práctica de las intervenciones de la PIAH de UNICEF es moderada. Los complejos mecanismos de monitoreo institucional de la organización son en su mayoría funcionales, pero es necesario racionalizarlos. UNICEF trabaja actualmente para mejorar los sistemas y los indicadores, pero la agregación de datos desde el terreno hasta las oficinas en los países y la sede sigue siendo cuestionable, lo que dificulta la validez y la comparabilidad de los datos y contrasta con el enfoque de equidad institucional de UNICEF.
- **Conclusión 4:** Como esfera de trabajo, la PIAH no es capaz actualmente de demostrar una contribución plena a los resultados humanitarios o a los resultados que se dan a través del nexo entre ayuda humanitaria y desarrollo, y que apoyan un impacto a largo plazo.

**Recomendación general:** UNICEF debería elaborar un plan general de impacto del programa de la PIAH y un marco de resultados con indicadores a diferentes niveles. Todas las líneas de trabajo de la protección de la infancia en situaciones de emergencia deberían

entrar en su ámbito de aplicación, con especial atención al programa relativo a los niños y los conflictos armados.

- **Recomendación 1:** UNICEF debería reforzar la coherencia de sus instrumentos de diseño de programas.
- **Recomendación 2:** UNICEF debería aclarar las responsabilidades relacionadas con la PIAH.
- **Recomendación 3:** UNICEF debería simplificar los mecanismos de supervisión del desempeño de la PIAH.

La EA ha identificado **brechas en las pruebas y necesidades futuras de información** en cinco esferas relacionadas con la PIAH:

- Evaluación formativa sobre la contribución de UNICEF a la agenda de la infancia y los conflictos armados (2022);
- Evaluación sumaria de la labor de UNICEF en materia de salud mental y apoyo psicosocial (2023);
- Evaluación o examen estratégico de la importancia de la protección en la labor que realiza UNICEF en los entornos humanitarios;
- Evaluación o examen operativo de los programas de UNICEF sobre la infancia en tránsito; y
- Evaluación de la contribución de la coordinación de las actividades de protección de la infancia al cumplimiento de las responsabilidades de UNICEF en su calidad de organización principal del Comité Permanente entre Organismos y de su programa más amplio de protección de la infancia.

En un proceso interno se podría dar prioridad a una o dos de estas cuestiones para su inclusión en el Plan de Evaluaciones Mundiales de UNICEF para 2022-2025 aprobado por la Junta Ejecutiva.

# RÉSUMÉ ANALYTIQUE

En prévision d'une future évaluation de cet axe de travail, le Bureau de l'Évaluation de l'UNICEF a réalisé une étude d'évaluabilité des interventions de l'organisation en matière de Protection de l'enfance dans l'action humanitaire (PEAH). Selon la *Note d'orientation sur la réalisation d'études d'évaluabilité à l'UNICEF*, une étude d'évaluabilité est un outil d'assurance qualité permettant de garantir une bonne conception des programmes. Cet outil permet aux responsables d'ajuster et de corriger la conception et la mise en œuvre des programmes à un stade précoce, si nécessaire. Le but d'une étude d'évaluabilité est de fournir à l'équipe et aux partenaires travaillant sur le programme des données indiquant dans quelle mesure des résultats peuvent être présentés à court, moyen et long terme, et ce, à partir des documents de programmes et systèmes de suivi.

L'étude d'évaluabilité analyse le niveau d'évaluabilité (ou « préparation à l'évaluation ») du travail de l'UNICEF en matière de PEAH. Elle évalue la robustesse des outils de l'UNICEF pour mesurer et vérifier les performances en matière de PEAH et détermine si l'organisation utilise pleinement et efficacement ces outils, y compris les théories du changement, les systèmes de contrôle de la performance et les indicateurs de performances. L'étude d'évaluabilité aborde la PEAH de manière globale et analyse les actions menées au niveau mondial, régional et national par différentes entités de l'UNICEF, principalement la Division des Programmes et le Bureau des Programmes d'Urgence. L'étude tient compte des activités opérationnelles de l'UNICEF en matière de PEAH ainsi que de ses activités de coordination et de plaidoyer.

Ce rapport présente les résultats, les conclusions et les recommandations de l'étude d'évaluabilité effectuée entre novembre 2018 et juillet 2019. Le Bureau de l'Évaluation reconnaît les efforts exceptionnels déployés par l'UNICEF pour élaborer, consolider, régulièrement mettre à jour et améliorer les structures de suivi de la performance relatif à la PEAH, ainsi que le travail effectué par les équipes au niveau national pour mettre ces structures à disposition, y compris dans certains des environnements les plus complexes et les plus dangereux au monde. L'étude devrait compléter les efforts constants déployés par l'UNICEF en soulignant les points forts et les points faibles du système actuel et en formulant des suggestions pratiques pour renforcer l'évaluabilité de la PEAH à l'avenir.

L'étude d'évaluabilité a été conçue autour des trois paramètres suivants :

- **Paramètre 1 : Conception des programmes – l'évaluabilité en principe**  
À travers ce paramètre, l'étude d'évaluabilité a permis d'examiner la cohérence de la logique d'intervention des programmes ainsi que la pertinence et la clarté des cadres de résultats associés. Il s'agissait notamment d'analyser la théorie du changement et les cadres de résultats généraux des éléments suivants : le *Groupe d'Objectifs 3* du *Plan Stratégique de l'UNICEF 2018-2021*, les axes de travail importants des activités de *Protection de l'enfance dans les situations d'urgence* ainsi que les *Principaux engagements pour les enfants dans l'action humanitaire*.
- **Paramètre 2 : Données de suivi financier et programmatique – l'évaluabilité dans la pratique**  
À travers ce paramètre, l'étude d'évaluabilité a établi l'existence, la disponibilité et l'accessibilité de données de suivi financier et programmatique pertinentes. Il ne s'agissait pas d'analyser la qualité des données saisies.
- **Paramètre 3 : Responsabilités de l'UNICEF en matière de PEAH – l'évaluabilité en principe et dans la pratique**  
À travers ce paramètre, l'étude d'évaluabilité a déterminé dans quelle mesure il existait des objectifs et des modalités de travail partagés et répertoriés autour de la

PEAH ainsi que recensé les entités de l'UNICEF qui contribuent directement ou indirectement à la réalisation des aspects humanitaires du *Groupe d'Objectifs 3*. Pour ce paramètre, il s'agissait également d'identifier les principales lacunes en matière de données et les besoins en information dans l'optique d'une éventuelle future évaluation.

Deux dimensions de l'évaluabilité ont été différenciées dans l'étude : d'une part, l'évaluabilité en principe qui s'intéresse à la logique interne d'un programme définie par sa théorie du changement et, d'autre part, l'évaluabilité dans la pratique axée sur la méthode, les outils et les indicateurs de mesure utilisés pour représenter les performances et les résultats obtenus. Différents outils et méthodes ont été employés pour favoriser la standardisation et l'analyse des données, et d'autres informations qualitatives ont été prises en compte afin de contextualiser et de nuancer les résultats. S'appuyant sur de nouvelles « bonnes pratiques » lors d'exercices similaires réalisés par le Bureau de l'Evaluation de l'UNICEF, l'étude d'évaluabilité a permis de concevoir et d'utiliser des grilles pour améliorer l'analyse de différents types de données. L'étude d'évaluabilité a inclus l'examen de documents internes et externes, complété par des entretiens avec des informateurs clés destinés à clarifier ou à enrichir les informations obtenues pendant l'examen des documents ainsi qu'à identifier les lacunes de ces derniers. Bien que l'étude d'évaluabilité ne prévoyait pas de visites dans les régions ou sur le terrain, une étude de cas approfondie de la République démocratique du Congo a été réalisée sous forme d'une revue documentaire et d'entretiens téléphoniques (voir Annexe 10).

Le résumé des conclusions générales de l'étude d'évaluabilité est présenté dans le paragraphe suivant.

### Résultats concernant l'évaluabilité en principe :

Au **niveau de l'organisation**, il existe des limitations importantes à l'évaluabilité en principe des activités de PEAH de l'UNICEF. Cela s'explique principalement par l'absence de cadre conceptuel significatif permettant d'évaluer les résultats des interventions de l'UNICEF en matière de protection de l'enfance (et donc en matière de PEAH). La théorie du changement du *Groupe d'Objectifs 3* du *Plan Stratégique 2018-2021* est un document de l'organisation utilisé à des fins de plaidoyer et vise à préparer la PEAH à faire l'objet d'une évaluation. Dans les *Principaux engagements pour les enfants dans l'action humanitaire*, les relations de causalité entre les résultats et les objectifs spécifiques sont absentes, ce qui entraîne des difficultés importantes pour le suivi de la PEAH. Seuls trois des six axes de travail pour la *Protection de l'enfance dans les situations d'urgence* sont associés à une théorie du changement. Les théories élaborées pour les domaines « santé mentale et soutien psychosocial » et « violence liée au genre dans les situations d'urgence » sont les plus solides, mais leurs liens avec la théorie du changement du *Plan Stratégique* sont variables. Les disparités quant à l'intégration des activités de protection de l'enfance dans les cadres régionaux compliquent l'évaluabilité en principe de la PEAH au niveau de l'organisation.

Au **niveau des pays**, l'évaluabilité des activités de l'UNICEF en matière de PEAH est très variable. Dans la plupart des pays étudiés, l'évaluabilité était limitée à modérée. Le travail de l'UNICEF au sein des groupes sectoriels ainsi qu'au niveau des actions de plaidoyer en faveur de la PEAH présentent de faibles niveaux d'évaluabilité en principe. Aucune des théories du changement élaborées à l'échelle d'un pays n'est présentée comme un plan d'action lié à une théorie du changement au niveau global. Seul un petit nombre de programmes de pays sont en permanence conformes au Plan Stratégique de l'UNICEF. La plupart des indicateurs de PEAH au niveau des pays ne sont pas complètement comparables avec les indicateurs de résultat du *Groupe d'Objectifs 3*. Au niveau des bureaux de pays, peu de théories du changement proposent des hypothèses, des risques et

des mesures d'atténuation propres à la PEAH ou internes à l'UNICEF. Elles présentent au contraire des risques et des hypothèses qui mettent l'accent sur des acteurs et des facteurs externes.

### Résultats concernant l'évaluabilité dans la pratique :

Au niveau global, des **systèmes complexes de contrôle de la performance** ont été mis en place et fonctionnent dans l'ensemble, mais une simplification pourrait s'avérer utile. Concernant la production de résultats sur la PEAH et les rapports en la matière, il semble que les **responsabilités** soient réparties mais rarement consignées. Etant donné que la majorité des données de contrôle de la performance est rapportée au siège par les bureaux de pays, il est indispensable que ceux-ci comprennent la définition des indicateurs et fournissent les informations requises par le siège afin que les données globales soient valides. Le siège regroupe les données des bureaux de pays qui eux-mêmes regroupent les données du terrain. Cela explique la qualité inégale de ces données, qui limite l'évaluabilité dans la pratique. L'évaluabilité dans la pratique du rôle de l'UNICEF dans la **coordination du groupe sectoriel** de la protection de l'enfance est adéquate. En revanche, les **activités de plaidoyer** de l'organisation liées à la PEAH ne sont pas évaluables en raison de l'absence d'indicateurs concrets.

L'analyse a abouti aux conclusions et recommandations suivantes et a permis de suggérer des domaines d'évaluation future :

**Conclusion générale :** Les activités de PEAH menées par l'UNICEF ne sont actuellement pas prêtes à subir le type d'évaluation approfondie généralement commandée par le Bureau de l'Evaluation, et ce, malgré que l'UNICEF ait fait des investissements importants en faveur de la conception et de l'amélioration des systèmes de contrôle de la performance et soit conscient de la nécessité de poursuivre ce travail.

- **Conclusion 1 :** L'évaluabilité en principe des interventions de l'UNICEF liées à la PEAH est limitée. Les bases conceptuelles de ces interventions ne sont pas explicites et ne se traduisent pas par des chaînes de résultats cohérentes et des documents de planification regroupant les activités de toutes les entités concernées l'organisation. Les *Principaux engagements pour les enfants dans l'action humanitaire* ne sont pas intégrés à la théorie globale du changement associée à la protection de l'enfance/à la PEAH.
- **Conclusion 2 :** Les responsabilités quant aux résultats liés à la PEAH sont distribuées dans l'ensemble de l'organisation et font l'objet de peu de documentation écrite.
- **Conclusion 3 :** L'évaluabilité dans la pratique des interventions de l'UNICEF liées à la PEAH est modérée. Les mécanismes complexes de contrôle de la performance de l'organisation sont globalement fonctionnels mais doivent être simplifiés. L'UNICEF s'efforce actuellement d'améliorer ses systèmes et ses indicateurs, mais le regroupement successif des données du terrain par les bureaux de pays, puis par le siège reste une pratique contestable qui limite la validité et la comparabilité des données et qui tranche avec le principe d'équité cher à l'organisation.
- **Conclusion 4 :** Actuellement, rien ne montre que la PEAH, en tant que domaine d'activité, contribue pleinement aux résultats en matière d'action humanitaire ou aux résultats concernant le lien entre action humanitaire et développement, ou entraîne des effets à long terme.

**Recommandation générale :** L'UNICEF doit élaborer une logique d'intervention des programmes de PEAH et un cadre de résultats associé comprenant des indicateurs à

différents niveaux. Tous les axes de travail pour la *Protection de l'enfance dans les situations d'urgence* doivent relever de ce cadre, et une attention particulière doit être accordée aux actions menées en faveur des enfants touchés par les conflits armés.

- **Recommandation 1** : L'UNICEF doit améliorer la cohérence de ses outils de conception des programmes.
- **Recommandation 2** : L'UNICEF doit préciser quelles sont les responsabilités liées à la PEAH.
- **Recommandation 3** : L'UNICEF doit simplifier les mécanismes de suivi de la performance en matière de PEAH.

L'étude d'évaluabilité a recensé des **lacunes en matière de données et des besoins futurs en informations** dans cinq domaines liés à la PEAH :

- Évaluation formative sur la contribution de l'UNICEF aux actions menées en faveur des enfants touchés par les conflits armés (2022)
- Évaluation générale des activités de l'UNICEF relatives à la santé mentale et au soutien psychosocial (2023)
- Évaluation ou examen stratégique de l'aspect central de la protection dans les activités de l'UNICEF en situation de crise humanitaire
- Évaluation ou examen des opérations liées aux programmes de l'UNICEF en faveur des enfants en situation de déplacement
- Évaluation visant à déterminer dans quelle mesure le rôle de coordination dans la zone de responsabilité de la protection de l'enfance participe au respect des obligations de l'UNICEF au titre de responsable du Comité permanent interorganisations (CPI) et plus largement, à ses actions en faveur de la PEAH.

Un processus interne permettrait d'accorder la priorité à une ou deux de ces évaluations et de les inclure dans le plan de l'UNICEF pour les évaluations globales 2022-2025.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an evaluability assessment (EA) of UNICEF's work to protect children in humanitarian action (CPHA). Broadly stated, an EA is a review of a proposed set of activities to determine whether objectives are adequately defined, and results are verifiable. This EA provides evidence to UNICEF management and stakeholders on how robust the design of this work area is, the degree to which indicators are validated and measurable and the extent to which accountabilities and systems are in place to measure and verify performance. As such, this assessment is distinctly different from an evaluation and constitutes a preparatory phase to allow UNICEF managers to better prepare and understand the prerequisites for evaluations to follow.

As independent corporate evaluations typically commissioned by UNICEF's Evaluation Office tend to be theory-based (i.e., they assess UNICEF's contribution to a chain of results from activities and outputs through to higher-level outcomes and sometimes impact), this EA places considerable emphasis on the evaluability in principle of CPHA-related interventions. Conducting an EA in the first years of the strategy cycle permits UNICEF to strengthen, where necessary, the systems needed to reliably measure, monitor and evaluate progress toward results.

## 1.1 UNICEF's approach to child protection in humanitarian action

Child protection – defined based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child as preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, neglect and abuse against children – is central to the UNICEF mandate. Since its creation in 1946, UNICEF has been committed to protecting children in humanitarian action. When an emergency strikes, whether a sudden onset natural disaster, health epidemic or armed conflict, children require special protection to ensure their survival, safety and well-being. UNICEF's global mandate for children specifically provides for a focus on protecting children against maltreatment and from the immediate and long-term effects of emergencies, and on fulfilling their full rights.

As duty-bearers, governments have the primary responsibility of ensuring that children are protected at all times, including during emergencies. In full-fledged humanitarian situations, where the government may be weak or absent, or where the State is a perpetrator of violence, UNICEF actions to protect children are varied and far-reaching and carried out in line with the CCCs.<sup>1</sup> UNICEF's objectives are to actively prevent children from being harmed; to monitor violations committed against them; and to develop programmes to respond to instances where children are at risk of or have been subjected to violence, exploitation, neglect or abuse. Though devastating, emergencies can also provide opportunities to work with governments, civil society actors and communities to build back better and strengthen systems, including through legal reform, policies and capacity building to improve, for example, information management and case management systems and legal and policy standards and to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus.

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<sup>1</sup> The Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action – the CCCs – are UNICEF's central policy for upholding the rights of children affected by humanitarian crisis. They are a framework for humanitarian action, around which UNICEF seeks to engage with partners. The updated CCCs promote predictable, effective and timely collective humanitarian action, and clearly outline the areas in which UNICEF can best contribute to results. The CCCs are guided by international human rights law, in particular the Convention on the Rights of the Child and, in the case of complex emergencies, also by international humanitarian law. UNICEF is currently engaged in a process of reviewing and updating the CCCs (expected 2019).



More specifically, to address the vulnerabilities and risk factors arising in humanitarian situations, UNICEF:

- Supports community-based approaches to the provision of psychosocial support to girls, boys and women experiencing gender-based violence, including by providing safe spaces;
- Works to prevent family separation and support the reunification of unaccompanied and separated children;
- Strives to prevent child recruitment and support the release and reintegration of girls and boys associated with armed forces and groups;
- Supports programmes for the prevention and provision of survivor assistance to children affected by landmines and explosive arms;
- Seeks gender-responsive protection for children exposed to grave violations in situations of armed conflict and scales up support services for survivors;
- Advocates with all parties to a conflict to comply with international humanitarian and human rights law;
- Supports the development of effective and secure information management systems with the aim of better identifying the most vulnerable children in emergencies and improving case management services, including referral for protection support and other services;
- Supports the development of international standards, evidence, norms, good practice, guidance and other public goods associated with CPHA-related activities;
- Supports the monitoring and provision of timely and appropriate advocacy and programme responses to child rights violations.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, UNICEF is the lead agency within the humanitarian cluster system for the Child Protection Area of Responsibility (AoR) within the Protection Cluster. As lead agency, UNICEF is responsible for ensuring coordination and standards of delivery for all child protection entities in humanitarian action (including other United Nations agencies, government authorities, international non-governmental organizations, local civil society organizations, etc.).

### Defining CPHA

Humanitarian action is defined as the objectives to **save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of man-made crises and natural disasters, as well as to prevent and strengthen preparedness for the occurrence of such situations.**<sup>3</sup> In the context of this EA, this includes all humanitarian activities that UNICEF undertakes in all regions and sub-regions in its role as the lead United Nations agency mandated to protect children, alongside governments and civil society, through service delivery, systems strengthening, coordination of child protection actors and advocacy, including in all relevant settings, situations and contexts.

For the purpose of this EA, CPHA is defined as UNICEF's rights-based approach to protecting children in humanitarian action, including children affected by conflicts, natural disasters, health epidemics and other humanitarian situations, such as displacement or migration crises that can occur both outside or within stable development settings. Because CPHA is child protection work that is carried out in the context of humanitarian action and settings, it is guided by humanitarian

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021', E/ICEF/2017/17/Rev.1, UNICEF, New York, 16 August 2017, p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Child Protection Working Group, 'Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action', 2012.

principles.<sup>4</sup> This definition recognizes that CPHA goes beyond child protection in emergency contexts, as humanitarian settings can exist on a smaller, more localized scale even without an official emergency having been declared.

CPHA includes child protection work carried out at field levels in humanitarian settings in collaboration with partners, as well as at the country, regional and headquarters levels in support of the field. It takes place within the rights-based approach presented in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict; the Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action (CCCs); the Sustainable Development Goals associated with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Grand Bargain, launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016; UNICEF's Child Protection Strategy (2008); and the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021.<sup>5</sup>

## 1.2 External context

Protecting children in violent conflict and natural disasters is increasingly difficult as the number, scale and complexity of emergencies continues to grow and millions of children and their families and communities suffer numerous, multifaceted forms of violence, exploitation and abuse. Today's complex humanitarian contexts include international and national armed conflicts, unprecedented migration situations, natural disasters spurred by the increasingly negative impacts of climate change and the growing number of fragile states across the globe.<sup>6</sup>

At the same time, established modes of humanitarian aid delivery are being challenged, as parties to conflict increasingly target aid workers with both physical and political attacks and restrict access, and while the protection needs of children are increasing and donor support for child protection declines.<sup>7</sup> Each of these trends in the external operating environment is likely to impact UNICEF's CPHA work now and in the coming years.

### Challenges of evaluability of CPHA work

Evaluating CPHA work is complicated. Traditional approaches to evaluation in stable development contexts do not always easily apply in humanitarian settings and emergencies. This is further exacerbated by a range of challenging factors, such as:

- Increasingly demanding institutional accountability for funding and quality of humanitarian responses;
- Lack of baseline data or challenges in acquiring baseline data due to the unanticipated nature of emergencies;
- Multiplicity of actions, actors and interventions working in parallel, and related difficulties in attribution of impact;
- Limitations on humanitarian access;
- Time limitations due to urgent demands for humanitarian responses, which limits the time available to train teams, design results frameworks, establish monitoring systems and plan for evaluation;
- Uncertain planning horizons and short-term funding.

Such factors help explain why the development of theories of change and logical results frameworks remain relatively new to humanitarian work and responders, and why preference is

<sup>4</sup> The humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence distinguish work in humanitarian settings from other forms of foreign investment and development assistance.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Defining the Scope of Humanitarian Response/Results in UNICEF' (internal), undated.

<sup>6</sup> OECD, *States of Fragility 2018* (revised version), OECD Publishing, Paris, August 2018.

<sup>7</sup> The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action and the Global Protection Cluster-Child Protection, 'Unprotected: Crisis in humanitarian funding for child protection', July 2019.

often given to other tools such as humanitarian minimum standards, standard operating procedures and checklists that can be applied across operational settings. These constraints are more relevant in rapid-onset than in slow-onset emergencies and protracted crises and recovery programming that is transitioning towards a stable development context.

## 1.3 Institutional context

UNICEF's work in CPHA is operationalized through the organization's Strategic Plan and its accompanying results framework and theory of change. These documents provide an integrated framework, including for monitoring and reporting, encompassing all humanitarian and development commitments. At the decentralized levels of the organization, country programme documents (CPDs), results and resource frameworks, programme strategy notes (PSNs) and Humanitarian Action for Children appeals loosely align to corporate priorities but follow their own, context-specific logic. Regional offices support country operations and sometimes establish their own regional priorities. They usually have basic schematics of child protection rather than thorough theories of change or multi-year indicator frameworks.

### The Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, and its results framework

At the corporate level, CPHA is mainstreamed within the Strategic Plan under Goal Area 3: "Every child is protected from violence and exploitation". Work under Goal Area 3 seeks to ensure that every girl and boy is protected from violence and exploitation in both humanitarian and development contexts. This includes protection from all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse. Goal Area 3 explicitly seeks to address "the protection risks that humanitarian crises exacerbate and the new protection risks that emerge [in humanitarian action]".<sup>8</sup> These include, for example, displaced, unaccompanied, separated or orphaned children, children and women at risk of or directly affected by gender-based violence, children with disabilities, children belonging to minorities, and other context-specific risk factors.

The Strategic Plan also stresses the importance of risk-informed programming, systems strengthening and integrated approaches that cut across sectors and goal areas and link humanitarian and development programming.

### Goal Area 3 theory of change

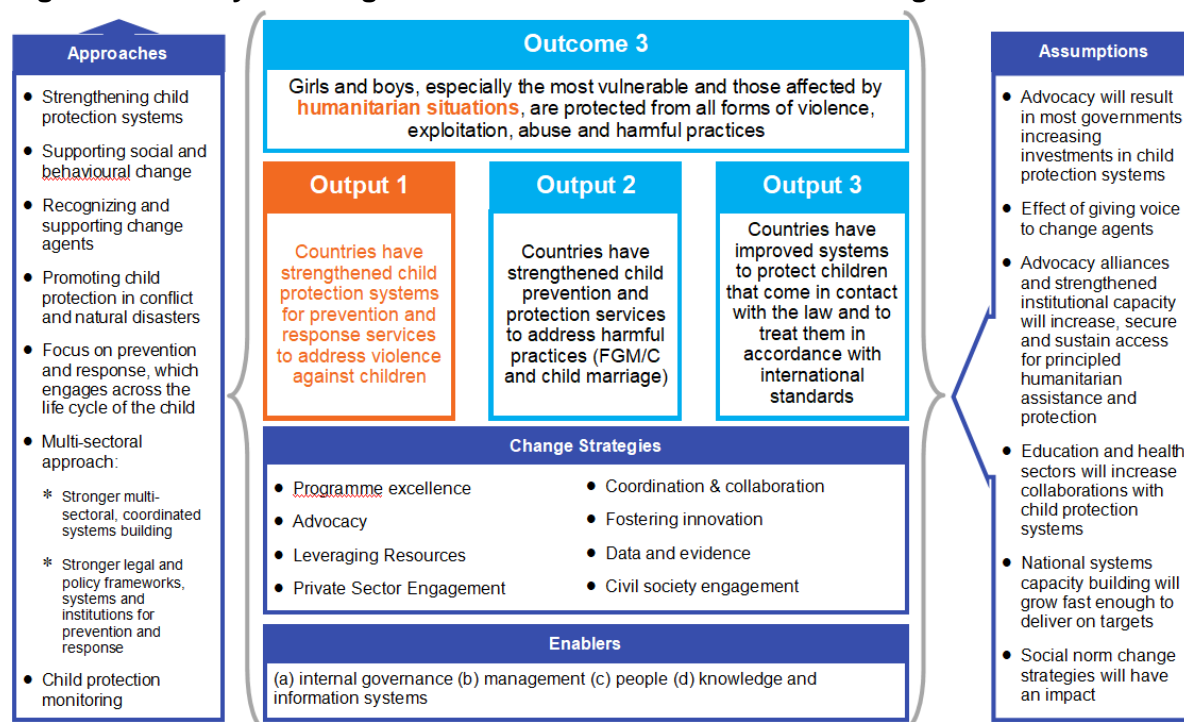
The theory of change for Goal Area 3 displays the results chain in graphic form. It depicts the outcome statement for Goal Area 3, the outputs expected to contribute to this outcome and the change strategies, enabling factors, key approaches and assumptions (see *Figure 1*).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> 'UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021', p. 26.

<sup>9</sup> It should be noted that the wording of the Strategic Plan change strategies is not consistent between the narrative and the graphic of the theory of change, which could give rise to confusion among readers.

**Figure 1: Theory of change for Goal Area 3 of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021<sup>10</sup>**



An important feature of the theory of change is that “humanitarian” is mentioned only in the outcome statement, “Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian situations, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices”, and then mainstreamed throughout all areas of work. “Promoting child protection in conflict and natural disasters” is flagged as one key approach to UNICEF’s work. One assumption is that “advocacy alliances and strengthened institutional capacity will increase, secure and sustain access for principled humanitarian assistance and protection”.

The Strategic Plan’s cross-cutting change strategies and enabling factors represent how UNICEF plans to meet its commitments under the Strategic Plan and the CCCs and enhance the likelihood of achieving its programmatic objectives. According to the narrative accompanying the theory of change, the change strategies and enablers address both humanitarian situations and the humanitarian-development nexus.

**Theory of change statement:** **if** countries have strengthened child protection systems for prevention and response services to address violence against children; **if** they have strengthened prevention and protection services to address harmful practices (female genital mutilation/circumcision and child marriage); and **if** they have improved systems to protect children that come in contact with the law and to treat them in accordance with international standards; **then** girls and boys will be better protected from violence and exploitation.

The results framework for Goal Area 3 primarily uses Sustainable Development Goal 16.2 indicators at the impact and outcome levels and UNICEF-specific indicators at the output level.<sup>11</sup> The key indicators relating to CPHA are placed under Output 1, “Countries have

<sup>10</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Theory of Change Paper, UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021: Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged’, UNICEF/2017/EB/11, UNICEF, 18 July 2017.

<sup>11</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Final Results Framework of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021’, E/ICEF/2017/18, UNICEF, 17 July 2017, p. 27.

strengthened child protection systems for prevention and response services to address violence against children” and marked “humanitarian”, which “signifies that the indicator is also applicable in humanitarian contexts”.<sup>12</sup>

**Table 1: CPHA-related indicators in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021**

Goal Area 3: Protection
<b>3.a.3.</b> Number of countries in which an inter-operable information management system supports and tracks case management, incident monitoring and programme monitoring.
<b>3.a.4.</b> Percentage of countries affected by armed conflict with a strategy to strengthen the protection of children from grave violations of international humanitarian law.
<b>3.a.5.</b> Prevention, risk mitigation and response services through UNICEF-supported programmes in humanitarian situations:
(a) percentage of UNICEF-targeted girls and boys in humanitarian situations provided with psychosocial support, including access to child-friendly spaces with inter-sectoral programming interventions;
(b) percentage of UNICEF-targeted unaccompanied and separated girls and boys registered with family tracing and reunification services and family-based care or appropriate alternative services;
(c) percentage of UNICEF-targeted girls and boys recruited and used by armed forces and groups that have been released and reintegrated with their families and provided with adequate care and services;
(d) percentage of UNICEF-targeted girls and boys in areas affected by landmines and other explosive weapons provided with relevant prevention and survivor assistance interventions.
<b>3.a.6.</b> Percentage of UNICEF-targeted women, girls and boys in humanitarian situations provided with risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions to address gender-based violence through UNICEF-supported programmes.
<b>3.a.7.</b> Number of children on the move who receive protective services through UNICEF-supported programmes.

The results framework also includes cross-cutting key performance indicators. Some of these are cross-cutting for all goal areas and specific to humanitarian action (see Annex 4).

## 1.4 UNICEF’s internal and external accountabilities for child protection in humanitarian action results

Accountabilities for CPHA extend beyond the work of the child protection in emergencies (CPiE) unit within the UNICEF Programme Division (PD) to include a range of other intra- and inter-institutional responsibilities, such as those held by the UNICEF Office of Emergency Programmes (EMOPS) and those related to UNICEF’s CPHA-related coordination (IASC) and advocacy functions.

Internally, UNICEF has a range of commitments to CPHA. These are depicted in different places, such as policies and strategies, global- and country-level theories of change, CPHA-related indicators, office management plans, annual work plans and various monitoring systems. Several key commitments are reflected in the CCCs. Key business units with internal accountabilities include:

- 1) **PD:** The CPiE unit within the Child Protection Section in PD has responsibility for CPHA results that relate to service delivery within its six work streams.<sup>13</sup> The Humanitarian Action and Transition Section supports risk-informed programming and the integration of development and humanitarian programmes.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021 Goal Area 3 ‘Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation’: Indicator Manual’, UNICEF, November 2018, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> The EMOPS Humanitarian Policy Section contributes to results on advocacy, notably in the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism work stream.

- 2) **EMOPS:** EMOPS has the primary responsibility for UNICEF’s coordination function or the Child Protection AoR, as well as for CPHA-related advocacy and policy work.<sup>14</sup>

#### UNICEF’s Child Protection in Emergencies unit work streams\*

1. MHPSS services
2. Family tracing and reunification
3. Children and armed conflict
  - a. The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
  - b. Reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups
4. Mine action
5. Gender-based violence in emergencies
6. Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse\*\*

\* UNICEF’s CPIE strategic review (publication expected 2019) defines these six core CPIE work streams and presents several core programmatic strategies relevant to CPIE, including capacity strengthening, systems strengthening, advocacy and awareness raising, partnerships, information management and knowledge generation, case management and service delivery. Development of norms and standards is also a key strategy for CPIE work streams.

\*\* This EA does not cover protection from sexual exploitation and abuse due to the recent independent review on this work stream (see Section 2 on scope and methodology).

It is important to note that PD intends to work collaboratively across business units/sectors around various activities that support the achievement of CPHA results, particularly for education, health and WASH.<sup>15</sup> Beyond PD and EMOPS, other UNICEF headquarters-level business units conduct activities that relate directly to CPHA, such as fundraising, communications, planning, data and analytics, research, monitoring and evaluation. These UNICEF business units are depicted in Annex 5 on stakeholder mapping.

One of UNICEF’s most visible external commitments to CPHA is marked by its role as the lead agency within the humanitarian cluster system for the Child Protection AoR within the Protection Cluster.<sup>16</sup> In this sense, UNICEF can be considered accountable for CPHA coordination in humanitarian contexts. This coordination commitment is in addition to the organization’s own internal CPHA programme commitments, such as CPHA-related service delivery, systems strengthening and advocacy.

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<sup>14</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘EMOPS Office Management Plan 2018-2021’, 24 April 2017, p. 6. “Outcome 1: UNICEF has comprehensive programmatic and strategic frameworks, and the right capacity, to enable COs [country offices] and UNICEF-led clusters/sectors to gain and sustain access for principled humanitarian assistance and protection for children affected by humanitarian crises, including to prevent and respond to the most serious protection risks and violations facing children affected by armed conflict”. Outcome 1 is explicitly intended to contribute to humanitarian advocacy under Goal Area 3: “Link to Strategic Plan: Outcome 1 contributes to Goal 3, Every child is protected from violence and exploitation, and the specific result Girls and boys receive prevention and response services for violence against children, addressing the need to strengthen programmatic and strategic frameworks and capacities towards principled humanitarian assistance and protection for children in situations of armed conflict; this in turn supports more systematic advocacy in situations of conflict to safeguard basic services supporting the other four goal areas, allowing children to survive, thrive and learn in safe environments with equity.”

<sup>15</sup> PD documents mutual responsibilities across business units using the PD planning tool, which renders traceable invitations to collaborate and the acceptance of the invitation. For the time being, the use of this tool is limited to business units within PD (i.e., it excludes EMOPS and others).

<sup>16</sup> The Child Protection AoR is focused on enhancing child protection coordination and response in humanitarian contexts (as defined as humanitarian coordinator and early warning contexts). It is comprised of coordination staff, a helpdesk and the Rapid Response Team to provide remote and in-country support to field-level child protection coordination groups. According to the Child Protection AoR mission statement, “The efforts of national and international humanitarian actors to protect children in humanitarian settings are well coordinated.”

In UNICEF’s operational documents, inter-institutional commitments are typically labelled as “coordination”. These commitments are tracked through various performance measurement systems and indicators that assess overall CPHA results, such as AoR contributions to IASC Protection Cluster results, Cluster Performance Monitoring System, the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (the Minimum Standards) and others. UNICEF’s visible CPHA accountabilities also stem from its leadership role in several relevant partnerships and networks, such as, for example, the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, which is responsible for the development of the Minimum Standards.<sup>17</sup> These entities fall into a quasi-internal category and are depicted in Annex 5.

- 3) **Regional offices:** Regional offices are responsible for providing oversight, guidance, quality assurance, technical support and resource mobilization to enable country offices to generate outputs and outcomes. Since 2018, regional offices have also reported on the Strategic Plan indicators.
- 4) **Country offices:** Country offices hold the prime responsibility for generating Goal Area 3 outputs and outcomes, including for CPHA. Country office reporting on CPHA indicators is verified and consolidated at the headquarters level by PD and EMOPS to generate global reports on the achievement of Goal Area 3 results for children.

#### Country office accountabilities related to CPHA

- Development, monitoring and quality control of UNICEF humanitarian action, in line with the CCCs and relevant inter-agency standards, adapted as relevant to context, ensuring inter-agency coherence and coordination, and integrating longer-term recovery priorities and opportunities.
- Oversight of clusters/AoRs where UNICEF is cluster lead agency against agreed cluster coordination functions and cluster-level mechanisms for AAP.

Source: United Nations Children’s Fund Office of Emergency Programmes, ‘Managing for Results in Humanitarian Action’, May 2017.

External to UNICEF, many stakeholders play key roles in achieving CPHA results, such as IASC partners, international non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations acting as implementing partners, cluster members, donors and academic institutions with ongoing research initiatives linked to CPHA.

<sup>17</sup> The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action is a global, inter-agency group that sets standards and provides technical support to ensure that efforts to protect children from violence and exploitation are of high quality and effective. It is comprised of a secretariat, several working groups and task forces on specific technical areas and over 100 member organizations.

## 2.SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Purpose, objective, scope and utility

The purpose of the EA is to enable the child protection sector to meet its accountabilities vis-à-vis the UNICEF Strategic Plan and ensure that UNICEF's contribution to CPHA is traceable in the relevant country programmes. The specific objective of the EA is **to assess to what extent UNICEF has the strategic and technical elements in place to credibly demonstrate results in future evaluations, across key CPHA functions.**

In terms of scope, the EA has endeavoured to take a comprehensive view of CPHA, by including the following work streams contributing to the achievement of Goal Area 3 and responding to UNICEF's accountabilities in humanitarian action:

- Analysis of the evaluability of UNICEF's programmatic CPHA work at the country level and supported by the regional and global levels. This includes five of the six CPIE work streams:<sup>18</sup> MHPSS; unaccompanied and separated children; children and armed conflict, including the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, prevention of the recruitment and use of children and the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups; mine action; and gender-based violence in emergencies.
- Analysis of the evaluability of UNICEF's advocacy work (public and private) carried out as part of programming at all levels of the organization.<sup>19</sup>
- Analysis of the evaluability of UNICEF's coordination role as cluster lead for the Child Protection AoR under the IASC cluster system.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the timeframe, the main points of reference are the years 2018 and 2019 – the first two years of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021. This provides insight into the extent to which UNICEF is globally measuring and reporting on the Strategic Plan in its first and second years of implementation and how well the corporate system works for countries in humanitarian situations.<sup>21</sup> (This is based on a review of a sub-section of countries with global CPHA representation as outlined below in Section 2.3).

The primary external audience for the EA is the UNICEF Executive Board. The primary internal audiences are the key stakeholders contributing to Goal Area 3, including the child protection sections at all levels and other UNICEF sections with responsibilities and accountabilities for CPHA, including EMOPS, the Humanitarian Action and Transition Support section and country and regional offices. The Child Protection Section in PD, in particular, is expected to utilize the insights, findings and recommendations of the EA. Given the cross-cutting nature of CPHA, EA findings and lessons will be applicable to other programming teams and partners that contribute to CPHA work at all levels.

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<sup>18</sup> Note that the EA excludes the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, as this programmatic area has been the object of a recent independent panel review. See Cravero, Kathleen, Yasmin Sooka and Susanne Frueh, 'Independent Panel Review of the UNICEF Response to PSEA', UNICEF, New York, September 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Note that corporate campaigns such as #EndViolence are excluded from the EA for reasons of manageability.

<sup>20</sup> The EA looks at the main accountabilities, internal to UNICEF and externally to IASC, but not all the external networks that UNICEF supports, including the Alliance.

<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the EA considers the evaluability of the most current country documents available as of mid-2019. This includes: CPDs valid in 2019; Humanitarian Action for Children appeals for 2019; country office annual reports for 2018; and country office reporting on the Results Assessment Module (RAM) and on the strategic monitoring questions (SMQs) for 2018.



The EA process has provided input into two related exercises: 1) the global CPiE strategic review commissioned by PD in 2018; and 2) the revision of child protection-specific CCCs.

## 2.2 Evaluability assessment parameters and questions

The EA addresses three evaluability parameters, each of which are accompanied by a set of specific evaluability questions. The full matrix with EA questions, data sources and means of analysis is presented in Annex 2.

The three parameters were:

- **Parameter 1: programme design (evaluability in principle)**  
Through this parameter, the EA assesses coherence across programme impact pathways pertaining to Goal Area 3 and the appropriateness and clarity of the associated results frameworks. This includes assessing the overarching theory of change and results frameworks for Goal Area 3, CPiE's substantive work streams (where available) and the CCCs.
- **Parameter 2: financial and programmatic monitoring data (evaluability in practice)**  
Through this parameter, the EA ascertains the existence and availability of relevant financial and programmatic monitoring data and its accessibility. It does not include a review of data quality in terms of the actual data points entered into corporate reporting systems.
- **Parameter 3: UNICEF's CPHA accountabilities (evaluability in principle and in practice)**  
Through this parameter, the EA determines the extent to which there are shared and documented corporate goals and work arrangements around CPHA. This includes key evidence gaps and information needs in view of a potential future evaluation. Work on this parameter includes a mapping of UNICEF's business units that are directly or indirectly contributing to the achievement of the CPHA aspects of Goal Area 3 (see Annex 5).

## 2.3 Evaluability assessment methodology

The overall approach taken was a desk-based review, supplemented by selective key informant interviews. The purpose of the key informant interviews was to clarify or supplement information obtained during the desk review and identify gaps in documentation.

### Sampling method

For the **document review**, the EA primarily scanned four sets of materials:

1. Global UNICEF theories of change, results frameworks and logic models for Goal Area 3 and related CPHA programmatic areas, as well as documents addressing programme planning, monitoring and oversight, including Results Assessment Module (RAM)/Programme Information Database (PIDB) information, monitoring/indicator guidance, situation reports and Humanitarian Action for Children appeals;
2. Country office-level CPHA programme design and monitoring documents for the 11 sample CPHA countries identified;
3. Country office-level CPHA programme design and monitoring documents, including field-based monitoring data, for one deep-dive country case study; and

4. External documents from the IASC, the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, the Child Protection AoR and others.

Full details can be found in the bibliography provided in Annex 14.

**Country selection** was aligned with the ongoing CPiE strategic review to avoid duplication. The strategic review first identified 34 UNICEF operations dealing with emergencies in pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis settings and then selected a sample of 10 country offices to represent a broad range of internal (UNICEF-focused) and external characteristics. The resulting sample includes: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lebanon, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. For the deep-dive country operation, UNICEF Democratic Republic of the Congo volunteered to participate to benefit from synergies with its internal process of reviewing and rationalizing its planning and results monitoring processes at the field and country office levels.

**Key informants** were selected based on the stakeholder analysis carried out during the inception phase. The analysis shows units and functions with accountabilities for CPHA (internal to UNICEF) and CPHA-related stakeholders and organizations with whom UNICEF collaborates closely (external to UNICEF). Annex 5 presents the results of the stakeholder mapping exercise and Annex 15 shows the full list of key informants. In total, 28 interviews were conducted with stakeholders from headquarters (N=20), regional offices (N=3) and country offices (N=5). Given their key role, several reference group members were interviewed both during the inception phase and again during the EA development phase.

## Data analysis

Data analysis methods included a variety of standard and custom-made tools. In addition to qualitative content analysis of primary and secondary sources, the EA:

- Identified, reviewed and analysed existing theories of change across relevant UNICEF business units and thematic areas, using a common template (see Annex 12);
- Applied an indicator analysis matrix to key Goal Area 3 indicators (see Annex 7);
- Devised, filled in and analysed a country-level analysis tool (see Annex 8).

## Ethical considerations

The EA did not collect primary data from vulnerable populations, nor did it re-analyse sensitive or classified information. Therefore, ethical review by an independent board was not required.<sup>22</sup> Consistent with United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards, ethical guidelines<sup>23</sup> and code of conduct,<sup>24</sup> the EA ensured respect for the rights of

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<sup>22</sup> See: United Nations Children's Fund, 'UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis', UNICEF, 1 April 2015, <<https://unicef.sharepoint.com/teams/OoR/Shared%20Documents/UNICEF%20Procedure%20on%20Ethics%20in%20Evidence%20Generation%20092015.pdf>>, accessed 13 June 2019.

<sup>23</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group, 'UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation', UNEG, June 2008, <[www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100)>, accessed 13 June 2019.

<sup>24</sup> United Nations Evaluation Group, 'UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations System', UNEG, June 2008, <[www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100](http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/100)>, accessed 13 June 2019.

individuals and institutions,<sup>25</sup> cultural identities and sensitivities,<sup>26</sup> and the professional responsibilities and obligations of evaluators.<sup>27</sup>

## 2.4 Limitations and challenges

**Key limitations** of the EA included the following:

- Given that the EA was designed primarily as a desk review supplemented by key informant interviews, there was no opportunity to carry out direct observations related to evaluability in practice in country offices or at the field level. While two implementing partners from the Democratic Republic of the Congo were interviewed remotely, the EA would have benefited from more extensive partner input, as partner reporting and field monitoring data is the basis of all country office and global level reporting, and hence its validity is key to the overall evaluability of CPHA.
- As the EA was framed as a UNICEF-focused exercise, it was not possible to delve fully into the role that the IASC, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other lead humanitarian agencies play in shaping the overall evaluability of CPHA at the global level. There would certainly be cause to review the full spectrum of IASC and other global level guidelines, results frameworks and indicators that are currently promoted for use in humanitarian settings both by UNICEF and by its child protection sector partners.
- Data from 2018 results reporting was released towards the end of the EA development phase in spring 2019, limiting the time available for the team to review RAM reporting in particular. However, the EA has drawn on other institutional processes and reviews to achieve a triangulated view of gaps and challenges in the evaluability of CPHA overall.

The **main challenges** encountered over the course of the EA were:

- The original terms of reference focused on the evaluability of CPIE work streams vis-à-vis Goal Area 3. The inception phase saw a broadening of the scope and title of the EA in regard to CPHA to encompass the contributions of various business units to achieving the CPHA-related objectives of the Strategic Plan and other core UNICEF policy documents, such as the CCCs. While the EA considers that an expanded scope was important, it had no clear definition of the concept of CPHA at the outset. The reference group guided the EA in progressively arriving at a working definition.
- Humanitarian action varies depending on the nature and scale of the emergency, number of children affected, sociocultural norms, pre-existing child protection risks, community-level preparedness, and stability and capacity of the State before and during the crisis, among others. The shift in focus for this EA from “conflict situations” to “humanitarian action” was accompanied by a reflection about the plethora of different contexts in which CPHA takes place, the – varied – associated data ecosystems and their implications for evaluability. However, given time and resource limitations, as well as concerns with length and readability of the report, the EA tends to report on the most common denominator. This tends to overrepresent evaluability

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<sup>25</sup> The EA team has accorded informants the opportunity to participate voluntarily while maintaining their anonymity, and to make an independent decision to participate without pressure or fear of penalty.

<sup>26</sup> Variances in ethnicities, culture, religious beliefs, gender, disability and age were respected. EA processes were mindful of cultural settings, developmental status/capacities and the needs of the respondents and rights-holders that programmes are supposed to serve.

<sup>27</sup> The EA has exercised independent judgement and operated in an impartial and unbiased manner.

of CPHA in conflict (rather than disaster) settings, and in lower (rather than middle) income settings.

- Readiness for an evaluation depends on what type of evaluation is envisaged. Yet the UNICEF Evaluation Policy (and EA guidance) lacks a clear typology of UNICEF evaluation exercises, as well as their usages, methodologies and pre-conditions.<sup>28</sup> A typology of evaluations could help future EAs determine evaluability more precisely, i.e. in relation to the prerequisites of formative vs. summative and other types of evaluations.

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<sup>28</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Revised Evaluation Policy of UNICEF', E/ICEF/2018/14, UNICEF, New York, 12 April 2018.

## 3. EVALUABILITY IN PRINCIPLE

### 3.1 Introduction

Evaluability in principle refers to whether a programme or thematic area can be evaluated in its current state based on the existing design and theory of change. It assesses whether programmatic actions and interventions are based on a clear and logical causal chain, leading to specified results for children and other populations of concern. According to UNICEF guidance, evaluability in principle “will look at the clarity of the conceptual underpinnings and design of the intervention including the underlying theory of change and how it has been translated into the intervention results framework”.<sup>29</sup>

This chapter considers the evaluability in principle of UNICEF’s CPHA work through the lens of the EA’s questions under parameter 1 (see Box 1). The EA also considers a range of criteria to guide its assessment of evaluability in principle, including coherence, plausibility and testability, validity, connectedness and context (see Annexes 3 and 6). The chapter is broken down into three sections: the corporate level; the country level; and coordination and advocacy.

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**Summary of findings:** Overall, at the corporate and country levels, UNICEF’s CPHA work is of limited evaluability in principle. At the corporate level, there are marked limitations in the evaluability in principle of the Strategic Plan Goal Area 3 theory of change, the CCCs, some CPIE work stream theories of change and regional results frameworks. Among the CPIE work streams, MHPSS and gender-based violence in emergencies have strong theories of change, and mine action has made a promising start. At the country level, CPHA-work is somewhat more evaluable in principle. Remaining challenges include the lack of alignment between corporate and country-level frameworks, lack of internal coherence of theories of change and results frameworks, and weak disaggregation of results. Evaluability in principle of CPHA-related coordination and advocacy work is currently very limited.

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#### Box 1: Evaluability assessment questions on evaluability in principle (Parameter 1)

##### Conceptual underpinnings/programme design

- Does CPHA work have clear objectives and a coherent logical framework?
- Can CPHA realistically contribute to the associated set of Strategic Plan results/outcomes?
- What actions, if any, are required to strengthen the design for greater coherence, and to ensure that the CPHA contributions to Strategic Plan outputs and outcomes are traceable, including for coordination and advocacy?

##### Theories of change

- Is there a clear and persuasive rationale for selecting change strategies?
- To what extent have key programme assumptions and mitigation approaches been specified?
- Are effects disaggregated for different groups of children in humanitarian action?
- At the country office level, are there theories of change that justify investment in certain areas of CPHA work?
- Do these align with the Strategic Plan?

##### Translation into results frameworks

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<sup>29</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Guidance Note for Conducting Evaluability Assessments in UNICEF’, UNICEF, February 2019.

- Are CPHA contributions explicitly traceable in CPDs, PSNs and results?
- Are results chains aligned coherently across sectors?
- Are UNICEF's contributions to cluster coordination traceable through Strategic Plan performance monitoring frameworks?

## 3.2 The corporate level

*Overall finding: At the corporate level, there are marked limitations in the evaluability in principle of UNICEF's CPHA work.*

The Strategic Plan Goal Area 3 theory of change, the CCCs, the 2008 Child Protection Strategy, CPiE work stream theories of change and regional results frameworks are important conceptual tools for UNICEF regarding the evaluability of CPHA. In theory, the existence of these tools and frameworks should enable the organization to effectively demonstrate its tangible contributions to protecting children in humanitarian action. This section reviews these corporate tools and frameworks in terms how effectively they contribute to the evaluation-readiness of UNICEF's CPHA work.

### Goal Area 3 theory of change

*Key finding: Goal Area 3 provides a weak conceptual framework for measuring the results of UNICEF's CPHA interventions. There are flaws in its logic and structure that limit its effectiveness in making UNICEF evaluation-ready in the area of CPHA.*

### Outcome level

The theories of change included in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, follow a common template for each goal area and arguably serve advocacy as well as planning purposes. The Goal Area 3 outcome statement reads: "Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian situations, are protected from all of forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices".

**This outcome statement is aspirational, rather than achievable, which makes it challenging to evaluate UNICEF's contribution to CPHA against it.** On a theoretical level, given the existence of pervasive and wide-scale forms of violence perpetrated against children in all regions of the world, it is aspirational and unrealistic to assume that UNICEF and partners could achieve this outcome in the next few years. If Goal Area 3 used a more realistic outcome statement, such as "Girls and boys... are *better* protected..." UNICEF could establish a realistic baseline against which it could measure improvements over time and eventually evaluate the extent to which UNICEF has achieved an attainable set off desired results.

Furthermore, the review of 11 UNICEF country programmes shows that limitations on the types of interventions and geographical coverage of UNICEF's and partner's programming, coordination and advocacy work would be highly unlikely to add up to the outcome statement in a reasonable period of time.

In addition, **the Goal Area 3 output statements do not logically lead to the outcome statement.** In other words, the causal pathways established in Goal Area 3 are weak. Due to the meta level on which the Goal Area 3 theory of change is established, the causal

pathways of the 'if-then' statements leave out important variables that can affect the achievement CPHA-related results.<sup>30</sup>

In this regard, it is important to recognize that the Goal Area 3 theory of change is a negotiated corporate template. It is not a fully considered programme-impact pathway for child protection. This is evidenced, for example, by the fact that the risks and assumptions presented are weak and only include the following two risk areas/assumptions that are specific to CPHA:<sup>31</sup>

- Human resources can be limited, coordination is poor and access is limited in certain situations, particularly in humanitarian action; and
- Politicization of mechanisms designed to enhance compliance of parties to conflict with international humanitarian and human rights law.

To be more robust in terms of CPHA-related assumptions and risks (and therefore also present a more robust causal pathway), the programme impact pathway would need to include, for example, contributions from other business units within UNICEF. Such a measure should be considered not only for Goal Area 3 but for all goal areas during the mid-term review.

### ***Output level***

The decision was taken for the entire Strategic Plan to mainstream humanitarian work across each of the goal areas, which are closely aligned with UNICEF's main sectoral programme areas. According to the overarching logic of the Strategic Plan, CPHA should be mainstreamed throughout the Goal Area 3 theory of change. Mainstreaming humanitarian aspects throughout all goal areas "avoids making humanitarian assistance a stand-alone area; instead, humanitarian response is integrated as a cross-cutting priority in the theories of change of each outcome level, and in the broader change strategies and the four categories of enablers. This is seen as strengthening humanitarian-development integration in all of UNICEF's work and providing programming direction to UNICEF programmes. UNICEF performance in humanitarian response can nonetheless be tracked in the Strategic Plan results framework through specific indicators, tagged as humanitarian, under each outcome area".<sup>32</sup> In other words, according to the Strategic Plan, CPHA should be visible in all three output areas within Goal Area 3.

Furthermore, a CPHA implementation modality is unlikely to yield substantial outcomes on its own unless it is anchored in existing child protection programming. Therefore, the inclusion of explicit CPHA results and indicators into existing (long-term, development-focused) child protection programming is crucial.

**However, CPHA is not effectively mainstreamed at the output level. It is condensed exclusively into Output 1 as CPIE which hinders a clear 'line of sight' from activities/outputs to outcomes/impact.** Though Outputs 2 and 3 address child protection issues that are relevant in humanitarian contexts (i.e., harmful practices and justice for

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<sup>30</sup> It is worth noting that the original theory of change prepared by the CP Section is not the same as the final version in the Strategic Plan. Among other differences, it showed humanitarian work as a separate pillar which may have provided a better basis for a global child protection theory of change. A corporate decision was made to mainstream humanitarian work throughout the Strategic Plan.

<sup>31</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Theory of Change Paper, UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021: Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged', UNICEF/2017/EB/11, UNICEF, 18 July 2017, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

children in contact with the law), these outputs do not explicitly address CPHA. Evidence suggests that harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation and child marriage, increase when communities are thrown into crisis by natural disasters, armed conflict and other emergency situations.<sup>33</sup> While EA evidence indicates that, in practice, some country offices in humanitarian settings are likely engaged in activities to address harmful practices, the absence of indicators on CPHA under Output 2 means that in theory, country office reporting on these activities is not required. Similarly, Output 3 does not include a specific indicator or connection to CPHA, rendering UNICEF's work to protect children in contact with the law and authorities in humanitarian settings less visible in global-level reporting (beyond what is included in Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeals, see page 37 below). According to key informants, a key challenge is the lack of systematic monitoring and reporting on CPHA as a cross-cutting issue across all output areas. For example, when it comes to efforts to reduce harmful practices, greater disaggregation could be used to capture UNICEF's work with internally displaced people and refugees. All in all, there appears to be **lack of conceptual clarity on how output areas 2 and 3 see their work relating to CPHA.**

Placing CPHA exclusively under Output 1 on systems strengthening could convey the message that the creation of parallel humanitarian service delivery systems, while often necessary in the absence of state capacity, is to be avoided. The link between systems strengthening and CPHA interventions, while logical, is not explained. This linkage requires more detailed and specific analysis and criteria to determine whether and when parallel humanitarian service delivery is required and why it is a necessary or preferred programming option in a particular context. It is recognized in the narrative accompanying the theory of change that UNICEF can act as last resort: "the UNICEF approach to child protection in humanitarian situations will include support to direct delivery with a range of implementing partners where there is an imperative to act in a humanitarian situation, where capacities and resources are low, and/or the national authorities are unwilling or unable to uphold their responsibilities to affected populations."<sup>34</sup>

To be evaluable, CPHA as systems strengthening would require a pre-determination (or prior assessment) of the capacities and resources of the governments in question. This should logically be found in a preparedness section of the CPD or child protection PSN that explains under which conditions UNICEF would need to step in to provide direct delivery, in what sectors and how it would do so to maximize its overall systems strengthening objectives. This would involve linking analysis currently found in UNICEF's Emergency Preparedness Platform<sup>35</sup> with key country office planning documents and theories of change. This will be further discussed in Section 4.

It is worth noting that the RAM and strategic monitoring question (SMQ) reporting structures have created a vast body of data related to CPHA; see chapter 4 of this report. However, these data are likely under-exploited as a basis for investigating CPHA's overall contribution to achieving Strategic Plan goals and other key commitments. There is also strong reporting guidance in the Goal Area 3 indicator manual – a compendium of all Goal Area 3 outcome and output indicators that outlines how they are defined, how they are verified and measured

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<sup>33</sup>United Nations Children's Fund, 'Evaluation of UNICEF's Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies', UNICEF, December 2013.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>35</sup> The Emergency Preparedness Platform is an online tool for implementing UNICEF's Procedure on Preparedness for Emergency Response (issued in December 2017 and effective 30 March 2018). The Platform helps teams analyse risks, self-assess and monitor their operational preparedness and identify high-return actions to get ready for immediate response – before an emergency happens or a situation deteriorates. It replaces the Early Warning Early Action platform.



and how baselines and targets are set. Annex 7 provides a full analysis of Goal Area 3 CPHA-related results indicators.

## Core Commitments for Children in Humanitarian Action

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*Key finding: The CCCs add a layer of complexity and pose a significant monitoring challenge for CPHA. While they do serve as a potent advocacy tool and guide for programming, their evaluability is limited due to the lack of clear causal pathways that link outputs to higher level outcomes.*

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The CCCs are a typical humanitarian, standard-based tool that help practitioners on the ground guide their work and align their activities with international best practices. The commitments aim to promote a predictable, effective and timely response for children in humanitarian action. They are considered binding within UNICEF, as a key planning document on par with organizational strategic plans. For child protection, the CCCs (current 2010 version) provide eight commitments with corresponding benchmarks; and the 2019 revision of the CCCs (in progress) foresees 9 commitments with corresponding benchmarks. The revision significantly modifies the existing eight commitments and adds a commitment/benchmark for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. Child protection systems strengthening is now emphasized (new commitment 2). Once the updated CCCs are published, corporate CPHA indicators may have to be aligned through the mid-term review of the strategic plan, 2018-2021.

The premise of the CCCs is that UNICEF and partners will better protect children and their rights in humanitarian action if the commitments and benchmarks are met. This is based on the long-standing tradition within the humanitarian sector of using a conceptual framework with a fixed set of standards and actions to be applied irrespective of the specifics of the context and without defining causal linkages.<sup>36</sup> The CCCs are framed as a set of standards to be upheld more or less universally for all children, which is an important objective but nonetheless subject to the context of the emergency, the characteristics of communities and children most directly impacted, as well as the financial means to respond.

If understood as a set of standards that practitioners must achieve, it is in theory possible to evaluate UNICEF's compliance with the CCCs at the sub-national, national, regional and global levels. However, there are several challenges to the evaluability of the CCCs, such as lack of clearly defined and measurable indicators (the commitments and benchmarks tend to be medium- to longer-term aspirations or outcomes); and lack of means of verification (some of the benchmarks such as "all children" or targets of "80 per cent" are unevaluable without solid baseline data or needs assessments that may only be available at the country office level).

Furthermore, the lack of an overarching programme-impact pathway severely limits evaluability in principle. A rights-based approach does not explain why UNICEF and partners should engage in the actions outlined, rather than in others. It is unclear whether it is for reasons of competitive advantage or because these are anticipated high-impact areas or whether the sum of these commitments is meant to represent comprehensive protection as per the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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<sup>36</sup> This tradition is based on the general belief within the humanitarian sector that in the context of a sudden-onset emergency, there is little time for practitioners to step back and design elaborate theories of change. Rather, emergency teams operate from a clear set of tasks that they should perform and internationally agreed standards that they should strive to meet.

Finally, it is unclear how the CCCs align with related planning tools. The benchmarks do not reflect Strategic Plan indicators, nor do they align with the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, which are also under review.

## Theories of change for child-protection-in-emergencies work streams

**Key finding:** *Only three of the six CPiE work streams examined in the EA at the global level have dedicated theories of change; among those, MHPSS and gender-based violence in emergencies are strongest, but with different degrees of linkage to the Strategic Plan theory of change.*

Given the breadth, scope and lack of conceptual clarity of the Goal Area 3 theory of change regarding CPHA, as well as the absence other high-level child protection or CPHA-related theories of change, it falls to UNICEF teams working on specific CPiE work streams to elaborate their own sub-theories of change that clearly articulate their roles in supporting and realizing the outputs and outcomes of the Strategic Plan.

**At the time of writing of this EA, only three of the six CPiE work streams covered by the EA have dedicated theories of change (for gender-based violence in emergencies, mine action and MHPSS) at the global level. Of the three that do exist, there is a varying degree of conceptual clarity and logical linkages to the Strategic Plan theory of change.**

Table 2 describes the varying degrees of conceptual clarity and linkages to the Strategic Plan theory of change demonstrated by the three existing theories of change for CPiE work streams. It is worth noting that theories of change with little or no linkages to Goal Area 3 do not support evaluability against the Strategic Plan. However, these theories of change may remain relevant and usable for a longer time frame than those directly tied to the Strategic Plan (i.e., beyond 2021).

Beyond the Strategic Plan Goal Area 3 theory of change, the CCCs and the theories of change for individual CPiE work streams, UNICEF also lacks a comprehensive child protection theory of change that includes CPHA, or a CPHA theory of change that articulates the organization’s approach to and expected results from various types of interventions and how these lead to expected outcomes.

**Table 2: Summary of characteristics of child protection-in-emergencies work stream theories of change**

	Conceptual clarity	Logical links to Goal Area 3
<b>Gender-based violence in emergencies<sup>37</sup></b>	<b>Strong conceptual clarity</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong theory-based perspective, plausibility and testability</li> <li>• Grounded in a range of organizational and sectoral commitments pertaining to CPHA (including the Strategic Plan)</li> </ul>	<b>Strong linkages to Strategic Plan Goal Area 3</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Strategic Plan is the point of departure for the gender-based-violence-in-emergencies theory of change</li> <li>• Supports consistent and coherent implementation, monitoring and reporting on Goal Area 3</li> </ul>

<sup>37</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies: Operational guide’, UNICEF, 2019.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows impact pathways for both a UNICEF and a sector-wide comprehensive approach for achieving gender-based-violence-in-emergencies outcomes, in line with relevant Goal Area 3 indicators<sup>38</sup></li> </ul>
<b>Mine action</b>	<p><b>Strong conceptual clarity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aims to improve the effectiveness of the sector, based on lessons learned</li> <li>Built on a series of strategies to achieve its vision</li> <li>Strong analysis of gaps and challenges that need to be addressed to achieve long-term results<sup>39</sup></li> </ul>	<p><b>Linkages to Strategic Plan Goal Area 3 are not highly evident</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little or no reference to Goal Area 3; key assumptions and risk assessment not included</li> <li>No guidance available on the use of indicators and how they relate to Goal Area 3</li> </ul>
<b>MHPSS</b>	<p><b>Strong conceptual clarity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong alignment with other UNICEF and IASC policies, commitments and guidelines<sup>40</sup></li> <li>Highly plausible and testable (currently under field testing)</li> <li>Clear evidence-based conceptual framework that draws on lessons learned (especially on child-friendly spaces)</li> <li>Strong and plausible results framework</li> <li>Indicators, including impact indicators, are aspirational and can be empirically tested and validated using existing assessment methods and tools</li> </ul>	<p><b>Weak linkages to Strategic Plan Goal Area 3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Little or no reference to Goal Area 3</li> <li>Otherwise a strong and testable theory of change</li> </ul>

## Regional-level results frameworks

*Key finding: Inconsistencies in regard to how child protection work figures into regional frameworks complicates CPHA evaluability in principle at the corporate level.*

Regional teams focused on child protection, gender-based violence in emergencies and emergencies provide oversight, guidance, quality assurance and technical support to country-level child protection operations. Some regions have their own regional priorities (regional headline results) that are loosely aligned with the Strategic Plan, outlining a shared vision, strategic approach and collective contribution to which country offices and the respective regional office aspire.

<sup>38</sup> This refers to Strategic Plan Goal Area 3 indicator 3.a.6: "Percentage of UNICEF-targeted women, girls and boys in humanitarian situations provided with risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions to address gender-based violence through UNICEF-supported programmes (humanitarian)."

<sup>39</sup> The theory of change recognizes the need to take a public health approach to mine action and to strengthen injury surveillance systems for evidence generation and data collection, which could improve overall measurement and reporting on child protection interventions that can address and reduce the risk of injury.

<sup>40</sup> This includes alignment with the IASC Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Guidelines (2007); IASC key impact indicators and outcomes; UNICEF's 2008 Child Protection Policy; UNICEF and the IASC's AAP agenda; UNICEF's risk-informed programming agenda; and the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.

In several regions, regional priorities do not correspond directly to child protection, let alone Strategic Plan Goal Area 3. Rather, related issues are split among several regional priorities. For example, in Eastern and Southern Africa, these include priorities on achieving adolescent development, protection and participation (Priority 4) and scaling up social protection interventions to reduce child poverty and other vulnerabilities that impede the full realization of child rights (Priority 5).

### 3.3 The country level

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**Overall finding:** *In terms of evaluability in principle, UNICEF's CPHA work at the country level is highly variable. Most country cases fall within the limited to moderate categories.*

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This section reflects on EA research conducted in 11 sample countries currently affected by humanitarian crises to determine the extent to which CPHA interventions are coherently presented in theories of change and key planning documents at the country office level, the extent to which CPHA interventions are visible in country office documents and the extent to which the country office theories of change are aligned with the Goal Area 3 theory of change, results framework and change strategies (see *Annex 8*).

#### The alignment of country office child protection in humanitarian action with Goal Area 3

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**Key finding:** *None of the country-level ToCs are presented as “theories of action” that relate to a broader corporate theory of change. Only a subset of country programmes is aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan at any given time. Most country-level CPHA indicators are not fully comparable with Goal Area 3 results indicators.*

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First, it is important to note that the main utility of seeking strong alignment with the Strategic Plan would be to enhance the evaluability of the Strategic Plan itself, rather than to enhance the evaluability of a specific country programme or CPHA intervention. It is understood that any corporate ToC needs to be adapted to country realities (in the form of a “theory of action” or context-specific delivery model for the ToC) to be meaningful. Indicators at the two levels also serve different purposes: One is collected to inform/report on programme action on the ground and the other is for high-level indicators that can be aggregated across countries and settings.

An evaluation of CPHA at the corporate level would likely find that only a subset of country programmes are aligned with the Strategic Plan, given differences in lifecycles of the respective CPDs and the corporate emphasis on contextualizing programming. Thus, most of the CPDs that were current at the time of the EA were not aligned with the timeframe of the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 – neither were they meant to be. An evaluation of CPHA-related interventions at the country level would likely look far beyond the Strategic Plan to determine whether CPHA interventions are rational and justified with nationally-developed policies, strategies and programmes, whether their design is relevant given the context, whether they are effectively and efficiently achieving CPHA-related results, and whether evidence of these results is traceable and measurable in country office and field-level data. On balance, alignment with Strategic Plan outcomes and outputs seems to be a minor factor in the overall evaluability of CPHA at the country level.

In addition, the Strategic Plan has a relatively short shelf life and depending on the timeframe of the CPD or PSN, the overlap with the Strategic Plan, 2018–2021 may be short or non-existent. In fact, several of the CPDs and PSNs for the 11 countries reviewed for this

EA are out of phase with the current Strategic Plan (see *Table 3*). For example, at the time of writing the EA, UNICEF Democratic Republic of the Congo was in the process of creating a new CPD and PSN for the period 2020–2024. While the new cycle will be aligned with the Strategic Plan for two years (2020 and 2021), thereafter, it will be out of sync with the new Strategic Plan that will come into effect in 2022.

**Table 3: Lifespan of country programme documents for sample countries**

Country	CPD cycle
Afghanistan	2015–2019
Bangladesh	2017–2020
Central African Republic	2018–2021
Democratic Republic of the Congo	2013–2017, extended to 2019
Ethiopia	2016–2020
Haiti	2017–2021
Lebanon	2017–2020
Nigeria	2018–2022
South Sudan	2019–2021
Syrian Arab Republic	2016–2017, extended to 2019
Yemen	2012–2015, extended to 2019

None of the country-level ToCs are presented as “theories of action” that relate very explicitly to a broader corporate theory of change (for Goal Area 3 or otherwise). PSN guidance notes that country offices *can* draw on the theory of change accompanying the new strategic plan which outlines UNICEF’s specific contribution to outcomes for children but does not spell out how this can be done beyond the vision/impact statement.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, the EA found that it is most common for country offices to align the country-level theory of change with the Goal Area 3 outcome statement. Two examples are Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (PSN 2020–2024), where the country offices show a significant degree of alignment with the Goal Area outcome statement (see *Table 4*).

**Table 4: Theory of change and Goal Area 3 outcome statement alignment, Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Theory of change	Outcome statement
<b>Goal Area 3 theory of change</b>	“Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian crisis, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices.”
<b>UNICEF Afghanistan theory of change</b>	“Girls and boys vulnerable and exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation are better protected by institutional (formal and informal) and legislative frameworks, which include services and systems.”
<b>UNICEF Democratic Republic of the Congo theory of change</b>	“By 2024, all children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially the most vulnerable, are protected from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect.”

Alignment among Strategic Plan and country office indicators could facilitate the aggregation and harmonizing of global-level reporting with data received from country offices. However, there currently is no intent at UNICEF of having country-level indicators aggregated at the corporate level, beyond the SMQs. Harmonization would not be practical: **most country office CPHA indicators are not comparable with Goal Area 3 results indicators** (see *Annex 9*). While some country offices use indicators that are similar to those used to

<sup>41</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *Guidance on Development of Programme Strategy Notes*. FRG/GUIDANCE/2017/001. New York, December 2017, page 9.

measure Goal Area 3 results, in most instances, the indicators have small variations that can significantly affect the meaning of the indicator. Of the 11 country offices under review for this EA, most use their own variations of recommended indicators, which the country offices deem as most appropriate and consistent for their particular context. For example, UNICEF South Sudan uses a set of indicators that relate precisely to CPHA but are not fully consistent with Goal Area 3 indicators and therefore not fully evaluable against the Strategic Plan (see *Box 2*).

### **Box 2: UNICEF South Sudan CPHA indicators**

UNICEF South Sudan uses CPHA indicators in its results framework that demonstrate coherence with Goal Area 3 results indicators.

- Number of children and adolescents/young people (girls and boys) reached with critical child protection services
- Number of boys and girls, young people and caregivers in humanitarian situations benefitting from psychosocial support
- Number of unaccompanied and separated children and missing children (girls and boys) having received family tracing and reunification services and family-based or alternative care since the beginning of the conflict
- Number of children, adolescents and young people formerly associated with armed forces or groups and children at risk of recruitment enrolled in reintegration programmes
- Number of girls, boys and women receiving gender-based violence prevention and response services
- Number of children, adolescents and other vulnerable people provided with knowledge and skills to minimize risk of landmines and explosive remnants of war

### **The internal coherence of country office theories of change and results frameworks**

**Key finding:** *There is a high level of variability in terms of the extent to which country-level theories of change provide a coherent logical framework for evaluating CPHA interventions. The model of mainstreaming humanitarian action into theories of change and results frameworks means that humanitarian results may be less visible, and hence evaluable, than where they are 'stand-alone'.*

An analysis of PSNs and CPDs from 11 country offices covered by this EA show that many country offices have theories of change that coherently reflect CPHA. Other ToC do not address or very lightly address CPHA. In this context, coherence is defined as a theory of change that includes CPHA aspects in the narrative and results framework, as well as a graphic depiction of the theory of change.

Countries that are disaster-prone but generally operate in a more development-oriented context seem to be less focused on the coherent presentation of CPHA in their theories of change and results frameworks. For example, the theories of change for Bangladesh, Ethiopia and Haiti either do not address CPHA or do not address CPHA in a strong and compelling manner, and thereby fail to provide a clear rationale for investing in CPHA.

The model of mainstreaming CPHA into overall development work in theories of change and results frameworks as advanced by the Strategic Plan and at times taken up by country offices is not conducive to rendering CPHA results visible and evaluable. In the case of Ethiopia, the child protection PSN makes the case that it is precisely because of vulnerability to natural disasters that humanitarian programming has been mainstreamed within the PSN, similar to the mainstreaming rationale of the Strategic Plan. It states: “A key rationale for

incorporating emergencies within this output (as opposed to having a standalone output) is related to global emphasis on the development and humanitarian ‘nexus’, the fact that Ethiopia is heavily affected by climate change for which programmes need to be more prepared and responsive, and a significant refugee population for which establishment and/or strengthening of basic and more specialized services for refugees and host populations is critical to meet the needs and rights of these population groups with equity. Ethiopia also has a highly mobile young population, and protecting children ‘on the move’ is a proposed growth area for the programme.”<sup>42</sup> As is the case with the Strategic Plan, in the case of Ethiopia’s PSN, CPHA has become less traceable than it would have been as a standalone output due to the attempt to mainstream it, thereby diminishing the evaluability of CPHA.

On the other hand, country offices operating in contexts affected by protracted armed conflicts, such as Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lebanon, South Sudan and Yemen, have theories of change and results frameworks that present CPHA coherently and provide strong rationales for investing in CPHA, including specific analyses of where, why and which CPHA interventions are needed.

Country offices tend to use one of two models for addressing CPHA in the results frameworks attached to their PSNs: the mainstreaming model, in which CPHA is considered as contributing to one or more of the broader outputs or outcomes (e.g., in Afghanistan and Ethiopia); and the standalone model, in which CPHA constitutes a dedicated output area (e.g., in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, South Sudan and Yemen).

**While the mainstreaming model effectively breaks down rigid distinctions between humanitarian and development programming, which is in line with the Grand Bargain commitments, it is less effective in regard to the evaluability of the CPHA.** This is because CPHA is less visible in the mainstreaming model, which makes it more difficult to assess the coherence and logic of CPHA interventions, as well as plausibility, testability, validity and other key criteria. Furthermore, the value of CPHA investments can become lost and/or understated.

### Validity of assumptions/risks and mitigation measures

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*Key finding: Few country office theories of change provide assumptions, risks and mitigation measures that are either specific to CPHA or internal to UNICEF; rather, they present risks and assumptions that focus on external actors and factors.*

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A recent quality review found that, “**very few CPDs actually address relevant risks and assumptions for overall programming and for each programme component.**”<sup>43</sup> The EA found that this is indeed the case for CPHA. Two notable exceptions to this finding are Nigeria and Yemen, both of which address CPHA-specific risks and/or assumptions.

It is important to recognize, however, that the format and instructions for creating the PSN, which describe how the country office should develop a theory of change for each sector, do not demand detailed risk analysis, as described, for example, in UNICEF’s Guidance on Risk-Informed Programming.

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<sup>42</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Ethiopia Child Protection Programme Strategy Note’, December 2017, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Draft Synthesis Report: Quality review of UNICEF’s 2018 country programme documents and a sample of programme strategy notes’ (draft), May 2019, p. 9.

Research for the EA also indicates that **none of the country office theories of change reviewed present assumptions or risks that relate to factors that are internal to UNICEF. Rather, they all present risks and assumptions that focus on external actors and factors such as lack of political will of governments and weak capacities of civil society organizations.** Strategic direction from headquarters or regional offices, corporate funding flows and other internal factors are not noted.

### Disaggregation of expected results by different groups of children and the evaluability of gender equality

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**Key finding:** *Most country office logic frameworks and logic chains demonstrate weak disaggregation of the programme effects expected for specific groups of children. CPHA-related theories of change tend to strongly justify response activities, but without placing the issue within the context of a gender equality agenda or a broader inclusion strategy (e.g., Leave No One Behind).*

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A recent evaluation noted, “UNICEF does not have a consistent understanding of how to translate its equity principles into humanitarian practice. While data are frequently disaggregated by gender and age, and programmes often take account of these factors, there is a lack of broader vulnerability analysis in UNICEF programming.”<sup>44</sup>

This assessment was corroborated by an analysis of country office theories of change in the context of this EA. **ToCs do not sufficiently describe the anticipated effects of programme implementation for the most at-risk children (i.e., in terms of age, gender, disability, geographical location or other vulnerability factors in humanitarian settings).** Of the 11 country office results frameworks reviewed for the EA, only a few identify specific groups of children facing heightened vulnerability. For example, in Lebanon, the narrative of the theory of change describes specific protection problems facing Palestinian and Syrian children; whereas in other settings, such as the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, specific challenges are related to children associated with armed forces and armed groups.

Effectively disaggregated country-level data on CPHA would specify groups of girls and boys who are at risk of particular protection concerns as a basis for programme design. This information would contribute to evaluability by helping evaluators understand if the target group was well defined from the outset and to what extent the group has benefited from programme interventions.

Evaluability in principle for gender equality is particularly problematic: Most CPHA-related theories of change and results frameworks have medium to low evaluability (see Annex 11). This is because:

- While many country office theories of change address, for example, gender-based violence in emergencies, early marriage and female genital mutilation/circumcision in the context of CPHA responses, few theories of change consider broader gender equality concerns, such as gender parity, and these are not clearly reflected in the intervention design. In other words, the CPHA-related theories of change tend to strongly justify response activities, but without placing the issue within the context of a gender equality agenda or strategy.

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<sup>44</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *Evaluation of the Coverage and Quality of the UNICEF Humanitarian Response in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: Volume 1 – Main evaluation report*, UNICEF, New York, January 2019, page 54.



- Few references are made to inclusive stakeholder analyses as a basis for designing interventions.
- There is limited evidence that stakeholders (both women and men) have participated in the design of CPHA interventions in an active and meaningful manner. This is linked to the weakness in accountability to affected populations (AAP) discussed in the next chapter.
- There are few cases showing that results of interventions are framed and reported in terms of progress on gender equality objectives.

In terms of evaluability in principle, it is also important to note that indicators can be crafted to help reveal important gender equality results and impacts, both in qualitative and quantitative terms.

### Inter-sectoral dimensions of country-level planning and reporting structures

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*Key finding: Country offices are working through inter-sectoral collaborations to achieve Strategic Plan results. However, these are more visible/traceable at the project level, through project cooperation agreements, than at either the country office or headquarters levels.*

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**Inter-sectoral alignment on CPHA within country office theories of change is not highly visible, even though most country offices work across sectors and inter-sector work is a priority in the Strategic Plan.** Of the 11 country office results frameworks reviewed, three did not include results aligned across sectors; five included results aligned with at least one other sector; and three included results aligned across two or more sectors. This may suggest that most country offices are working through inter-sectoral collaborations and this high level of inter-sectoral activity in relation to CPHA interventions may become visible in a future CPHA evaluation.<sup>45</sup>

## 3.4 Coordination and advocacy

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*Overall finding: Both UNICEF's cluster coordination and advocacy work for CPHA have low levels of evaluability in principle.*

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### Cluster coordination and sector-wide performance monitoring

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*Key finding: UNICEF's cluster coordination role is currently not evaluable in principle, despite the recommendation in the 2013 UNICEF evaluation on this point.*

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At the time of writing, the IASC had conducted two evaluations on the cluster approach – regarding implementation (2007) and improving humanitarian assistance through the cluster approach (2010). UNICEF also carried out an evaluation of its cluster lead role in 2013.<sup>46</sup> These evaluations noted that despite this well-formed coordination role, **the cluster coordination system does not have a theory of change, results framework or results chain against which UNICEF can evaluate its cluster coordination role.**

However, as will be discussed in Section 4 on evaluability in practice, cluster coordination does have a set of six (plus one) objectives (the one being accountability to affected

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<sup>45</sup> Note that the Strategic Plan and various UNICEF evaluations emphasize the growing importance of inter-sectoral collaboration for achieving child protection results for children.

<sup>46</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Evaluation of UNICEF's Cluster Lead Agency Role in Humanitarian Action Final Report' UNICEF, 2013.

populations), against which some types of evaluations could be carried out. Several documents and processes should exist at the country office level to support a process/compliance type of assessment of UNICEF's cluster coordination role for the Child Protection AoR to assess the extent to which different country offices are contributing to and advancing these objectives.

### Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action

The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2012) are an inter-agency framework for child protection preparedness and response.<sup>47</sup> While the Standards are an important contribution to the humanitarian sector, they do not include clear causal pathways towards a stated change or guidance on prioritization between interventions based on local conditions and available resources.

At the same time, **the Standards have potential (though this potential is currently under-realized) for advancing UNICEF's CPHA evaluability.** They present new ways of thinking about CPHA that are not prominently reflected in UNICEF's own documents. One example is the approach to measuring social service workforce strengthening, which includes some 20 high-quality indicators, such as per cent of mid-level and senior positions occupied by female child protection staff and number and per cent of staff who come from the beneficiary population.

### Advocacy as part of child protection in humanitarian action

*Key finding: CPHA-related advocacy is currently poorly integrated into results frameworks at the corporate and country levels, making evaluability in principle of UNICEF's CPHA advocacy weak.*

CPHA-related advocacy takes place at the corporate, regional and country levels. Advocacy is a cross-cutting change strategy in the Strategic Plan and a key change strategy in the Goal Area 3 theory of change. At the country level, the 11 country offices reviewed for the EA frequently mention advocacy as a key strategy within PSN narratives and theories of change. However, there is no follow through in the theories of change in terms of indicators to support evaluability. Research on the 11 country offices revealed that only Yemen had begun to develop elements of a child protection advocacy strategy with the intention of identifying indicators for monitoring results. **Advocacy is usually poorly integrated into results frameworks, limiting evaluation-readiness.**

UNICEF recently undertook a global internal survey to gather information from country offices regarding advocacy, including in child protection. During this information gathering process, UNICEF identified some important insights that relate directly to evaluability in principle:

- UNICEF lacks a common understanding and definition of advocacy at the headquarters and country levels;
- UNICEF does not identify clear roles, accountabilities and responsibilities for advocacy at the global and country levels;
- Embedding advocacy in programming would enable the development of indicators to help UNICEF measure advocacy results at all levels.

In 2019, UNICEF published the Child Protection Advocacy Strategic Framework for 2019–2021. It includes a theory of change and a results and monitoring framework (see table 5, below) that link country level inputs and tactics with advocacy outputs to support the overall

<sup>47</sup> The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action is currently overseeing a global review and update of the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action.

Goal Area 3 outcome statement. **Going forward, this can be expected to enhance the evaluation-readiness of child protection advocacy work conducted in humanitarian action.**

**Table 5: Child protection advocacy strategic framework, results and monitoring framework (abridged)**

Key result statements	Indicators	Baseline 2018	Milestone 2019	Target 2021	Means of verifications
UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 Goal Area 3: Every child is protected from violence and exploitation Strategic Plan Outcome Statement 3: Girls and boys, especially the most vulnerable and those affected by humanitarian situations, are protected from all forms of violence, exploitation, abuse and harmful practices.					
<b>Advocacy Outcome 1.</b> By 2021, stronger policy frameworks, systems, workforces and services at the local, national, regional and global levels are helping to protect children from violence, abuse and exploitation.					
Outcome indicators	Number of policies/laws/regulations/strategies announced by governments (disaggregated by i) existing and ii) newly introduced				
	Add additional indicators as needed				
<b>Advocacy Outcome 2.</b> By 2021, the government, partners, international development agencies and businesses increasingly invest and finance in child protection systems and services.					
Outcome indicators	Percent increase in national expenditure on child protection				
	Add additional indicators as needed				
<b>Advocacy Outcome 3.</b> By 2021, increased public information and engagement will have resulted in wider awareness, positive social change and support for child protection advocacy goals.					
Outcome indicators	Number of high engagement calls to action completed on digital channels in relation to child protection				
	Add additional indicators as needed				

### 3.5 Key findings

**Table 6: Summary of findings: Evaluability in principle**

Corporate level	<b>Overall finding: At the corporate level, there are marked limitations in the evaluability in principle of UNICEF's CPHA work.</b>
	<b>Key findings:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal Area 3 provides a weak conceptual framework for measuring the results of UNICEF's CPHA interventions. There are flaws in its logic and structure that limit its effectiveness in making UNICEF evaluation-ready in the area of CPHA.</li> <li>• The CCCs add a layer of complexity and pose a significant monitoring challenge for CPHA. While they do serve as a potent advocacy tool and guide for programming, their evaluability is limited due to the lack of clear causal pathways that link outputs to higher level outcomes.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only three of the six CPIE work streams examined in the EA at the global level have dedicated theories of change; among those, MHPSS and gender-based violence in emergencies are strongest, but with different degrees of linkage to the Strategic Plan theory of change.</li> <li>• Inconsistencies in regard to how child protection work figures into regional frameworks complicates CPHA evaluability in principle at the corporate level.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Country office level</b></p>	<p><b>Overall finding: In terms of evaluability in principle, UNICEF’s CPHA work at the country level is highly variable. Most country cases fall within the limited to moderate categories.</b></p> <p><b>Key findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None of the country-level ToCs are presented as “theories action” that relate to a broader corporate theory of change. Only a subset of country programmes is aligned with the UNICEF Strategic Plan at any given time. Most country-level CPHA indicators are not fully comparable with Goal Area 3 results indicators.</li> <li>• There is a high level of variability in terms of the extent to which country-level theories of change provide a coherent logical framework for evaluating CPHA interventions. The model of mainstreaming humanitarian action into theories of change and results frameworks means that humanitarian results may be less visible, and hence evaluable, than where they are ‘stand-alone’.</li> <li>• Few country office theories of change provide assumptions, risks and mitigation measures that are either specific to CPHA or internal to UNICEF; rather, they present risks and assumptions that focus on external actors and factors.</li> <li>• Most country office logic frameworks and logic chains demonstrate weak disaggregation of the programme effects expected for specific groups of children. CPHA-related theories of change tend to strongly justify response activities, but without placing the issue within the context of a gender equality agenda or a broader inclusion strategy (e.g., Leave No One Behind).</li> <li>• Country offices are working through inter-sectoral collaborations to achieve Strategic Plan results. However, these are more visible/traceable at the project level, through project cooperation agreements, than at either the country office or headquarters levels.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Coordination and advocacy</b></p>	<p><b>Overall finding: Both UNICEF’s cluster coordination and advocacy work for CPHA have low levels of evaluability in principle.</b></p> <p><b>Key findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNICEF’s cluster coordination role is currently not evaluable in principle, despite the recommendations in the 2013 UNICEF evaluation on this point.</li> <li>• CPHA-related advocacy is currently poorly integrated into results frameworks at the corporate and country levels, making evaluability in principle of UNICEF’s CPHA advocacy weak.</li> </ul>

## 4. EVALUABILITY IN PRACTICE

### 4.1 Introduction

Evaluability in practice refers to the practitioner logic of a programme or intervention, as opposed to the research logic (evaluability in principle). According to UNICEF guidance, evaluability in practice “will assess how the intervention theory has been operationally translated in practice given the availability of relevant data and the capacity of management systems able to provide it”.<sup>48</sup>

This chapter considers the evaluability in practice of UNICEF’s CPHA interventions and activities in terms of how UNICEF operationalizes the theories of change and results frameworks described in Section 3 and the extent to which UNICEF country offices are able to supply the data needed for reporting on UNICEF’s CPHA work. The evaluability in practice of UNICEF’s CPHA work is considered through the lens of the EA questions (see Box 3); and is organized by the following three categories: the corporate level (including global and regional levels); the country level; and coordination and advocacy.

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**Summary of findings:** Overall, UNICEF’s CPHA is more evaluable in practice than in principle, due to UNICEF’s significant investment at the corporate level in integrating humanitarian performance monitoring (HPM) with results monitoring against the Strategic Plan indicators and objectives, and other institutional objectives. Significant reporting against the SMQs, the RAM and PIDB codes is evident and robust data is available at the global level about CPHA. However, evaluability in practice is hampered by weak evaluability in principle, especially the lack of a strong overarching conceptual framework to be operationalized, as well as challenges of disaggregation of data from the field, and aggregation of results at the global level.

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#### Box 3: Evaluability assessment questions on evaluability in practice (Parameter 2)

##### Performance monitoring frameworks

- Does the CPHA area of work have performance monitoring systems in place across key headquarters business units and at the country office level?
- Are UNICEF’s contributions to CPHA-related humanitarian cluster coordination and advocacy visible through Strategic Plan performance monitoring frameworks?

##### Data and indicators

- Is baseline data available?
- Is the frequency of data collection adequate to measure progress?
- Are monitoring data disaggregated for groups of children (by sex, disability and other key variables)?
- To what extent can development and humanitarian results be disaggregated? What other types of disaggregation can be computed?
- Does UNICEF have a clear set of expenditure codes related to CPHA?

##### CHPA accountabilities within UNICEF

- Are clear accountabilities defined for the contribution of non-child protection actors to UNICEF’s portfolio on CPHA? How does this relate to Goal Area 3?
- How does UNICEF’s CPHA work related to AAP?
- Do UNICEF teams and implementing partners have clear mandates and accountabilities for their monitoring and evaluation roles?
- Does the CPHA area of work have a cohesive risk assessment framework?

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<sup>48</sup> ‘Guidance Note for conducting Evaluability Assessments in UNICEF’.

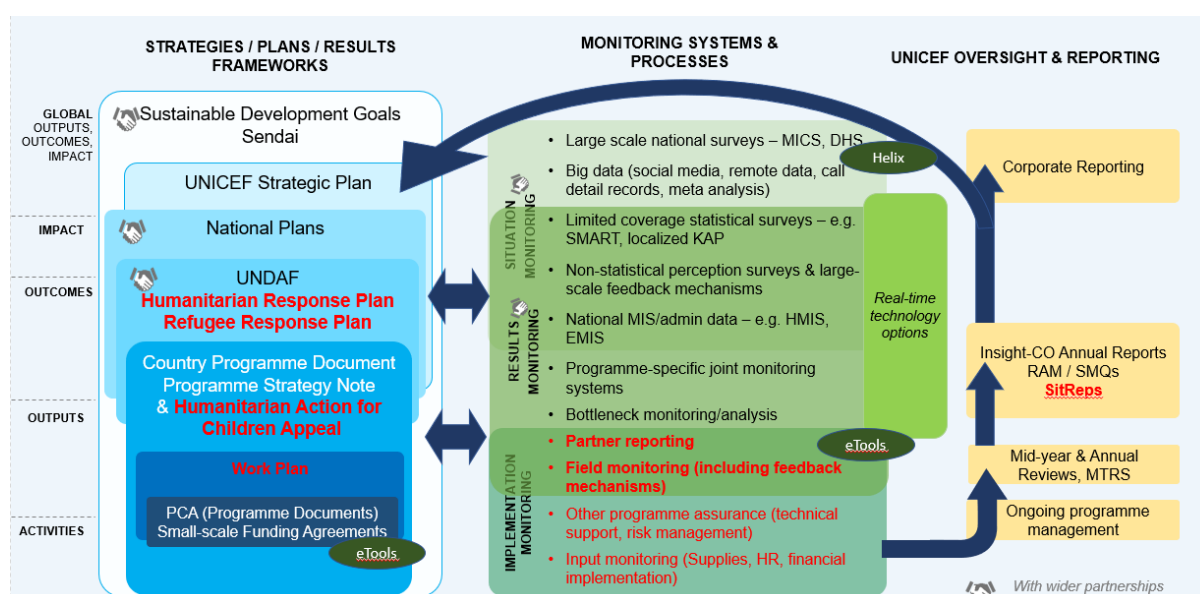
## 4.2 The corporate level

**Overall finding:** Complex corporate performance monitoring systems are in place and broadly functioning but could benefit from streamlining. Accountabilities for generating and reporting on CPHA-related results are reportedly widespread but largely undocumented.

### Performance monitoring systems

**Key finding:** The key tools pertaining to humanitarian monitoring and to cluster performance monitoring are not yet well integrated with the corporate Strategic Plan-related platforms and mechanisms. Systems integration is ongoing and is creating new challenges.

**Figure 2: UNICEF’s corporate frameworks and processes for monitoring and reporting on CPHA results**



(Source: UNICEF Division of Data, Analytics, Planning and Monitoring, Programme Monitoring Training, Session 7; red shows minimum approaches)

Figure 2 depicts the primary mechanisms for CPHA performance monitoring. **Corporate oversight systems (right hand side) primarily consist of annual reporting conducted by country offices** through country office annual reports, the RAM and the SMQs. Input monitoring on financial implementation through the PIDB (middle column) is also crucial for corporate oversight and reporting. Taken together, these systems generate a wealth of data on both humanitarian and development programming that UNICEF uses to evaluate its work at the corporate level, and for its advocacy and public reporting (e.g., the annual results report on child protection, reporting to donors on thematic funds).

A notable complication is that the **key tools pertaining to humanitarian monitoring (in red) are not yet well integrated** with the corporate system, which remains focused on development results. At the time this EA was conducted, humanitarian performance monitoring still largely used separate platforms and mechanisms, in all of the 11 countries scrutinized; see Section 4.2. below. Meanwhile, at HQ level, intense systems integration efforts are ongoing. These include fostering convergence of RAM and eTools platforms, and of Partner Reporting Portals for implementing partners on the one hand and for cluster

partners on the other. **Systems integration is however creating new challenges**, among which: The process of distinguishing “humanitarian results” for purposes of accountability vis-à-vis the HAC appeals, expected results and funds raised, is increasingly complex and burdensome, especially vis-à-vis donors that make an explicit distinction between development and humanitarian funding. A separate issue concerns cluster performance monitoring which should in fact differ from UNICEF’s monitoring of its own performance (see Section 4.3, below).

Taken together, the data generated by the corporate tools cover a broad range of issues related to CPHA and humanitarian operations, including cross-cutting issues such as coordination, advocacy and gender equality, among others. **However, the data appear to be generally under-utilized, not appropriate for making comparative analysis and plagued by other flaws that render them difficult to leverage for CPHA evaluability purposes.** Table 7 provides a summary of these challenges.

**Table 7: Global performance monitoring systems: Challenges and opportunities**

<b>Country office annual reports</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting appears to be selective and not comparable</li> </ul>
<b>SMQs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In their revised form (since 2018), strong source of comparative data from country offices</li> <li>• Past (pre-2018 SMQ) data underutilized based on previous reviews of CPHA-related evaluations</li> </ul>
<b>RAM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator selection poses a challenge to developing strong, standardized and comparative reporting on country results related to CPHA. Country offices often elect to use indicators other than those included in the standard RAM list (<i>see Annex 9 for analysis of the use of Goal Area 3 humanitarian indicators in RAM reporting</i>).</li> </ul>
<b>PIDB codes</b>	PIDB codes missing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For risk-informed programming under Goal Area 3</li> <li>• To show CPHA inter-sectoral interactions<sup>49</sup> or cross-sectoral initiatives</li> <li>• To show unintended positive or negative results.</li> </ul>

All in all, it is important to note that UNICEF has demonstrated a strong commitment to making necessary changes to strengthening CPHA evaluability. At the corporate level, the push for an integrated monitoring architecture linking humanitarian and development results with corporate Strategic Plan objectives is being resourced, favouring integrating HPM with results monitoring against the Strategic Plan indicators and objectives. Key improvements include the development of a structured AAP monitoring framework, stable standard indicators that allow measurement over time and current discussions around improving data disaggregation. Significant reporting against the SMQs, RAM and PIDB codes is evident and robust data is available at the global level about CPHA that would permit meaningful comparative and longitudinal analysis across countries and regions.

## Disaggregation of humanitarian and development results

**Key finding:** *UNICEF is largely able to disaggregate humanitarian and development results, which contributes positively to CPHA evaluability. However, this comes at a high cost (potential duplication of effort and confusion at the country level) and appears undesirable from a strategic and systemic perspective.*

<sup>49</sup> There are only a few expenditure codes in other goal areas that explicitly refer to child protection, for example, health sector codes related to child protection exist for children with HIV/AIDS or violence-related health aspects. UNICEF could identify synergies by searching the expenditure codes for generic intervention codes within CPHA-related change strategies.

As noted above, parallel monitoring systems for CPHA work continue to co-exist, especially in settings where UNICEF delivers both development and humanitarian programming (e.g. Lebanon). This is despite the discourse around strengthening the humanitarian-development nexus and the Grand Bargain commitments, which consider such distinctions unnecessary.

On the flipside, and because these two systems continue to co-exist, disaggregation of humanitarian results is possible, which contributes positively to UNICEF's CPHA evaluability. Though humanitarian monitoring may be less evaluable than development monitoring due to the lack of clear theories of change and results frameworks in the humanitarian sector, humanitarian performance reporting is made visible through various modalities. First, at the most basic level, all results are considered humanitarian when they occur in a humanitarian setting (e.g., systems strengthening in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen is considered a humanitarian intervention). Second, expenditures are considered humanitarian when they are funded through other resources-emergency; when they relate to a humanitarian PIDB code; and when the humanitarian marker is applied within the PIDB coding system. Third, the SMQs, RAM and other **data sources allow UNICEF to extract a wide range of data from existing systems and disaggregate that data by humanitarian or development delivery modalities.**

#### Box 4: Programme Information Database codes in principle and practice

Theoretically, PIDB codes are an important evaluability tool for CPHA purposes. For example, markers and tags allow UNICEF to indicate when expenditures in any sector relate to humanitarian action, gender equality, climate, adolescents or disabilities. In principle, UNICEF should be able to identify all child protection programming taking place in humanitarian contexts and thereby see a broader picture of what it spends on CPHA at the global, regional and country levels.

Similarly, in theory, UNICEF should be able to correlate all humanitarian expenditures related to child protection (i.e., CPHA) that also include strong, medium and low markers for gender equality, adolescents, disabilities or climate-related work. UNICEF can also correlate sector-specific codes with specific change strategies promoted in the Strategic Plan. This means that it should be possible to correlate expenditures on CPHA by change strategy to ascertain how much it is spending on CPHA-related systems strengthening, direct service delivery, advocacy, research, etc. However, unique coding for cross-cutting issues has repeatedly been mentioned as representing a challenge.

In practice, key informants suggest that with humanitarian and development work becoming more intertwined, there is a reduction in reliability and PIDB codes describing humanitarian and development expenditures are becoming less accurate. This perception should be independently verified in the future.

#### Establishing clear accountabilities for child protection in humanitarian action results

*Key finding: In practice, CPHA accountabilities are primarily concentrated at the country level and UNICEF lacks a centralized system for documenting and describing accountabilities for generating and reporting on CPHA-related results.*

The EA conducted a stakeholder mapping of internal business units and external entities that share accountabilities for CPHA-related inputs and results to assess organizational accountabilities for CPHA results in practice (see Annex 5 for the full stakeholder mapping). The mapping revealed that UNICEF guidance on CPHA makes numerous references to the roles and responsibilities of country office teams, but makes limited reference to the roles



and responsibilities of regional office and headquarters teams (beyond those documented for PD and EMOPS) in terms of generating CPHA results.

This means that while child protection and non-child protection business units at the headquarters and regional levels may be contributing to CPHA through the provision of technical assistance, quality assurance, communications, reporting and other strategies, **the actual accountabilities and responsibilities for achievement of CPHA results lie with country offices**. Country offices work to achieve CPHA results, then monitor and report on CPHA results, and headquarters units – namely PD and EMOPS – consolidate and report on this data. This arrangement poses the following challenges to evaluability:

- Existing indicators do not adequately capture CPHA accountabilities and contributions beyond the country level.
- Headquarters and country-level theories of change do not consider or capture the engagement needed from various UNICEF business units regarding CPHA.
- UNICEF does not formally document or track shared accountabilities for CPHA results at the headquarters and regional levels in a consistent manner. Any shared accountabilities that do exist are not subject to monitoring or review. In some instances, UNICEF has begun to work towards increased documentation of these shared accountabilities in various formats, such as office management plans, annual work plans, the regional office-PD compact, a joint annual review between PD and EMOPS, the PD Planning Tool and management matrices.
- The process of identifying the exact content and location of the CPHA accountabilities of all other internal business units and actors would be extremely labour intensive, requiring searching through the annual work plans of each unit, as well as the annual work plans of some individuals.

Given that it is very difficult to show concrete examples of shared accountabilities for CPHA results at the headquarters and regional levels, one proxy indicator would be to investigate and verify which headquarters units are currently utilizing relevant CPHA-related expenditure codes at the headquarters and regional levels. However, such an analysis has proven difficult to carry out in practice.

### Accountability to affected populations

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*Key finding: Despite a structured monitoring framework for AAP, programming and reporting on AAP is weak and fragmented and evaluability in practice remains low, though some progress is evident in this area.*

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UNICEF subscribes to the IASC and Core Humanitarian Standards definition of Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) as, "An active commitment to use power responsibly by taking account of, giving account to, and being held to account by the people humanitarian organizations seek to assist" and as putting "communities and people at the centre of humanitarian action and promoting respect for their fundamental human rights underpinned by the right to life with dignity, and the right to protection and security as set forth in international law," respectively.

The UNICEF vision on AAP is that all vulnerable, at-risk and crisis-affected girls, boys, women and men supported through UNICEF's actions can hold UNICEF as an organization to account for promoting and protecting their rights and generating effective results for them, considering their needs, concerns and preferences, and working in ways that enhance their

dignity, capacities and resilience.<sup>50</sup> The commitment in the draft 2019 CCCs reads: “Ensure that affected children and families participate in the decisions that affect their lives, are properly informed and consulted and have their views acted upon.”

Corporate instruments on AAP include a conceptual framework (narrative) and roadmap (logframe). The roadmap includes four strategic objectives<sup>51</sup> with associated results areas, each associated with targets (2021), baselines (2018) and expected milestones (2019, 2020). This could be expected to generate strong and consistent reporting. At the time of writing, however, the **EA did not find consistent data collection, and only few references to AAP in corporate and country office reporting.** In practice, there does not yet appear to be any systematic attempt at the corporate and country levels to monitor and measure UNICEF’s contributions in this area. One reason for this may be that AAP is a relatively new area of focus for UNICEF and while cross-cutting commitments exist, systematic training for country offices to understand how to measure AAP in the context of country office and sector programming appears weak or non-existent.

**Box 5: UNICEF Lebanon 2018 strategic monitoring questions reporting on accountability to affected populations**

While the ranking system provided in the SMQs is useful to understanding the extent to which country offices are rolling out AAP activities, some of the most valuable information can be found in countries’ remarks alongside the SMQ reports.

For example, in its 2018 SMQ remarks, Lebanon noted, “Two-way communication with communities was strengthened in 2018 through the establishment of different platforms. In 2017 and 2018, the Ground Truth Solution, commissioned by OECD [the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development], conducted a systematic perception survey of beneficiaries and local partners (including UNICEF’s) as a follow up to the Grand Bargain commitments. In 2019, UNICEF Lebanon will roll out AAP across all programmes to foster continuous feedback.”

As a sign of progress towards better evaluability in practice of AAP, in 2018, the SMQs included several questions related to AAP. These questions take the form of one overarching question and five sub-questions (see Table 8). Data generated by country offices in their answers to these questions can provide valuable insights into the extent to which country offices are operationalizing APP (see Box 5). As of the 2018 SMQ reporting, data seem to indicate that AAP efforts in humanitarian action are underway but largely remain experimental and small-scale.

**Table 8: Strategic monitoring questions on accountability to affected populations – Strategic Plan indicator H1.c.4**

SMQ	Response options and disaggregation requirements
22. In relation to the reporting period, please rate the level of the country office’s Communication for Development support to communications, community engagement and	<p>(Screening question)</p> <p><b>Scale/rating (pick one):</b> 1) Not applicable/not related programming activities or efforts as</p>

<sup>50</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Scaling-up Accountability to Affected Populations in UNICEF, 2018-2021: Business Case. 7 May 2018’, UNICEF, New York, 2018.

<sup>51</sup> Strategic Objective 1: UNICEF procedures and systems support people-centred approaches across all sectors. Strategic Objective 2: All UNICEF programmes are designed based on feedback from, and participation of affected people and meet recognized quality, technical and management standards. Strategic Objective 3: UNICEF achieves an organizational culture whereby a people-centred approach becomes a fundamental part of our actions. Strategic Objective 4: UNICEF AAP commitments relate to effective collective accountability mechanisms (including PSEA) in countries affected by crises.

/or AAP for each of the following core good practice standards for humanitarian action:

**22a.** UNICEF and implementing partners, and government as relevant, provide information to affected and at-risk people, including the most marginalized groups, on life-enhancing/life-saving actions that they can take

**22b.** UNICEF and implementing partners, and government as relevant, provide information to affected and at-risk people, including the most marginalized groups, to make them better informed about their entitlements, the programmes available and how to access it

**22c.** UNICEF and implementing partners, and government as relevant, have systematic feedback and complaint mechanisms which are designed in a way that reaches the most marginalized and vulnerable groups, and inform decisions about programme design and course correction

**22d.** UNICEF and implementing partners, and government as relevant, have approaches to support participation and community engagement across the programme cycle (assessment, service design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation)

**22e.** Coordinating and managing three or more of the above in some form connected communication/community engagement/AAP strategy or approach

part of humanitarian response

2) Experimental small-scale efforts in one or two sector/clusters, not necessarily connected, not yet achieving significant scale results (<25% of population in need)

3) Efforts across two or more sectors/clusters, and starting to achieve some scale of results (26-50 % of the population in need), but limited or no engagement at wider inter-cluster/sector level

4) Efforts across two or more sectors/clusters, with at least some sectors/clusters with significant scale of results (>50% of population in need), and at least some level of input to wider inter-cluster/sector coordination

5) Efforts across most sectors/clusters and as well as contributing to inter-cluster/sector coordinated efforts, with at least some sectors with significant scale of result

### 4.3 The country level

**Overall finding:** *Given that almost all performance monitoring data is self-reported by country offices to headquarters, country offices must be able to understand the definitions of indicators and supply the information requested by headquarters in order for global data to be valid. The mixed quality of data, due to aggregation from the field to the country office and from the country office to headquarters, limits evaluability in practice.*

#### Performance monitoring at field and county office levels

**Key finding:** *The multitude of overlapping CPHA-related monitoring processes and the complexity of associated systems is severely limiting evaluability in practice at the field and country office levels.*

In COs, activity/output reporting is done on a quarterly basis against annual work plans signed with the government (and other implementing partners) and usually aligned with CPD results frameworks and United Nations development assistance frameworks. Partner reporting to country offices is done monthly, which means that there is a continuous flow of field data that country offices can use to monitor the achievements of outputs, project milestones and prepare quarterly reports.

In all 11 countries reviewed, there is a parallel system of monitoring and reporting specific to humanitarian action. Humanitarian monitoring begins at the outset of an emergency or humanitarian crisis, when the CCCs kick in, and continues to apply through the emergency response and into the early recovery phase. Here, the demands for monitoring and reporting appear to multiply, both in terms of country office accountabilities to partners and in terms of

frequency. COs operating in humanitarian settings produce situation reports (SitReps) against impact and financial indicators from the HAC appeals, HAC end year reporting as part of the annual HAC appeal, and inputs to the Executive Director Annual Report (EDAR) and new humanitarian report, the latter two required by the UNICEF Executive Board. Quarterly reporting against annual work plans in these COs is aligned with cluster-level inter-agency reporting requirements, which in turn are derived from the Humanitarian Response Plan/Refugee Response Plan. As noted above, HPM runs in parallel with the corporate mechanisms, using separate platforms. According to key informants, this put a considerable burden on country offices, which often have to employ additional staff to handle the reporting burden.

For both Strategic Plan monitoring and HPM, field monitoring provides the raw data for country office and global reporting. It is therefore crucial to 'ground-truth' partner reporting.<sup>52</sup> Several ad-hoc platforms are being developed in different settings, including ActivityInfo (used by over 50 countries) and EquiTrack, where information is entered by implementing partners. Key benefits of these platforms include that they are searchable and can store complete databases for years. Other developments such as mobile applications for field monitoring, child protection information management systems and Primero for case management are opening new opportunities for data collection on field-level results that could enhance evaluability in the future.

Since 2018, headquarters has been investing heavily in improving capacities for child protection programme monitoring, including by recruiting research, monitoring and evaluation specialists for child protection teams.<sup>53</sup> In addition, a field-tested indicator manual for Goal Area 3 and a set of guidance on the SMQs have been developed and rolled out through webinars, and an online module for child protection results-based management is under development. UNICEF conducted a gap analysis on data disaggregation for Goal Area 3 indicators and a related investment needs assessment, both as preparatory work to improve disaggregated data for child protection, particularly regarding programme and administrative data.

An initiative is currently underway to develop technical guidelines on improving data on child protection, focusing on Goal Area 3 output indicators. The guideline will include distinct but related technical modules (or methodology briefs) covering: a) improving disaggregated data, including data in emergencies; and b) counting the number of beneficiaries reached through UNICEF support for systems strengthening. This and other related initiatives show that UNICEF is ready to, and does, invest in monitoring and evaluation for CPHA.

Finally, it should be noted that country offices also report through the Emergency Preparedness Platform. It is not clear whether and how this data is reflected in country office planning documents. The review of documentation from 11 country offices did not demonstrate any Emergency Preparedness Platform analysis being taken up and reflected in CPHA-related theories of change, where it could have provided a strong rationale and justification for CPHA interventions and programming.

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<sup>52</sup> According to UNICEF guidance, field monitoring should include reporting on unintended consequences/negative impacts and accountability to affected populations, e.g. through focus groups, monitoring financial risk management, getting ad hoc local feedback. Key informant interviews suggest that this is not fully implemented.

<sup>53</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, 'Strengthening Child Protection Systems: Evaluation of UNICEF strategies and programme performance', UNICEF, New York, 2018.

## Indicators related to child protection in humanitarian action

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**Key finding:** *A plethora of indicators from different sources are used in parallel to report on CPHA. While indicator quality is relatively high when indicators are considered one by one, comparability and aggregation of data make it difficult to demonstrate UNICEF's contribution to CPHA.*

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A wide range of suggested indicators from various sources co-exist within UNICEF's thematic areas. For example, both the MHPSS and gender-based-violence-in-emergencies theories of change and operational frameworks offer indicator lists specific to their work streams that country offices may choose from and/or adapt. The indicators are derived from three primary sources: the SMQs/RAM, HPM/the CCCs and inter-agency sources.

The core CPHA-indicators in the SMQs and the RAM are found to be measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound, to some extent, with a main weakness being lack of specificity (the "S" in SMART). Many indicators are composites of different sub-indicators, with differences between the wording of the indicator and its formal definition. This can lead to divergent interpretations of what the indicator is describing (*see Annex 7 for an analysis of Goal Area 3 indicators*).

Since 2018, an indicator manual has provided the exact definition of each indicator, means of verification, reporting platforms, disaggregation, what to do in case of data limitations, etc.<sup>54</sup> This has boosted evaluability a great deal. In addition, each indicator has a baseline value for 2018 derived from UNICEF's global database, the Strategic Plan Baseline Survey of Country Offices (May 2017) and the SMQs. Milestones and targets of the Strategic Plan indicators for child protection were defined by applying the SDG targets or targets for related SDGs and interpolating the value for 2021; using geometrical, linear extrapolation of historic data while considering expected changes in UNICEF's programmatic focus; and using normative target setting based on global or UNICEF targets.

**HPM indicators were not always found to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). They sometimes inadequately represent the spectrum of CPHA services provided by UNICEF and tend to focus on the number of children reached and on coverage, rather than on quality of services.** Across the EA sample countries, indicators measured some thematic areas more than others (e.g., the provision of psychosocial support, gender-based violence services, family tracing and reunification and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups). Key informants suggest that the reason for this is to showcase large numbers of beneficiaries to attract donor funding. This would obscure monitoring and reporting on critical issues that may affect fewer children.

The EA found that quarterly reporting against annual work plans in humanitarian country offices is aligned with cluster-level inter-agency reporting requirements, which in turn are derived from the humanitarian response plan/refugee response plan with its own distinct set of indicators. OCHA, on behalf of the IASC, maintains a Humanitarian Indicator Registry<sup>55</sup> with indicators that have been developed by the global clusters. There are 23 CPHA indicators that are quite different from those utilized by UNICEF. The Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action offer 340 indicators that practitioners can select

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<sup>54</sup> 'UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021 Goal Area 3 'Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation': Indicator Manual'.

<sup>55</sup> Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'Indicator Registry', OCHA, <<https://ir.hpc.tools/>>, accessed 15 June 2019.

from. The IASC also has indicators pertaining to key work streams that do not align with UNICEF's work stream indicators. Key informants suggest aligning indicators across organizations such as OCHA and UNICEF would be difficult due to differences in definitions, methods of calculation and disaggregation, further complicating humanitarian reporting.

UNICEF's situation report guidance requires that country offices report both cluster targets<sup>56</sup> and achievements alongside their own contribution. **From an evaluability perspective, this is considered positive as it provides an overview of the extent to which there is a functioning CPHA-related sector apart from UNICEF and renders visible UNICEF's role in coordination and information sharing.** However, in cases where sector and UNICEF targets and results are very similar, it is important for evaluators to consider the challenge of attribution. At the global level, there is the risk of conflating cluster partner results with those specifically attributable to UNICEF support though implementing partners. In addition, implementing partners have their own identity. When UNICEF claims these partner results as its own, it can diminish partner contributions. In some emergency contexts, non-governmental organizations prefer to independently report their '3/4/5Ws' (who is doing what, where, when) to cluster coordinators directly so that they appear on the coordination map as having an active role in the response independent of UNICEF. **This makes it difficult to disaggregate what can be attributed to UNICEF versus others.**

As highlighted e.g. in the recent CHTE evaluation and CPiE strategic review, UNICEF staff are increasingly concerned by the fact that CPHA-related indicators are mainly focused on coverage, rather than the quality of services provided. In its review of 11 country offices, the EA found that indeed, CPHA-related indicators selected by country offices are more often intended to reflect coverage than to measure quality. Some guidelines do recommend alternative ways to capture the quality of services and outputs and outcomes that are aligned with the good practice definition above, but none have been designed to capture the subjective experience of beneficiaries regarding their own assessment of the quality and value of services received. This may be linked to the limited number of feedback mechanisms in place, and is discussed further later in this section.

## Data quality

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***Key finding:** Key challenges to data quality include issues around aggregation (e.g., double counting, underreporting on recidivism) and coverage. At the country level, UNICEF does not accurately articulate its own methods for setting baselines and coverage, nor does it transparently document how these change over time. Limitations include inconsistencies in calculating coverage and lack of transparency in documenting reach.*

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At the field level, the current performance monitoring system tends to be compliance-oriented and aggregation of outputs reported by partners appears to pose challenges. Key informants report that disaggregating data can be challenged when field partners are using their own definitions of indicators and their own data collection tools that are not compatible with those of other field partners.

Key informants have described various strategies that have been used and assessed to improve field monitoring, including the use of consultants, short-term UNICEF staff and independent monitoring contracts, also known as third-party monitors. Third-party monitoring

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<sup>56</sup> In clusters where UNICEF is the lead agency.

has become a frequently used modality for field monitoring in UNICEF due to its cost effectiveness and limited security risks to UNICEF personnel.

However, key informants have also expressed concerns about third-party monitoring in regard to evaluability in practice. Third-party monitors are not child protection specialists and are therefore unable to report on or make suggestions for improving the quality of programming. As a result, quality concerns go undocumented. The monitoring role is limited to validating numbers reported by partners, which fuels the perception that CPHA is mainly about numbers and coverage. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for example, the EA found that while a combination of field monitoring modalities is used, partners most appreciate visits from UNICEF child protection specialists who can provide feedback on the quality of services and introduce good practices (*see Annex 10 for a case study on the Democratic Republic of the Congo*).

**Partners have also expressed concerns regarding the double or triple counting of cases.**

This point is highlighted at the global level in the Goal Area 3 indicator manual, which indicates several CPHA-related indicators that present this risk. At the field level, one partner in the Democratic Republic of the Congo felt that because many different partners were providing various services to the same clientele, beneficiaries were being counted multiple times. The Country Office has clarified that it prevents double counting by not adding up services that may be used by the same rights holder. Both UNICEF Democratic Republic of the Congo and partners agree that a future case management system would provide the best insurance against multiple counting of beneficiaries. **From an evaluability perspective, it is very important that UNICEF country offices ensure that mechanisms are in place that prevent double counting or at least identify the risk of double counting to avoid serious negative consequences in terms of transparency, accountability and evaluability.**

**Box 6: Excerpt from *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies***

“The availability, quality and consistency of data collected across partners and across countries varied considerably and made it difficult to collate and compare programme results. Baseline data were not always available, limiting the capacity to assess progress over time. Data on total populations (for example, children with armed forces/armed groups) were also not always available, making it difficult to provide the proportion of children reached by interventions. Data disaggregation by age and sex was weak in all contexts, and in most countries indicators had not been standardized across partners so different types of data were presented across reports. In addition, country contexts are very different and programme implementation time-spans vary between partners and between countries, exacerbating difficulties in comparing results.”

**Source:** United Nations Children’s Fund, *Evaluation of UNICEF Programmes to Protect Children in Emergencies*, UNICEF, 2013.

**The EA also found that with the focus on the number of children reached, country office monitoring and reporting lacks adequate consideration of sustainability and impact over time and as a result, recidivism can go unnoticed.** For example, partner reporting on children associated with armed forces and groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo highlighted a certain degree of recidivism, meaning that some children who had been through a process of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration returned to armed groups. Similarly, some children who had been reunited with families returned to transition centres. Partners suggested that it is important to develop indicators that measure not only those children who are demobilized and reunited with families, but also the rate at which children return to armed groups or leave home again, which speaks to

the context in which children find themselves and the **extent to which the response provided by UNICEF and partners is sufficient to bring an end to a cycle of violence.**

Goal Area 3 impact indicators are based on global data, while data for outcome and output indicators in the Strategic Plan were until recently based on a predefined list of countries<sup>57</sup> for each indicator that UNICEF was working in. In practice, this limited the universe of countries to those where UNICEF directed most of its resources and capacities, which made it easier to show contribution. Beginning with the reporting of 2018 results UNICEF management decided to open up the majority of outcome indicators to all countries. Similarly, the results matrix accompanying the Strategic Plan used to indirectly define the universe of countries for the baselines, and in some instances the targets. A significant change in the universe of countries would potentially invalidate the baseline and target. In the case of CPHA, this posed a challenge, since emergencies are often not predictable. For example, **either the beginning or the end of an emergency could add or subtract countries that should be part of the baseline and targets.** Since 2018, targets set are in percentages and the only 'reach' figure indicator is 3.a.7. Reporting is no longer limited to select countries but includes figures provided by humanitarian or non-humanitarian countries.

**Box 7: Excerpt from *Evaluation of the Coverage and Quality of the UNICEF Humanitarian Response in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies***

“The lack of adequate data collection, disaggregation and reporting means that UNICEF cannot reliably calculate its coverage in relation to need. Neither can it determine accurately enough whether it is targeting those whose needs are the greatest. UNICEF (and the broader humanitarian system) lacks measures to adequately track coverage due to contextual challenges and time constraints that prevent sophisticated data collection methods. Estimates of people in need lack accuracy and they mostly fail to differentiate between different levels of vulnerability. The imbalance between humanitarian demand and supply, donor priorities and efficiency measures all reinforce an approach that prioritizes coverage over equity and quality. From an institutional perspective, UNICEF’s focus on targets rather than people in need, variability in the capacity of its staffing, and an institutional pressure (and cluster lead agency responsibility) to deliver at scale tends to reinforce this focus.”

**Source:** United Nations Children’s Fund, *Evaluation of the Coverage and Quality of the UNICEF Humanitarian Response in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: Volume 1 – main evaluation report*, UNICEF, New York, January 2019.

In some cases, the universe of reporting countries appears to be unnecessarily limited and CPHA work, particularly work related to armed conflict, may be losing visibility. For example, for SMQs that relate to humanitarian cluster coordination and having a multi-year plan, the universe of countries appears to only include those with humanitarian response plans (OCHA-led response) rather than those that have refugee response plans (UNHCR-led response). **This would mean that several countries affected by conflict with large refugee populations are not effectively counted in baselines, targets or reporting.**

The universe of countries for Strategic Plan impact indicators consists of all countries.<sup>58</sup> Most output indicators, however, were defined using a multi-step selection process for tracking

<sup>57</sup> 'UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021 Goal Area 3 'Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation': Indicator Manual'. Note that beginning with the reporting of 2018 results (i.e., in the Data Companion of the Executive Director’s Annual Report), management decided to open up the majority of outcome indicators to all countries instead of select countries, in consultation with PD.

<sup>58</sup> For outcome and output indicators that track the results of a global joint programme that UNICEF is part of (e.g., the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)-UNICEF Joint Programme on Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting and the Global Programme to Accelerate Action to End Child Marriage) a limited number of countries that are part of the global programme constitute the universe of countries.



countries where UNICEF currently delivers or has plans to deliver significant support. **Regarding CPHA, this would imply that new emergencies or humanitarian situations that are small in scale would not figure into the setting of baselines and targets.**

A 2019 evaluation<sup>59</sup> found that in its situation reports, UNICEF only presents targets and does not seek to measure these against the total population in need. Moreover, it is frequently unclear on what basis these targets have been generated. The evaluation found that these were sometimes ambitious and other times not, and they may have been reduced to account for funding gaps or lack of access. **It is therefore not possible to determine the extent of UNICEF’s coverage against total need**, and even a calculation of UNICEF’s coverage against targets is of limited value.<sup>60</sup>

### Inclusion, equity, gender focus and disaggregation

*Key finding: Country offices can provide sex-disaggregated data; however very few can provide age-disaggregated data and even fewer can provide data on numbers or percentages of children with disabilities.*

It is well documented that different children are affected differently by various types of humanitarian situations and emergencies. The impacts of the same emergency may be different for children based on age, gender, rural/urban location, remoteness, socio-economic status or migration status, etc., indicating the need for a strong equity focus in CPHA. To capture UNICEF’s contributions to the well-being and protection of different children, the Goal Area 3 indicator manual requires that its core humanitarian indicators be disaggregated, as depicted in Table 9.

**Table 9: Disaggregation of Goal Area 3 humanitarian results indicators**

		Sex	Age	Geography	Disability	Humanitarian situation
<b>3.a.4.</b>	Percentage (%) of countries affected by <b>armed conflict</b> with a strategy to strengthen the protection of children from grave <b>violations of international humanitarian law</b> ( <i>humanitarian</i> )			+		+
<b>3.a.5.a.</b>	Percentage (%) of UNICEF-targeted girls and boys in humanitarian situations provided with <b>psychosocial support</b> , including access to child-friendly spaces with inter-sectoral programming interventions ( <i>humanitarian</i> )	+	+		+	+
<b>3.a.5.b.</b>	Percentage (%) of UNICEF-targeted unaccompanied and separated girls and boys registered with <b>family tracing and reunification</b> services and family-based care or appropriate alternative services ( <i>humanitarian</i> )	+	+		+	+

<sup>59</sup> United Nations Children’s Fund, *Evaluation of the Coverage and Quality of the UNICEF Humanitarian Response in Complex Humanitarian Emergencies: Volume 1 – Main evaluation report*, UNICEF, New York, January 2019.

<sup>60</sup> UNICEF’s results against its CCCs are generally expressed as a numerator of people who have been reached against a denominator of those who have been targeted, which has limited value without a global figure for people in need for each of the sectors. It also provides a more optimistic picture, as targets are usually lower than the total number of people in need.

3.a.5.c.	Percentage (%) of UNICEF-targeted girls and boys recruited and used by <b>armed forces</b> and groups have been <b>released and reintegrated</b> with their families, and provided with adequate care and services ( <i>humanitarian</i> )	+	+		+	+
3.a.5.d.	Percentage (%) of UNICEF-targeted girls and boys in areas affected by <b>landmines</b> and other explosive weapons provided with relevant <b>prevention and survivor assistance</b> interventions ( <i>humanitarian</i> )	+	+		+	+
3.a.6.	Percentage (%) of UNICEF-targeted women, girls and boys in humanitarian situations provided with risk mitigation, prevention or response <b>interventions</b> to address <b>gender-based violence</b> through UNICEF-supported programmes ( <i>humanitarian</i> )	+	+		+	+
3.a.7.	Number of <b>children on the move</b> who receive <b>protective services</b> through UNICEF-supported programmes ( <i>humanitarian</i> )	+	+	+		+

Note: The reference '(humanitarian)' in the SP results matrix does not necessarily signify that this indicator is *only* relevant to humanitarian contexts. In certain cases, it signifies that the indicator is *also* applicable in humanitarian contexts, e.g. indicator 3.a.7. Cf. 'UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021 Goal Area 3 'Every Child is Protected from Violence and Exploitation': Indicator Manual'.

However, interviews with key informants suggest that applying an equity focus and corresponding data disaggregation in the context of an emergency is particularly onerous. A verification of SMQ reporting shows that most country offices in the sample were not able to provide the disaggregation requested by UNICEF at the headquarters level. **While country offices can provide sex-disaggregated data, few can provide age-disaggregated data and even fewer can provide data on numbers or percentage of children with disabilities.** Key informants provided the following reasons:

- UNICEF has not provided implementing partners with information and training on how to disaggregate the information and what categories should be used. For example, UNICEF Democratic Republic of the Congo is not currently requesting partners to provide data on disability or on specific age groups.<sup>61</sup>
- Multiple partners are using slightly different categories to classify beneficiaries (e.g., for age groups). Not all correspond to the age groups provided in the SMQs.
- Disaggregated registration and monitoring data are collected by field partners on paper copies and no funds exist to transfer them into electronic format (e.g., in UNICEF Democratic Republic of the Congo).<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Both implementing partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo maintained that if UNICEF wanted this information, they would be able to provide it, which constitutes a discrepancy with the perspective of UNICEF staff at the country level, who felt that partners would not be able to reliably provide this data. According to UNICEF Democratic Republic of the Congo, data is disaggregated by gender and, the Country Office cannot collect this data due to the low capacity of implementing partners, combined with the sheer number of implementing partners throughout the country (around 40). These partners are already struggling to provide the data that the Country Office asks for and a lot of back and forth is required to clean the data once it is received. Requiring implementing partners to collect further data would be impossible.

<sup>62</sup> According to UNICEF Democratic Republic of the Congo, funds are given for the partner to purchase laptops and other elements necessary to transmit data electronically. However, due to low information technology skills, the misuse of funds/materials and other constraints (lack of connectivity, lack of electricity, etc.), this is not sufficient.

While sex disaggregation is the most basic form of disaggregation found among country offices, gender-responsive monitoring should go beyond that to capture meaningful changes in the context that favour improved gender equality. Understanding the nuances within groups as well as any form of exclusion that can lead to enhanced risk and vulnerability (such as age, disability status, ethnic origin, place of residence, sexual orientation, social class or income group, etc.) will offer a much broader view of how the intervention affects all stakeholders involved.

## 4.4 Coordination and advocacy

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*Overall finding: Evaluability in practice of UNICEF's cluster coordination role in the Child Protection AoR is adequate, while UNICEF's CPHA-related advocacy work is not evaluation-ready due to the lack of concrete indicators.*

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### Cluster coordination and sector-wide performance monitoring

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*Key finding: Evaluability in practice of UNICEF's cluster coordination role for the Child Protection AoR is adequate: monitoring systems and tools are in place, indicators are largely SMART and baseline data is available. However, compliance with inter-agency mechanisms, particularly the cluster coordination performance monitoring mechanism (CCPM), is low.*

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While UNICEF's cluster coordination role may be one of its most important in terms of supporting coverage and quality of humanitarian programming, including CPHA, the EA finds that UNICEF's value-added is not well reflected in performance monitoring systems.

The IASC, which in theory should provide oversight, has provided a few ways to monitor and measure the cluster coordination role.<sup>63</sup> The 2015 revision to the Reference Module on Cluster Coordination<sup>64</sup> identified two monitoring mechanisms: 1) the CCPM; and 2) the cluster coordination architecture review.<sup>65</sup> However, in practice, **the EA finds few examples of these review monitoring/mechanisms being utilized, particularly in the case of the Child Protection AoR.** Key informants noted that while some clusters, such as WASH and nutrition, have utilized the CCPM, child protection has rarely made use of the mechanism. Over the past three years, according to key informants in Geneva whose role it is to track performance on CCPM, only three child protection clusters have initiated the CCPM, and only two had completed the process. Of the 11 countries reviewed for the EA, only one (the Democratic Republic of the Congo) had completed the cluster coordination architecture review. This poor track record shows a hesitancy within the sector to self-assess.

One key informant expressed the concern that the CCPM and similar cluster self-assessments may represent a conflict of interest for UNICEF. UNICEF itself may be contracting many cluster members as its implementing partners, which may reduce their willingness to express dissatisfaction with UNICEF's role as cluster lead for the Child Protection AoR. (This is not a challenge unique to UNICEF but rather one that all UN cluster

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<sup>63</sup> The IASC Transformative Agenda states that the cluster coordination architecture should be reviewed regularly to ensure that cluster coordination structures remain fit for purpose. In new emergencies, cluster coordination architecture should be reviewed immediately and then within three months, as in Level 3 emergency responses. In protracted crises, it should be reviewed annually. A cluster coordination architecture review is initiated and led by the humanitarian coordinator/humanitarian country team to assess whether cluster coordination structures continue to be appropriate given changes in the humanitarian context.

<sup>64</sup> Inter-Agency Standing Committee, Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level', 2015.

<sup>65</sup> These monitoring mechanisms apply mainly to non-refugee settings, where OCHA is the lead humanitarian agency.

lead agencies face with their respective cluster lead responsibilities). There have also been alternative surveys developed, such as the Cluster Partner Reporting Portal, which now appears to be the preferred mechanism for the Child Protection AoR to conduct partner perception surveys.<sup>66</sup> Another concern is that all current partner surveys are based on perceptions, and could be influenced by partners' feelings about the UNICEF Child Protection AoR coordinator, rather than their actual performance. Key informants highlighted that more objective ways to measure Child Protection AoR coordination performance are needed.

UNICEF's cluster coordination role is now also monitored at the headquarters level through three indicators tracked in the SMQs.<sup>67</sup> Six out of six child protection AoRs responded in 2018 (data is self-reporting). This allowed UNICEF to report in its 2018 Humanitarian Action Study that UNICEF-led cluster coordination mechanisms for the Child Protection AoR met satisfactory performance in 100 per cent of the countries concerned. In practice, the EA was not able to identify the actual reports that would confirm this, and it is unclear whether these are stored only at the country level or are/should be in the public domain. The challenge of validating the documentation that would support this reporting is a challenge to the overall evaluability of the cluster coordination role.

In addition, the HPM approach has also highlighted the need **for more frequent cluster coordination milestone monitoring** to analyse trends related to the extent to which UNICEF country offices are able to meet milestones for the coordination of clusters for which UNICEF is accountable. Again, in practice, it is not clear whether this reporting is carried out at the country office level and to whom.

Suggested methods/proxy indicators that could be used as a basis for process-type evaluation include:

- Linking expenditures on dedicated coordination personnel to overall cluster performance to determine whether increased investment in the coordination function, proportional to the scale and complexity of the emergency, provide significant return in terms of coordination and overall sector performance;
- Whether the CPD and/or the annual work plan account for UNICEF's role as cluster lead for the Child Protection AoR and whether this is reflected in planning and resource allocation;
- Evidence of regional emergency advisors' roles in identifying gaps in coverage, quality and support in defining indicators used to measure these at the country office level;
- Whether the cluster coordinator is functioning at a high enough level within the organization, with the right type of contract;
- Linking cluster coordination to effective, sector-specific fundraising; whether gaps in funding have been met; and whether the sector is better funded as a result of actions taken by the coordinator;
- Whether, via UNICEF coordination, the Child Protection AoR gains or loses visibility within humanitarian needs overviews/humanitarian response plans; and whether

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<sup>66</sup> Note that UNICEF's partners have a contractual obligation to report.

<sup>67</sup> The SMQs for indicator H6.a.5 are: For each of the following, does the country office assign designated staff to lead/co-lead a humanitarian cluster/sector, area of responsibility or similar coordination mechanism (whether co-lead with government or other actor)? For each of the humanitarian cluster/sector/other coordination mechanisms where UNICEF has designated a cluster lead/co-lead, has any form of coordination performance assessment been undertaken with partners during the year of reporting? If yes, categorize the assessment results indicating whether the assessment was structured against the six IASC-agreed core functions of coordination and AAP as per the CCPM tools.

coherent and integrated analysis is generated by the Child Protection AoR for its own users, for the use of strategic decision makers and for use by other sectors.

Finally, an important monitoring tool for UNICEF's cluster coordination role is the presence or absence of the 3W/4W/5W matrices that are used to track which partners are active in which geographical areas and providing which types of services.<sup>68</sup> This is not only needed to feed into situation reports and Humanitarian Action for Children appeals, **but is also invaluable from an evaluability perspective to understand the extent to which areas affected by humanitarian crises are being provided with services and by which partners.** The quality of such documents is a good proxy for the quality of UNICEF's coordination role. Nigeria provides an excellent example of reporting on this type of coordination, and many country offices are using Excel dashboards where results are searchable by partner, location and other indicators. New information management and visualization tools are also being developed for humanitarian action (e.g., eTools).

Based on available documentation, as highlighted above, despite the lack of a theory of change and results framework, the coordination of the Child Protection AoR could be evaluated using a process evaluation methodology.

### Advocacy as part of child protection in humanitarian action

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*Key finding: In practice, UNICEF's CPHA-related advocacy results are not highly visible at any level, due to challenges related to the nature of advocacy. PIDB codes and SMQs could help UNICEF measure its advocacy investments going forward.*

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**In practice, there are few examples of UNICEF country offices selecting outputs and indicators that enable UNICEF to measure the results of its advocacy work,** despite plentiful references to UNICEF's advocacy role (including in the context of CPHA) in theories of change, work plans and various country level documents. Many country offices recognize the critical role of advocacy in CPHA in the narrative theories of change in PSNs.

Through the task forces in conflict-affected countries and the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, UNICEF and partners collect important information on grave violations committed against children to share with the United Nations Security Council and to develop appropriate responses to respond to children's needs. However, very little of the data generated, nor the results of UNICEF's advocacy with key actors, is traceable at the country office level. This is a powerful value-added of UNICEF's CPHA work that should be rendered more visible, while respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the victims and advocacy done on their behalf. Even in the case of UNICEF Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is heavily invested in advocacy-related activities, such as documenting grave violations of children's rights, the country office has difficulty tracking and demonstrating the results associated with this considerable body of work because results may only become visible once formal advocacy is taken up at the regional or global level (based on country level documentation). In some cases, such advocacy is taken up by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, further removing results visibility from UNICEF.

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<sup>68</sup> The 4W (alternatively 3W or 5W) database is designed to provide key and accessible information as to 'Who' does 'What', 'Where' and 'When': <https://www.ochaopt.org/dbs/4w>

At the regional level, UNICEF primarily engages in CPHA-related advocacy to influence regional bodies such as the African Union and to support cross-border programming. However, there are no specific measures to track regional-level advocacy results, which makes evaluability in practice unrealistic. Advocacy-related outputs and indicators are usually found in annual work plans, but not in higher-level reporting, such as the RAM. Within work plans, CPHA-related advocacy outputs tend to be generic and lumped together with other types of work such as technical assistance. For example, the West and Central Africa Regional Office work plan states, “By 2021, Level 3, Level 2 and other country offices directly or indirectly affected by emergencies/armed conflicts in West and Central Africa will have received response support (technical assistance, resources and advocacy) and other selected country offices will have received technical support for preparedness.”

Still, the PIDB codes (expenditure reporting) and the SMQs (results reporting) are two examples of performance monitoring within UNICEF that can contribute to rendering advocacy and public engagement visible at all levels. This includes advocacy and public engagement that UNICEF undertakes in humanitarian contexts.

The **SMQs can also help render advocacy visible by obligating country offices to report on the results of their advocacy, including in humanitarian action.** While, many of the performance monitoring indicators within the Goal Area 3 structure focus exclusively on UNICEF’s role in service provision, two SMQs strive to measure UNICEF’s advocacy work.<sup>69</sup>

## 4.5 Key findings

**Table 10: Summary of findings: Evaluability in practice**

<b>Corporate level</b>	<b>Overall finding: Complex corporate performance monitoring systems are in place and broadly functioning but could benefit from streamlining. Accountabilities for generating and reporting on CPHA-related results are reportedly widespread but largely undocumented.</b>
	<p><b>Key findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The key tools pertaining to humanitarian monitoring and to cluster performance monitoring are not yet well integrated with the corporate Strategic Plan-related platforms and mechanisms. Systems integration is ongoing and is creating new challenges.</li> <li>• UNICEF is largely able to disaggregate humanitarian and development results, which contributes positively to CPHA evaluability. However, this comes at a high cost (potential duplication of effort and confusion at the country level) and appears undesirable from a strategic and systemic perspective.</li> <li>• In practice, CPHA accountabilities are primarily concentrated at the country level and UNICEF lacks a centralized system for</li> </ul>

<sup>69</sup> The two SMQs that support Strategic Plan indicator H3.a.2 are: During the reporting period, has UNICEF advocacy contributed to a positive child-focused policy change in your country through any of the following: Select all that apply. Please list the top three advocacy priorities being implemented at country level in the remarks. i) New legislation or policy ii) Improved existing legislation (e.g. amendment) or policy iii) Prevention of negative legislation or policy iv) Funding commitments v) Shift in position or narrative of key advocacy target (e.g. in speeches) vi) Other (Specify) vii) None of the above; and During the reporting period, was the country supported to take action through a UNICEF-led advocacy campaign on: (a) Child Survival; (b) Children Uprooted; (c) Early Moments Matter (ECD); (d) End Violence Against Children (#ENDViolence); (e) Humanitarian Response; (f) World Children’s Day (g) None of the above Select all that apply i) Child Survival ii) Children Uprooted; iii) Early Moments Matter (ECD) iv) End Violence Against Children (#ENDViolence) v) Humanitarian Response; vi) World Children’s Day vii) None of the above.

	<p>documenting and describing accountabilities for generating and reporting on CPHA-related results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite a structured monitoring framework for AAP, programming and reporting on AAP is weak and fragmented and evaluability in practice remains low, though some progress is evident in this area.</li> </ul>
<p>Country level</p>	<p><b>Overall finding:</b> Given that almost all performance monitoring data is self-reported by country offices to headquarters, country offices must be able to understand the definitions of indicators and supply the information requested by headquarters in order for global data to be valid. The mixed quality of data, due to aggregation from the field to the country office and from the country office to headquarters, limits evaluability in practice.</p>
	<p><b>Key findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The multitude of overlapping CPHA-related monitoring processes and the complexity of associated systems is severely limiting evaluability in practice at the field and country office levels.</li> <li>• A plethora of indicators from different sources are used in parallel to report on CPHA. While indicator quality is relatively high when indicators are considered one by one, comparability and aggregation of data make it difficult to demonstrate UNICEF’s contribution to CPHA.</li> <li>• Key challenges to data quality include issues around aggregation (e.g., double counting, underreporting on recidivism) and coverage. At the country level, UNICEF does not accurately articulate its own methods for setting baselines and coverage, nor does it transparently document how these change over time. Limitations include inconsistencies in calculating coverage and lack of transparency in documenting reach.</li> <li>• Country offices can provide sex-disaggregated data; however very few can provide age-disaggregated data and even fewer can provide data on numbers or percentages of children with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<p>Coordination and Advocacy</p>	<p><b>Overall finding:</b> Evaluability in practice of UNICEF’s cluster coordination role in the Child Protection AoR is adequate, while UNICEF’s CPHA-related advocacy work is not evaluation-ready due to the lack of concrete indicators.</p>
	<p><b>Key findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluability in practice of UNICEF’s cluster coordination role for the Child Protection AoR is adequate: monitoring systems and tools are in place, indicators are largely SMART and baseline data is available. However, compliance with inter-agency mechanisms, particularly CCPM, is low.</li> <li>• In practice, UNICEF’s CPHA-related advocacy results are not highly visible at any level, due to challenges related to the nature of advocacy. PIDB codes and SMQs could help UNICEF measure its advocacy investments going forward.</li> </ul>

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1. Conclusions

**Overarching conclusion: UNICEF’s CPHA work is not currently evaluation-ready for the type of comprehensive, corporate evaluation exercise typically commissioned by the Evaluation Office. This is despite the fact that UNICEF has made important investments towards developing and improving CPHA-related performance monitoring systems and recognizes the continued need to advance this work.**

The independent corporate evaluations typically commissioned by UNICEF’s Evaluation Office tend to be theory-based; that is, they assess UNICEF’s contribution to a chain of results, from activities and outputs to higher-level outcomes (and sometimes impact). If no coherent theory of change exists that readily maps this pathway, a theory of change would need to be developed at the beginning of the evaluation process. If the ingredients for a theory of change – such as common understanding and sufficient evidence of links between causes and effects – are not in place, this would not be feasible. Given weaknesses in evaluability in principle, as explained under conclusion 1, theory-based evaluation is not currently an option for assessing UNICEF’s CPHA work.

UNICEF demonstrates strong awareness, willingness and commitment to making the changes needed to strengthen CPHA evaluability. At the corporate level, the push for an integrated monitoring architecture stands out. This would integrate HPM with results monitoring against the Strategic Plan indicators and objectives. Other noteworthy improvements include the development of a structured AAP monitoring framework and high-quality indicators that facilitate measurement over time, as well as further discussion on improving data disaggregation. Significant reporting against the SMQs, the RAM and PIDB codes is evident and robust data is available at the global level about CPHA that would permit comparative and longitudinal analysis across countries and regions. This progress is particularly relevant given the complexity of programming and monitoring in the context of CPHA.

Other, less comprehensive evaluations could be carried out, however. These include project/programme evaluations of more mature CPHA components, or evaluations at the country level, provided that a clear theory of change and results framework exist. Process-focused evaluations (e.g., on compliance with CPHA-related standards and guidelines) could also be an option. A formative, learning-orientated evaluation could be conducted for those programme components that are currently being piloted or that are still under development. It is, however, unlikely to meet the UNICEF Executive Board expectations for a long-standing area of work and investment: A more summative evaluation may be considered necessary, focused on assessing performance and effectiveness in achieving expected results.

In the current context, the EA notes a strong organizational push for results-orientation in the child protection area of work, as evidenced e.g. by the child protection results-based management module, indicator mapping, technical module on methods of improving disaggregated data, etc. (see *Section 4*). This EA should be read as further incentive and a roadmap for boosting the evaluation-readiness of CPHA in time for the 2022–2025 period.

**Conclusion 1: The evaluability in principle of UNICEF’s CPHA interventions is limited. The conceptual underpinnings of this work are not explicit and translation into coherent results chains and planning documents encompassing the work of all**



## **relevant business units is missing. The CCCs are not integrated into an overarching child protection/CPHA theory of change.**

The evaluability in principle of UNICEF's CPHA interventions is challenged for a number of reasons. First, there is no comprehensive document outlining the vision and programme impact pathway for CPHA. The corporate template used for the Goal Area 3 theory of change has not yet been broken down or made intelligible for humanitarian action, which is supposedly mainstreamed. Second, the Goal Area 3 theory of change does not adequately and coherently represent UNICEF's cross-sectoral role in CPHA. Third, the CCCs, even in the (draft) 2019 version, follow a standards/targets logic that seems entirely disconnected from any conceptualization of causal pathways. Finally, the CPiE work streams are a mixed bag in planning terms, with some (notably MHPSS and gender-based violence in emergencies) more coherent in programme design than others (e.g., prevention and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups, the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism and family tracing and reunification). Gaps in programme logic for the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism are noteworthy as it overlaps with the thematic area of children and armed conflict, which the UNICEF Executive Board has expressed interest in having evaluated.<sup>70</sup>

At the country level, key planning documents, such as CPDs and PSNs, do not systematically incorporate assessment of the risks of specific types of humanitarian situations arising in the country (e.g., public health emergencies, armed conflict, massive population movements, natural disasters, etc.) and of the existing capacities of governments, affected populations and civil society actors to address these risks. They tend to lack discussion of the programme effects on specific groups of children and inter-sectoral linkages and assumptions regarding UNICEF's internal support to CPHA interventions.

## **Conclusion 2: Accountabilities for CPHA-resulted results are disbursed widely throughout UNICEF and are not well documented.**

CPHA accountabilities are widely distributed, both internally and externally. This wide disbursement is logical given the complex nature of CPHA; however, these accountabilities are primarily implicit as they are generally neither documented nor traceable. For example, in relation to CPHA-related accountabilities set out by the UNICEF Strategic Plan, only the accountabilities of Child Protection teams and EMOPS are clearly articulated, even though many of UNICEF's other business units and quasi-internal and external partners and networks have active and essential CPHA-related roles. This lack of clarity regarding CPHA roles and responsibilities ultimately leads to an overall lack of accountability for achieving and reporting on results.

## **Conclusion 3: The evaluability in practice of UNICEF's CPHA interventions is moderate. The organization's complex corporate monitoring mechanisms are mostly functional but need to be streamlined. UNICEF is currently working to improve systems and indicators, but data aggregation from the field to country office and headquarters levels remains questionable, hampering the validity and comparability of data, and contrasting with UNICEF's corporate equity focus.**

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<sup>70</sup> The evaluability assessment of child protection in conflict situations, originally included in United Nations Children's Fund, 'Plan for Global Evaluations, 2018-2021', E/ICEF/2018/3, UNICEF, 11 December 2017, <[www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2018-3-Plan\\_global\\_evals\\_2018-2021-2018.01.03-EN.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/2018-3-Plan_global_evals_2018-2021-2018.01.03-EN.pdf)>, accessed 17 June 2019, was a manifestation of that interest. For the current EA, the decision was to veer away from that focus and include natural disasters and health epidemics in the assessment.

UNICEF is able to disaggregate humanitarian and development results to some extent, which contributes to CPHA evaluability. However, this comes at a high cost, with potential duplication of efforts and confusion at the country level. Evaluability in practice is limited at all levels by the multitude of overlapping CPHA-related monitoring processes (i.e., humanitarian monitoring in parallel with corporate monitoring), the large number of potential indicators and the complexity of associated systems.

While equity and gender equality are corporate priorities, the equity and gender equality focus in UNICEF's CPHA monitoring system is not fully operational. While country offices can provide sex-disaggregated data, few can provide age-disaggregated data and even fewer can provide data on numbers or percentages of children with disabilities. Given ambiguities about the methods used for setting targets at the country office level, there are serious risks that the most vulnerable and in need are not always identified or reached – either through UNICEF-specific or sector-wide interventions. Though a structured monitoring framework for AAP exists, programming and reporting on AAP is weak and fragmented and evaluability in practice remains low (with some progress evident in this area).

At the corporate level, robust CPHA-related data drawn from the SMQs, the RAM and PIDB codes appear to be under-exploited as a basis for assessing the contribution of CPHA to achieving Strategic Plan goals and other key commitments. In addition, the plethora of indicators makes it challenging for country teams and partners to identify which indicators are most valid for CPHA in which contexts.

**Conclusion 4: As an area of work, CPHA is not currently able to demonstrate full contribution to either humanitarian results or results across the humanitarian-development nexus, supporting longer-term impact.**

As an area of work, CPHA is not currently able to demonstrate its full contributions to UNICEF's humanitarian results. It is even less able to show results across the humanitarian-development nexus, supporting longer-term impact. This is due in part to the fact that CPHA's contributions to strengthening child protection systems at the sub-national, national and regional levels are not well integrated into results frameworks. There are few corresponding indicators through which to track CPHA contributions to overall systems strengthening.

This is also due to the range of data quality flaws, which are mostly evident in data aggregated at the headquarters level. For example, CPHA data tends to over-emphasize coverage over quality of services and under-emphasize longer-term consequences related to systems strengthening and the extent to which the services provided correspond to humanitarian need or beneficiary priorities. There are also mixed messages regarding the relevant definitions and methods of calculation for some indicators, leading to distortions when field-level data is aggregated at the headquarters level. There is a significant discrepancy between the expectations of headquarters regarding data disaggregation (e.g., related to age, disability and other factors) and the capacity of country offices to meet these expectations. These challenges make it difficult for UNICEF to capture or present a complete picture of the medium-term results of its CPHA interventions and their contributions to UNICEF's corporate plans and priorities.

Furthermore, UNICEF's significant contributions to CPHA-related advocacy, including the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism, and cluster- or sector-wide coordination, and its major contributions to standard setting, evidence-generation and other public goods tend to be

undervalued. These areas are not strongly incorporated into results frameworks and performance measurement, limiting the extent to which their importance can be demonstrated.

## 5.2 Recommendations

**Overarching Recommendation: UNICEF should develop a comprehensive CPHA programme impact pathway and associated results framework with indicators at different levels. All CPiE work streams should fall within its scope, with particular attention to the children and armed conflict agenda.**

This is the top priority recommendation. The key entities responsible for implementation are: the associate director of child protection with the PD director (in consultation with all associate directors for the various goal areas) and the EMOPS director.

Ideally, this CPHA theory of change would be nested within a consistent and overarching child protection theory of change and results framework that is aligned with the CCCs (updated version) and theories of change for each of the distinct CPiE work streams. It should give particular attention to the children and armed conflict agenda and be translatable into context-specific theories of action or programme delivery models.

It is important to note that a robust theory of change and results framework is measured by the extent to which it charts realistic pathways towards priority outcomes for children. Such a robust CPHA theory of change would therefore include the following aspects:

- Explanation of under what circumstances specific types of CPHA interventions are initiated, how this relates to overall systems strengthening, how they complement/work with existing child protection and other UNICEF sectors and activities, and how and when they are phased out;
- Explanation of how factors such as need, inclusion, equity, gender equality and AAP should be addressed through UNICEF's CPHA-related work and the work of all partners through cluster coordination;
- Clarification of the expected results from the Child Protection AoR coordination role and performance monitoring, including ensuring adequate oversight measures;
- Explanation of how UNICEF's advocacy work supports overall child protection and CPHA results, and how performance on child protection-related advocacy should be measured;
- Clarification of the roles of UNICEF internal actors at the headquarters, regional and country levels in generating CPHA results, and how performance should be measured at each level; and
- Articulation of expectations about where and how inter-sectoral linkages and collaborations enhance the achievement of CPHA results.

Implementation of this recommendation may include:

- Holding a theory of change workshop where key stakeholders co-create a theory of change;
- Translating the CPHA-related elements of the theory of change into a results framework;
- Validating the theory of change/results framework with select country offices;
- Revising, publishing and disseminating the final theory of change/results framework;
- Creating an investment case document based on the theory of change to support resource mobilization; and

- Creating a brief on children affected by armed conflict based on the theory of change.

### **Recommendation 1: UNICEF should strengthen the coherence of its programme design tools.**

This is a high priority recommendation. The key entities responsible for implementation are: the Division of Analysis, Planning and Monitoring and the sections in PD and EMOPS responsible for CPHA planning and monitoring at the programme level (i.e., PD-Child Protection Planning and Evidence Building team, PD-CPIE team, PD-Humanitarian Action and Transition Support Section and EMOPS-Humanitarian Evidence and Learning Section).

Key areas for attention include the identification of assumptions and risks that are both internal and external to UNICEF, and the inclusion of risk-informed programming approaches in country-level theories of change. In addition, core planning documents, such as CPDs and PSNs, should include strong analyses of the likelihood of specific types of humanitarian crises and situations arising in the country, as well as the existing capacities of government and civil society actors to address these needs. This will serve as a basis for assessing whether and under what conditions UNICEF might be called upon to intervene with direct service delivery, as opposed to other types of support to strengthening existing systems. This should be based on clear linkages with the Emergency Preparedness Platform.

Implementation of this recommendation may include:

- An expert consultation on risks and assumptions for CPHA;
- A capacity development initiative on CPHA programme design, including focus on risks and assumptions, to benefit the decentralized level;
- Updating the PSN guidance to include an expectation that data from the Emergency Preparedness Platform be used to inform planning.

### **Recommendation 2: UNICEF should clarify CPHA-related accountabilities.**

This is a high priority recommendation. The key entities responsible for implementation are: the PD director (in consultation with the associate directors for the various goal areas), the EMOPS director and the associate director child protection.

Clarifying CPHA-related accountabilities requires stronger tools for demonstrating and tracking organizational accountabilities for CPHA results across UNICEF roles, functions and business units. Implementation of this recommendation may include:

- Creating and sharing a document that lays out the division of labour for CPHA programmatically and in terms of monitoring and reporting; and
- Rolling out the PD Planning Tool to include EMOPS and other UNICEF entities and eventually developing a widely visible planning tool that allows all relevant business units to document and track their CPHA commitments. This would help to equalize expectations and improve capacity to negotiate, trace, record and report on commitments and outcomes for evaluability and other institutional purposes.

### **Recommendation 3: UNICEF should simplify CPHA performance monitoring mechanisms.**

This is a very high priority recommendation. The key entities responsible for implementation are: the Division of Analysis, Planning and Monitoring and the sections in PD and EMOPS responsible for CPHA planning and monitoring at the programme level (i.e., PD-Child Protection Planning and Evidence Branch, PD-CPIE, PD-Humanitarian Action and Transition Support Section and EMOPS-Humanitarian Evidence and Learning Section).

UNICEF must continue to address the tension between humanitarian specific monitoring and integrated humanitarian and development monitoring – both of which the organization is accountable for. This should result in decreasing reporting duplication.

More specific areas for attention include:

- Improving transparency in target setting for CPHA and using people in need as a basis for determining coverage and documenting and reporting on UNICEF's reach;
- Ensuring that the field-level data produced and indicators used correspond fully with higher level country office and headquarters indicators;
- Continuing to invest in digital data collection, particularly on mobile devices, to avoid having to transfer data from paper copies and to aid specificity (e.g. on age categories);
- Addressing the possibility and reality of double or triple counting using appropriately harmonized reporting via information management systems such as child protection information management systems (counting of beneficiaries rather than services received);
- Providing clear instructions and support to country offices regarding expectations on data disaggregation;
- Reconsidering the validity of self-assessment as a means of cluster coordination performance monitoring, given the potential conflict of interest that might reduce the willingness of partners to participate or that could potentially bias results; and
- Introducing strengthened performance monitoring of UNICEF's CPHA-related public and private advocacy work – in keeping with the principles of confidentiality and 'do no harm' – in a manner that renders traceable the considerable investment in and results accruing from UNICEF's advocacy work.

This effort should include redesigning CPHA indicators to balance the emphasis on coverage and quality, clarifying relevant definitions and methods of calculation, and adding indicators on critical issues that affect fewer children. It should also address discrepancies between headquarters expectations regarding data disaggregation and what is considered feasible in the field.

Implementation of this recommendation may include:

- Developing a coordinated CPHA-related indicator audit to coordinate and consolidate which indicators are most practical and effective for field-level data collection to reflect the quality of service provision and the subjective experience of these services from the point of view of affected populations;
- Commissioning a corporate review to generate specific recommendations on how to simplify CPHA-related planning and monitoring systems and mechanisms across the humanitarian-development nexus.

### **5.3 Suggested areas for future evaluations**

High/low evaluability depends on what kind of evaluation is envisaged. E.g. a lot more solid monitoring data is required for a summative, backward-looking and accountability-focused evaluation than for a formative, forward-looking and learning-orientated evaluation. As noted above ("overarching conclusion"), the area of CPHA is currently of limited evaluability for a comprehensive summative evaluation, especially of the theory-based variety. But other kinds of evaluations could be possible: a developmental evaluation, a formative evaluation, or

component part/portfolio evaluations (including of the summative variety), among other options. As highlighted in Section 2.4, the EA has been hampered by the lack of a clear typology of UNICEF evaluation exercises, their usages, methodologies and pre-conditions. Adding such a typology to the UNICEF EA guidance or evaluation policy could enable future evaluability assessments to be more focused and lay out the pre-conditions that must be met in terms of evaluability for each type. In the absence of such a reference document, the EA is using the most commonly used evaluation categories to guide readers in the following sub-section.

The EA has identified evidence gaps and future information needs in five areas relating to CPHA. The descriptions below attempt to capture some of the key questions that could be addressed in future evaluations or reviews. An internal process could prioritize one or two of these for inclusion into the Executive Board approved UNICEF Plan for global evaluations, 2022-2025.

### **1. Formative evaluation on UNICEF's contribution to the children and armed conflict agenda (2022)**

Protecting children in armed conflict is a sensitive area of work in which UNICEF is one among several key players. As this EA has shown, UNICEF's CPHA-related advocacy work and contribution to the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism are currently of limited evaluability. Given the high stakes and interest in the children and with armed conflict arena, however, the EA suggests scheduling and preparing a formative evaluation on UNICEF's contribution to the children and with armed conflict agenda as soon as possible during the next Strategic Plan period, once some of the EA recommendations have been implemented, to boost evaluability.

### **2. Summative evaluation of UNICEF's work on mental health and psychosocial support (2023)**

Mental Health and Psychosocial support is one of UNICEF's long-standing areas of focus in humanitarian settings, as well as a Grand Bargain commitment. A summative evaluation could assess how the significant investments made over the past decade have translated into results for children. With a new theory of change now being rolled out, MHPSS is an evaluable area of work where adequate monitoring frameworks are in place. Midway through the next Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, a future evaluation should assess whether community based mental health and psychosocial services have made a difference vis-à-vis earlier paradigms and shed light on the contested question of numbers reached and other issues around indicators and reporting (i.e., how to capture the quality of care, how to report on referrals, etc.).

### **3. Evaluation or strategic review of the centrality of protection in UNICEF's work in humanitarian action**

As noted in this report, documented accountabilities for CPHA are not as widespread across UNICEF as the Strategic Plan narrative and corporate discourse around the updated CCCs and other areas suggest. In practice, it appears that what could be a cross-cutting mandate at the level of heads of country offices tends to be relegated to specialists in child protection teams. What could be appreciated as a joint accountability at the headquarters level and operationalized through matrix management tends to be kept separate under child protection, which continues to exist as a quasi-sector. Similarly, funding streams are not

forthcoming in this area of work. An evaluation or review could help the organization uncover the discrepancies and find a consolidated way forward. It should engage all relevant stakeholders in the agency, and could be led by EMOPS/HPS in HQ.

#### **4. Evaluation or operational review on UNICEF's children on the move programming**

An area that has been peripheral to the EA but that has sparked great interest in key informant interviews is UNICEF's work with children on the move. An emerging area of focus for UNICEF, the issue speaks to the humanitarian-development nexus and to the way in which UNICEF operates. This raises the following questions: Is the model of country offices as main programme delivery agents fit for purpose when it comes to addressing regional and cross-border challenges? What is the relative importance that the organization attaches to strengthening national systems versus providing services in different settings, including for non-nationals? Taking the planned evaluation synthesis on children on the move (2021) as a starting point, UNICEF could explore some of the above questions further, with a focus on organizational efficiency/value for money on the one hand, and equity, rights and principles on the other.

#### **5. Evaluation of the contribution of Child Protection AoR coordination to the achievement of UNICEF's accountabilities as an IASC Principal and its broader CPHA agenda**

As discussed in Section 4, there is a significant body of data, indicators and proxy indicators that could be used to evaluate the contribution, effectiveness and efficiency of the Child Protection AoR to UNICEF's accountabilities as an IASC Principal, as well as the contribution of cluster coordination to enhanced coverage and quality of CPHA-related investments. Such evaluation work could review the extent of UNICEF's investment in Child Protection AoR coordination and related information management at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels, as well as results in terms of improved coverage and quality for CPHA, and improved evidence-generation, data collection and reporting. It could also consider the extent to which these investments lead to improved needs identification and analysis, coverage and quality of responses, both for UNICEF specifically and sector-wide.





