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***Strategic
Positioning
Evaluation
Report on
UNICEF
Bangladesh
Country Office
UNICEF Regional
Office for South
Asia***

4 February 2020



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04 February 2020

Reference: Strategic Positioning Evaluation of UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office

Subject: Submission of Final Report of '*Strategic Positioning Evaluation Report of UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office*'

Dear Mr. Bickel,

We are pleased to submit the Final Report for the study '*Strategic Positioning Evaluation Report of UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office*'

We are thankful for the kind co-operation and support provided by UNICEF staff in ROSA and Bangladesh Country Office.

Best Wishes,
For and on behalf of PricewaterhouseCoopers Private Ltd.

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Abbreviations

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
ANC	Antenatal care
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCO	Bangladesh Country Office
C4D	Communication for Development
CAP	Communication and Partnership
CBO	Civil society-based organizations
CP	Country Programme
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DHIS	District Health Information Software
FYP	Five-year plan
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
ICT	Information and communications technology
IMED	Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division
LDC	Least Developed Countries
LGD	Local Governance Division
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MIS	Monitoring Information System
MoHFW	Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
MoWCA	Ministry of Women and Child Affairs
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PSN	Programme strategic note
RAM	Results Assessment Module
ROSA	Regional Office for South Asia
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals

SITAN	Situation Analysis
SPE	Strategic Positioning Evaluation
T4D	Technology for Development
U5MR	Under five mortality rate
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive summary

Background

The seventh five-year plan (FYP) of Government of Bangladesh (GoB) in alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and UN conventions outlined for the country, aims to address critical issues and concerns faced by the country. A few critical areas delineated by the FYP include Human Resource Development that focuses on issues including education, health and population, and water and sanitation¹. This stems largely from the changing economic status and demographic profile of the country. Further, the FYP also discusses the need for enhanced convergence and inclusion of issues pertaining to gender, equity and geography across all critical focus areas.

The UNICEF – GOB Country Programme of Cooperation (CP) was conceptualized as a response to the identified categories of developmental challenges. The CP integrates the issues and needs identified through the SITAN 2015, 7th FYP, MICS 2012-13 and other recurring concerns using a life cycle approach. It is agreed upon and jointly executed by UNICEF and other national partners from the private and NGO sector. The overall goal of the CP is to support the efforts of Bangladesh to advance the universal realization of the rights of children, particularly the most disadvantaged and excluded.

Strategic positioning evaluation

Given the strategic importance of the UNICEF Bangladesh CP towards achievement of SDGs, alignment with UNCRC, Government Five Year Plans and vision 2021 and UNDAF commitments, it is an appropriate time for the programme to be evaluated to understand the office's strategic position in the country's development context. This shall enable timely course corrections towards achieving wider international targets, and enhanced alignment towards the Country's next FYP. Furthered by UNICEF's evaluation policy, the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) commissioned an independent 'Strategic Positioning Evaluation' of the CP 2017-20. This is complemented with a gender evaluation, with the impetus given to gender mainstreaming across the CP implementation process, and a perception survey to understand UNICEF's perception amongst micro, meso and macro stakeholders for improved convergence and collaboration. The task of conducting the evaluation exercise was awarded to PricewaterhouseCoopers India Private Limited.

Approach and methodology to the evaluation

The evaluation exercise was consultative, participatory, inclusive, and used mixed methods of data collection from both primary and secondary sources. A thorough secondary review covering the various programme documents, policy briefs, evaluation reports, Management Information System reports from UNICEF and other partner agencies was conducted. This was augmented through validating the findings with primary interactions with various stakeholders including UNICEF staff at all levels, government agencies at national and sub-national level, other donor agencies, technical organizations and participating NGOs/CBO's. All the information was synthesized as per the evaluation and analysis framework guided by the ToR for the evaluation

Key findings

The key findings from the evaluation have been presented in alignment with the ten themes detailed in the evaluation framework. Select themes including the LCA and headline results, convergence, new programming areas, adolescents and youth, and gender have further been analyzed using the four parameters including: institutional arrangements, partnerships, programmatic arrangements, and results and monitoring.

Lifecycle and headline results

While the office has programmatically made significant progress for delivering as per LCA, yet institutionally the required adjustments or changes could not be made thereby limiting progress. A primary reason for the same was the sector alignment of outputs across all outcome areas corroborating with the reporting mechanisms of the office. In terms of partnership and convergence, while the LCA strategically better positioned the office to develop joint programmes with Government, private sector and UN agencies, the same was not realized optimally within the office. Sections like Health and Nutrition were unable to develop joint programmes as was

¹ Retrieved from

https://ird.portal.gov.bd/sites/default/files/files/ird.portal.gov.bd/notices/e1675bb0_7fef_4e99_8999_1f3c33da74cd/BANGLADESH%20SEVENTH%20FIVE%20YEAR%20PLAN%20-FINAL.pptx

envisaged in the causal analysis of PSNs. Similarly, Child Protection being a cross cutting theme, got less visibility in results in the agenda across all outcome areas. In terms of cross converging areas, the office made good progress towards integrating issues of gender through causal analysis and results mapping. Normative issues pertaining to gender were less considered. Equity related issues were not addressed in a targeted manner.

Moving upstream/mainstreaming

Through this CP, the BCO has developed a positive relationship with Government at various levels including (but not limited to) Cabinet Division, Parliamentary Caucus, and relevant Ministries. The office has also begun working closely with academia and statistical organizations at national level for evidence based planning, budgeting and programming for children to inform policy and national planning and programming. In addition, UNICEF is a part of several key platforms and forums. UNICEF has leveraged its presence through these platforms for various upstream influences. Limited conversion of efforts undertaken at sub-national level towards upstream activities were observed.

The BCO has traditionally followed the approach of piloting programmes that can then act as evidence-based models for scaling up to mainstream programmes. Pilot designs are often driven by existing evidence like SITAN, GoB priorities and/or donor priorities. Most pilots initiated by the office in current CP are not backed by specific evidence showcasing the need for the same. Given the adhoc nature of these pilots they are often not discussed with national actors in advance and hence are not linked to learning for scale up and mainstreaming efforts.

Convergence

Convergence has been found to be interpreted as coming together of allied partners in pursuit of a common goal, meeting regularly and sharing information. This is in alignment with what government and other development organizations define convergence. However, sharing resources, risks and opportunities are not considered while defining convergence. The BCO's reporting mechanism accentuates this, as it showcases limited convergence of the office to operate collaboratively report against outputs and outcomes.

Ending Child Marriage, Early Childhood Care and Development, adolescent clubs, and WASH in Education are some positive initiatives to converge effort of sections and stakeholders to achieve desired results during this CP. However, these are limited to a select few and does reflect a scope of widening similar effort for multi sectoral response to critical development challenges. This can be largely attributed to limited convergence witnessed amongst government partners, who operate sectorally. Nevertheless, with increased partnerships with government at the highest level, UN agencies and private sector, augmented by regular capacity building exercises there is increased buy-in from actors to support UNICEF's LCA.

New programming areas

Analysis reflected that entry points for programmatic interventions for NPA are mostly driven by government, UN HQ and/or other national priorities. An increased emphasis was drawn on focusing on emergency situations in new PSN compared to the original version. Programmatic interventions for new programming areas are integrated across existing programmatic interventions as climate change, urban programming, and tea gardens are largely geographically defined areas. As gender and equity have been included across different PSN, no specific mention has been made towards the same with respect to any new programming area.

Amongst the new programming areas, the office has performed best towards urban programming and showcased limited achievements towards working on issues of disability. This is also in alignment with the institutional arrangements of the office which saw adequate human and financial resources for urban programming and tea gardens, and relatively less for disability and climate change.

Adolescents and youth

The intensification of efforts for adolescents is largely driven by the shift to the country's economic status and the Government's increased focus on adolescents as a national priority. Overall, given the focus on adolescents and youth through a completely independent outcome area, there is increased resourcefulness for the office to work for adolescents and youth.

Leveraging Government's interest towards adolescent and youth issues, UNICEF interventions across outcome 3 have strongly focused on convergent strategies and interventions. Gender component was well integrated in programme delivery through sex disaggregated data against key indicators and including transgender and men

who have sex with men, across interventions. However, there is still scope of enhanced integration through gender sensitive normative and transformative practices.

Gender

Institutionally, this CP has ensured gender ratio (51% female) in staffing. Trainings have been organized however its standardization in design, follow up plan, assessment of its effectiveness is yet to be assessed. The gender inclusion is more driven by progress with respect to resource allocation and access data and limited on the normative issues that drive the results.

Programmatically, gender mainstreaming remains a more section driven approach with respect to the outcome definitions. There is limited focus on boys/ men in outcomes one and two. UNICEF is also a member of forums such as the Local Consultative Group on Women and Gender Equality and the organization holds a relevant role in this and in similar groups, yet the positioning of UNICEF on gender issues is not clearly defined or led in the network of agencies.

Communications and social media

Through CP 2017-20, UNICEF has aimed to create shared value with private sector partners by tapping on the potential of newer forms of communication like social media towards creation of public demand for rights of children. At the same time, UNICEF has continued to leverage traditional forms of communication as a tool to reach out and engage with affected populations. The communications for development team has been effective in using Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) as a cross cutting programmatic tool alongside different sections including WASH, health, education and nutrition, and has achieved significant results. However, there is no direct correlation of UNICEF's activities across communication resulting in increased budgeting for children.

Technology for Development (T4D) solutions have been adopted at various levels across the organization. However, overall programmatic integration with T4D is low and inclusion of T4D as a function across planning mechanisms been often shared to be an afterthought.

Planning and review mechanisms

Evidence building has not been found to be an integral and universal part of project designs. The design of legacy programmes has found to be lacking sufficient evidence. This is also closely associated with pilots that should be evidence-based models but often become small scale programmes that run for years without any assessment to be scaled or stopped.

The definition of programmatic success and failure is primarily measured by the RAM reporting structure which is also aligned with the revised PSN. However, the same does not synthesize with reporting mechanisms at sub-national level which are still governed by the previous reporting format. In addition, the SPEAR section also conducts Year End Reviews, section level mid-line and end –line evaluations, and well as periodic evaluations of short programmes and pilots. Further, audits are also conducted at the end of CP to gauge the success/failure of programme strategies and build evidence for new CPs. These also supported by regional office.

Relations with government and major partners

The UNICEF CP 2017-20 strongly promoted a convergent and collaborative mechanism to work alongside stakeholders including (but not limited to) Government counterparts, UN agencies, international development agencies, NGOs/CBO partners and private sector. Being a long-standing partner for Government and other agencies, UNICEF has leveraged on its comparative strength, and planned, implemented and advocated for issues of children. This CP also saw external stakeholders understand, adolescents as a core target group for UNICEF interventions, with more than 50% respondents providing an excellent rating to UNICEF on adolescent and child focused programming through the Perception Survey. However, UNICEF's role in contributing to gender and community level programming received limited visibility. More than 30% external respondents through the Perception Survey viewed UNICEF to perform excellent as a capacity development agency at national and sub-national levels.

Engagement with private sector saw increased fervour in this CP. However, the programmes and the programme sections are not yet geared to mobilise or initiate private sector partnership within programme design and implementation. This is largely due to the design and response of the programme and operational structure of the office (delay in decision making, understanding of private sector interest).

While BCO is viewed and valued for its technical expertise and knowledge by its partners at the national level and at the sub national level yet at the sub national level it is more recognised as a partner in implementation. Further, the working relationship with the GoB and local level government is not clearly established despite UNICEF having Field Offices across 4 divisions as sub-national levels. This maybe as historically, UNICEF has worked through the NGOs and CBO partners on ground.

Recommendations and way forward

A critical learning for the office in this CP was the shift to LCA and its impact on UNICEF BCO as a key development sector actor in the country. The performance of BCO towards promoting LCA was perceived to be positive amongst external stakeholders. This led to better convergence, partnerships and programming in cross converging and new areas such as adolescents and youth issues, urbanization, and gender. However, institutionally the office was not aligned to deliver as per LCA as it still operates sectorally. This is further made challenging through the planning, monitoring and reporting mechanism of the office which are sectorally aligned too.

To actualize the recommendations the office may continue to operate using a section driven approach institutionally in alignment with results structures, reporting formats, budgetary allocations while continue to promote cross sectoral collaboration to achieve desired goals drawn from the LCA. This would support in maintaining the position the office has taken amongst its external partners towards promoting a convergent approach. Institutionally to support this, the office should shift to a more converging reporting mechanism integrating cross converging and new programme areas with support from regional office.

Further, as the country shifts it's economic and demographic profile, UNICEF as a development sector partner, should leverage its comparative advantage in capacity development and mark a shift from an implementation partner to a technical support agency providing handholding support to partners in the upstream space to contribute towards in increased accountability and sustainability of interventions. The office should also strengthen its position at the sub national level through its field offices by promoting bottom up planning and reporting such that it supports the decentralized levels of government and realize the goal of the country office as a policy and advocacy actor at national level.

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1. Introduction

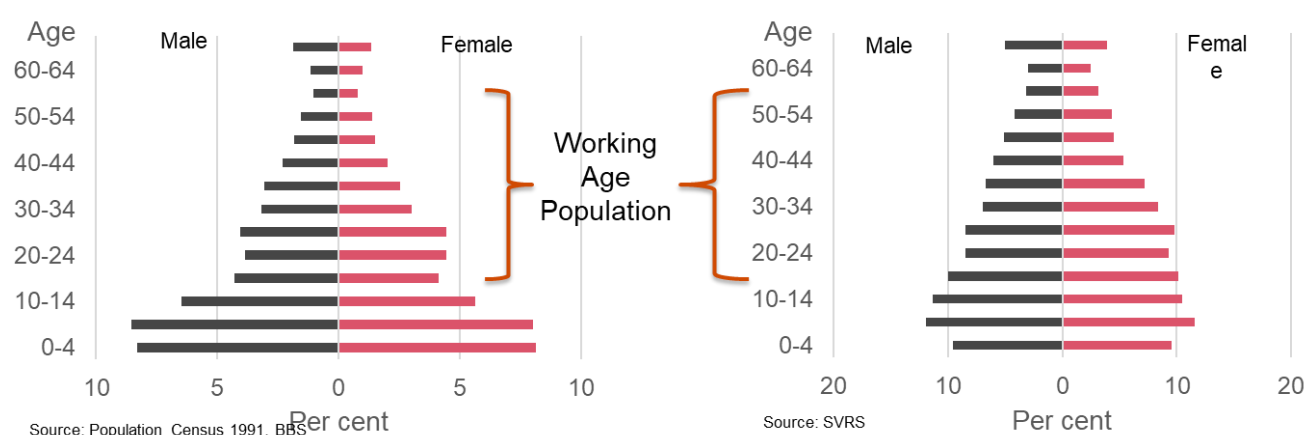
1.1. Background

Bangladeshi context

Bangladesh has made notable progress in reducing poverty, supported by sustained economic growth. Based on the international poverty line of \$1.90 (using purchasing power parity exchange rate)² a day, poverty rates reduced from 44.2 percent in 1991 to 14.8 percent in 2016/17³.

In parallel, life expectancy, literacy rates and per capita food production have increased significantly. Progress is underpinned by steady growth in GDP, which was around 7.9 percent in 2018⁴. This is coupled with the changing demographic profile of the country (Exhibit 1), which is moving towards an increase in working age population between the age group 20-34. Rapid growth enabled Bangladesh to reach the lower middle-income country status in 2015. In 2018, Bangladesh also fulfilled all three eligibility criteria for graduation from the UN's Least Developed Countries (LDC) list for the first time, and the country is on track for graduation in 2024.

Exhibit 1: Changes in working age population in Bangladesh from 1991 to 2013



However, the country faces significant challenges in achieving fast track holistic growth across all dimensions. Bangladesh ranks eighth in terms of population with its citizens comprising 2.1% of the world's population⁵. Amongst the top ten most densely populated countries of the world, in 2014 the Climate Change Vulnerability Index ranked Bangladesh as being most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change⁶. In addition to being vulnerable to climate change, low access to reliable and affordable power, poor transportation infrastructure, limited availability of serviced land, uncertain and complex business regulation as well as rapid urbanization have critically challenged Bangladesh's progress⁷.

In addition to the abovementioned economic concerns, there is a need to focus on social development issues including, reducing overall child undernutrition; increasing primary school completion and adult literacy rates; generating employment and creating decent wage work for women in particular; and the presence of skilled health professionals at delivery; and broadening ICT coverage, amongst others⁸. These reasons have been cited in the MICS 2012-13 and further corroborated by the Situation Analysis (SITAN) conducted by the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office (BCO) in 2015. These challenges are further reinforced by the socio-cultural norms and beliefs that govern Bangladeshi society.

² Please note: There are methodological differences in calculating poverty rates (\$1.09/31%; \$1.25/43%). The evaluation refers to the rates cited by World Bank.

³ Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/bangladesh/overview>

⁴ Retrieved from <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=BD>

⁵ Retrieved from <https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR311/FR311.pdf>

⁶ Retrieved from <https://www.maplecroft.com/risk-indices/climate-change-vulnerability-index/>

⁷ Retrieved from https://wess.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/WESS_2016_Report.pdf

⁸ Retrieved from SITAN 2015 and MICS 2012-13 (http://203.112.218.65:8008/WebTestApplication/userfiles/Image/LatestReports/MICS_2012-13.pdf)

Role of international agencies in Bangladesh

The relationship between United Nations and its agencies with Bangladesh can be traced back to 1971 during the Bangladesh Liberation War. Amongst the first three agencies that provided support to the refugees included UNICEF, WHO and WFP. Since then, the relationship between Bangladesh and international development agencies has only strengthened through the country's membership of several international conventions and councils.

Bangladesh signed as a member to ratify the UNCRC in 1990. Since the ratification of the UNCRC the GoB made an attempt to implement and apply the principles and provisions of the UNCRC in addressing the issues of child rights in the country. However, despite numerous efforts made by the GoB over the years a large section of children is still deprived of their basic rights. Researchers believe that strengthening the Convention's implementation will require substantial changes in socio-cultural values regarding children and childhood⁹.

The country made a remarkable achievement towards MDGs and has been particularly impressive in terms of reducing headcount poverty and under-5 mortality rates (U5MR)¹⁰. However, significant parts of the MDG agenda remain unfinished (for example, MDG Goal 1, Target of Achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people; Goal 5, Achieve universal access to reproductive health and Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability). In addition, the SITAN 2015, highlights the question if the achievements are made alongside addressing core issues of equity, gender and geographic differences.

The country now needs to gear towards newer agendas in the SDGs like shift towards data revolution through enhanced monitoring, evaluation and accountability, leveraging new forms of funding, including new programming areas like peace building, climate change etc., and promoting inclusive goal setting amongst others.

7th Five-year plan of Government of Bangladesh

The 7th FYP of GoB highlights several issues and concerns to be addressed by the country. These are also in alignment with existing pressures to uphold UN conventions and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) applicable to the country. A few critical areas delineated by the FYP include Human Resource Development that focuses on issues including education, health and population, and water and sanitation¹¹. Amongst cross cutting issues, the FYP focuses on gender equality, income inequality and social protection, environmental sustainability, and ICT enhancement¹².

Further, the FYP also discusses the need for enhanced convergence and inclusion of issues pertaining to gender, equity and geography across all critical focus areas.

UNICEF – GOB Country Programme of Cooperation (CP) 2017-20

The UNICEF – GOB Country Programme of Cooperation (CP) is conceptualized as **a response** to the categories of developmental challenges identified above. The CP is a planned intervention aimed to contribute to a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach that is responsive to the present country situational analysis and international and national development agendas.

The current CP flows down from UNICEF's traditional approach of working alongside GoB's priority and focus areas. The relationship between UNICEF and GoB can be traced back to 1950s, much before other UN agencies officially began engaging with the Country's development. UNICEF has addressed the needs of children in Bangladesh, from providing immunization against tuberculosis, small pox, malaria and cholera to developing maternal and child health services and training healthcare providers since 1952. UNICEF has also been at the forefront of providing emergency relief to children caught up in natural disasters, such as the cyclones that killed over half a million people in 1970 and to war refugees in 1971. UNICEF also laid the foundation of gender-focused development programming in Bangladesh by supporting the Grameen Bank in developing *Sixteen Decisions* under which women could borrow money to educate and care for their children in 1984. UNICEF has also been at the forefront of advocating with garment manufacturers and exporters to eliminate child labour in the garment industry since 1995.¹³

The UNICEF CP 2017-20 integrates the issues identified through the SITAN 2015, 7th FYP, MICS 2012-13 and other recurring concerns through a convergent life cycle approach. The UNICEF Country Program (CP) is agreed on and jointly executed by UNICEF and other national partners from the private and NGO sector. The

⁹ Pp 46, SITAN 2015

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Pp 1-11, Bangladesh 7th FYP, Accelerating Growth, Empowering Every Citizen, prepared by Internal Resources Division

¹² Ibid.

¹³ www.unicef.org/bangladesh

overall goal of the country programme is to support the effort of Bangladesh to advance the universal realization of the rights of children, particularly for the most disadvantaged and excluded. The program by design, is aligned to the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, the midterm review of the country programme and concluding observations of the Committee of the Rights of the Child.

The programme made a conscious shift by following a **life-cycle approach** to address children's needs as they pass from infancy to adolescence and this resonates with national priorities identified by the GoB in the 7th Fifth Year Plan document. Apart from adopting a life cycle approach, UNICEF has also given emphasis to emergency preparedness and response, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and moved towards risk informed programming to ensure effective preparedness and response to natural and manmade disasters. To achieve these goals, the country programme has sought to strengthen partnerships with local authorities and NGOs and engage with the private sector¹⁴.

Continuing its mission towards protecting children and realizing Child Rights, UNICEF has been at the forefront of the response to the L3 Rohingya crisis by leading the nutrition, WASH and education sectors and child-protection sub-sector for more than 646,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Rationale for evaluation

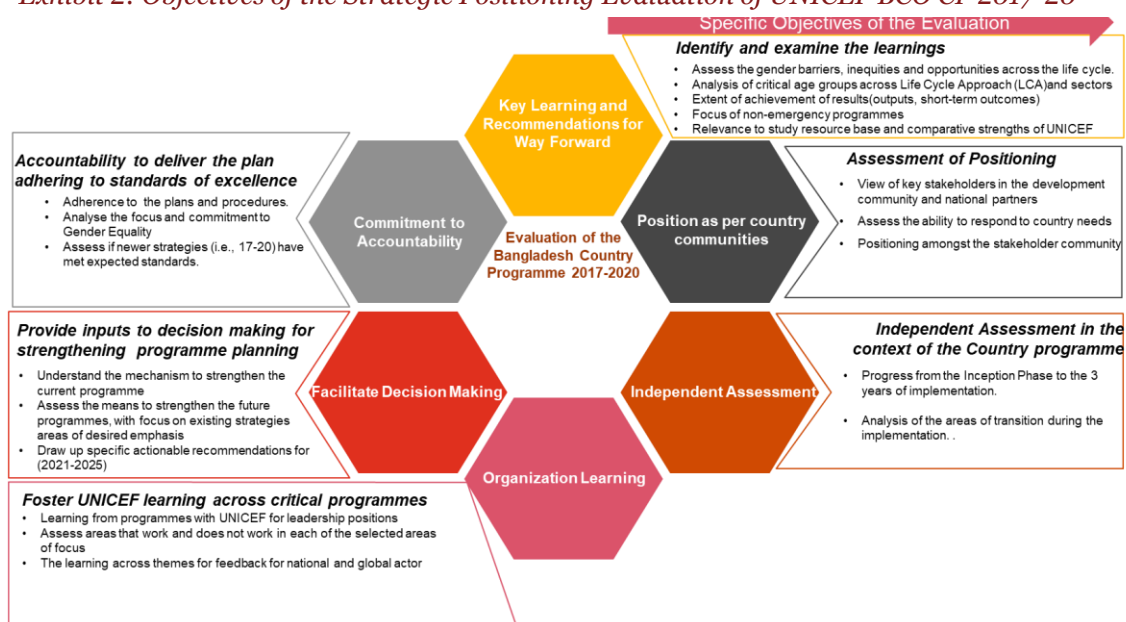
Given the strategic importance of the UNICEF Bangladesh CP towards achievement of SDGs, alignment with UNCRC and alignment with Government Five Year Plans, complemented with convergence with Government's vision 2021 and UNDAF commitments, it is an appropriate time for the programme to be evaluated. This shall enable timely course corrections towards achieving SDGs and ensure alignment towards the Country's next Five-Year Plan.

Further, country programme evaluations are commonly conducted at the end of CPs by UNICEF headquarters and/or regional offices. Given the strategic importance of the CP in Bangladesh, and following UNICEF's evaluation policy, the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia (ROSA) commissioned an independent 'Strategic Positioning Evaluation' of the UNICEF BCO CP 2017-20. This will be complemented with a gender analysis, with the push given to gender mainstreaming across the CP implementation process, and a perception survey to understand the UNICEF's perception amongst micro, meso and macro stakeholders for improved convergence and collaboration. The task of conducting the evaluation exercise was awarded to PricewaterhouseCoopers India Private Limited.

Objectives for evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation can be divided into overall objectives which seek longer progress on outcome level indicators and the specific objectives which seek to evaluate progress made against output level indicators. The image below illustrates the objectives in detail:

Exhibit 2: Objectives of the Strategic Positioning Evaluation of UNICEF BCO CP 2017-20



¹⁴ UNICEF – GOB Country Programme of Cooperation (CP), 2017-20

1.2. Approach and methodology

Our Approach

The overall approach to the evaluation was consultative, participatory, inclusive, and employed mixed methods of data collection from both primary and secondary sources. We conducted a thorough secondary review covering various programmatic documents, policy briefs, evaluation reports, Management Information System reports from UNICEF and other partner agencies (*Detailed literature log is appended separately*). This was augmented through validating our findings with primary interactions with various stakeholders including UNICEF staff at all levels, government agencies at national and sub-national level, other donor agencies, technical organizations and participating NGOs/CBO's (*Detailed stakeholder list is appended separately*). The information from secondary and primary research was triangulated as per the evaluation framework (*Detailed evaluation framework is appended separately*). The evaluation exercise also analysed information using a gender lens amalgamating a gender analysis of the CP, and a perception study culling out the outlook of macro, micro and meso level stakeholders.

Exhibit 3: Our approach to the evaluation



Our Methodology

For the execution of this engagement, we have listed the key activities to be undertaken in a phased manner. It also includes the outputs and the overall timeline of each phase. Each phase has been described in depth in the following section.

Exhibit 4: Summary of our methodology

Phases	Phase 1 – Plan and Design	Phase 2 – Evaluate	Phase 3 – Report
	- Develop a common understanding on the scope of work - Design the evaluation in agreement with the client - Develop a robust plan for the study	- Implement the evaluation through data collection - Compile the gathered data/information	- To implement the evaluation through data collection - To compile the gathered data/information
Activities	- Inception meeting with discussion and finalising scope, detailed approach and methodology. - Develop a study plan and finalise the list of stakeholders - Development of tools - Collation of requirements and Collection of Secondary data - Finalise design with inputs of UNICEF - Consultations with internal UNICEF Bangladesh staff and partners initiated	- Conducting IDIs, Group Discussions, and workshops with all identified stakeholders (internal and external) - Data compilation and analysis - Analysis of secondary data and triangulation - Interim discussions and presentation of key topline findings	- Analysis of the available data - Presentation of key findings and draft deliverables - Finalisation and editing using inputs of the client on the draft deliverables
Stakeholders	- ROSA Regional Advisor - UNICEF Bangladesh leadership team - UNICEF Bangladesh sector representatives	- Relevant Officials at the National and Sub National level in the Government - UN Agencies & Other IDA partners - NGOs, CBOs, Network/s - Private agencies - Academia - Statistician organizations - Media	- ROSA Regional Advisor - Reference Group - UNICEF Bangladesh leadership team - Other staff of UNICEF-B team - Any other (if nominated)

The detailed breakup of the activities and outcomes in each phase of the study is described below:

¹⁵ Adapted from Terms of Reference, UNICEF ROSA, Strategic Positioning Evaluation

Phase 1: Planning and Design

The objective of this phase was to finalise the evaluation methodology including the evaluation framework and data collection tools. A kick off meeting was conducted with UNICEF ROSA to understand the overall intent and purpose of the evaluation. Subsequently, an inception visit was undertaken to UNICEF BCO to understand the current operations and mechanisms of CP implementation to develop a coherent evaluation design. During this phase, preliminary secondary literature review was also initiated. The output of the phase is an inception report comprising of the detailed methodology, work plan, data collection tools, evaluation framework and preliminary literature review.

a) Inception Meeting

An inception meeting was conducted on 3rd and 4th of July at UNICEF Dhaka, Bangladesh, and included representation from UNICEF ROSA office, UNICEF BCO leadership, UNICEF BCO Planning and SPEAR teams, and sector representatives. The meeting aimed to validate the overall understanding and context for the SPE, ensure clarity in the methodology and work plan for the study, and agreement on the operational framework to deliver the assignment effectively and efficiently.

b) Stakeholder Identification & Sampling

Stakeholder mapping was done in a consultative manner with UNICEF ROSA and SPEAR representative during the inception meeting. The prioritization of stakeholders was developed using the following criteria:

- Role of the stakeholder
- Working across the Life Cycle Approach
- Working across Core sectors
- Working across Cross sectors
- Support across different documentation

Stakeholders within UNICEF, other UN Agencies, ministries, departments, other donor agencies, private sector, academia, media and UN agencies were identified for high priority interventions within the scope of the study. Apart from stakeholders at the national level, select stakeholders at the division, district level from Government, NGO's / CBO's and, other implementation agencies will be approached for insights into various aspects of ground level implementation.

c) Literature mapping

The secondary literature review was conducted basis the literature available on public domain, and essential documents discussed with UNICEF BCO during inception meeting. Findings from secondary research fed into the analysis framework and accentuated the overall findings for all deliverables.

In addition, a detailed mapping of all relevant documents using a document listing tool was prepared for the study and was shared with all BCO staff members. The various categories of documents captured through the tool included:

- UN Global documents/guidelines/strategies
- UNICEF Global documents/guidelines/ strategies
- UNICEF BCO CP programme documents
- UNICEF sector specific documents/guidelines/strategies
- Government of Bangladesh documents/reports/studies/guidelines/strategies etc.
- Management Information Systems (MIS)
- Independent evaluations of sectoral/cross sectoral interventions
- Documents from implementing partners/civil society/academia

d) Evaluation Framework

Based on the preliminary literature review, stakeholder mapping, and discussions during the inception meeting, an evaluation framework was developed to prioritise the various thematic areas as identified in the Terms of Reference (ToR). The evaluation framework for the SPE has been designed at two levels.

Each of the evaluation questions under the themes has been analyzed against the evaluation parameters detailed at the first level.

The first cluster looks at three themes:

- (i) **Life cycle and headline results**
- (ii) **Moving upstream and mainstreaming**
- (iii) **Convergence**

The second cluster looks at five themes:

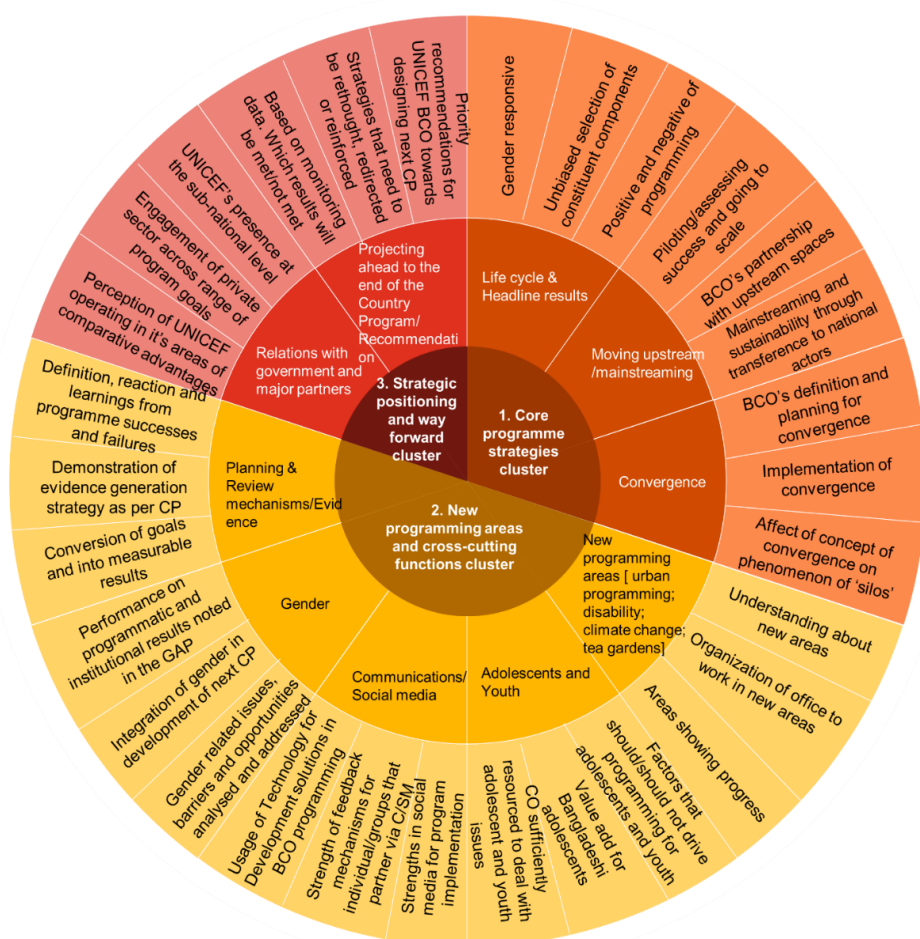
- (i) **New programming areas**
- (ii) **Adolescents and youth**
- (iii) **Communications/SM**
- (iv) **Gender**
- (v) **Planning review mechanisms/evidence**

The third cluster looks at two themes:

- (i) **Projecting ahead to the end of the Country Programme**
- (ii) **Relations with Government and major partners**

The framework also delves deeper into the means of verification for each area of enquiry. The means of verification are broken into two types: (i) Secondary data through document review and/or monitoring information systems; and (ii) primary data collection through in-depth interviews, group discussions, workshops and/or perception survey.

Exhibit 5: Summary of evaluation framework



e) Tool Development for Stakeholder Consultations

The research tools used to assess the CP include a mix of participatory and in-depth data collection tools. The in-depth interview tools and workshop guides were developed in line with the evaluation framework of the country programme capturing probe areas as detailed in the framework and ensuring that critical elements of gender inclusion and perception towards UNICEF are incorporated within the same.

The perception survey tool was also developed separately for all external stakeholders. The tool was employed through virtual platforms and was limited to the agency's opinion of UNICEF's current CP, implementation mechanisms, convergence, coordination, advocacy, capacity building and other efforts. *The tools employed during data collection are shared in a separate Appendix to the report.*

At the end of this phase, an inception report was developed synthesizing the finalised approach and methodology inclusive of the workplan, frameworks, and way forward. The inception report was approved by the Steering Committee for the SPE.

Phase 2: Evaluate

This phase concentrated on conducting the evaluation through primary data collection and, compilation of the evidence and/or data gathered from the sources at the various levels and from different stakeholders. The preliminary findings emerging from primary and secondary data collection were presented as interim findings at the end of the phase.

a) Stakeholder Consultations

Two primary sets of tools were developed for internal and external stakeholders.

For internal stakeholders:

- Tools including in-depth interviews, workshops and group discussions were employed for internal stakeholder interactions.
- In-depth interviews enabled the evaluation team to gain complete knowledge and perspective of the stakeholder towards their areas of accountability.
- Workshops were organised utilising participatory tools to gather opinions and perceptions about the internal staff with respect to strengths and areas for improvement regarding UNICEF's operations in Bangladesh.
- Group discussions were used to capture the viewpoints of field staff through the experiences garnered by them at sub-national levels vis-à-vis internal collaboration with UNICEF, and convergence with stakeholders externally.

For external stakeholders (not including perception survey objectives):

- Tools for external stakeholders primarily included only in-depth interviews.
- In-depth interviews enabled the evaluation team to gain complete knowledge and perspective of the stakeholder towards UNICEF's areas of work, areas of collaboration and convergence, strengths and challenges in the collaboration etc.

For perception survey:

The evaluation sought to understand the aspects of awareness, image, perception and attitudinal sides of the external stakeholders engaged at the sub-national and district/ divisional levels. The survey also focused on gathering information on UNICEF's role in policy and advocacy influencing, country programming, capacity building exercises. The survey was carried out through a **virtual online platform** via email to foster ease of delivery and ensure confidentiality of the process.

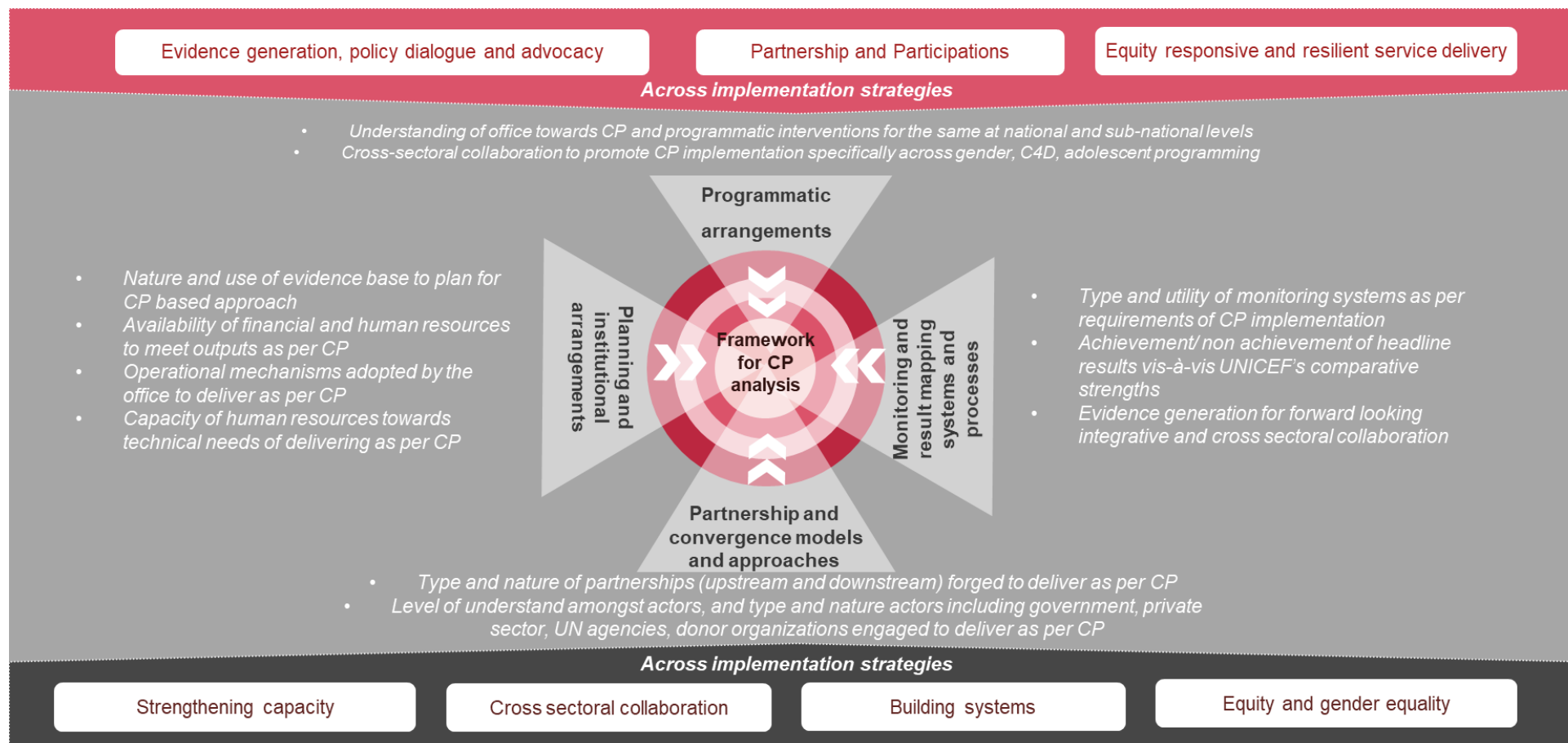
b) Desk Review of Interventions and analysis with respect to the key evaluation questions

Using the documentation listing prepared during phase 1, the evaluation team collected all relevant material from all internal and external stakeholders. Relevant document listing was conducted in a consultative manner with internal stakeholders. A detailed list of documents has been appended separately.

c) *Data Analysis for final findings:*

A data analysis framework was used to synthesise the findings from primary and secondary sources. The analysis framework was drawn from the evaluation framework and considers four parameters: (i) planning and institutional arrangements, (ii) programmatic interventions, (iii) partnerships and convergence models and approaches, and (iv) results and monitoring systems and processes. The implementation strategies were analysed against these four lenses.

Exhibit 6: Analysis framework used to analyze evaluation themes: Life cycle and headline results, convergence, new programming areas, adolescents and youth, and gender.



In addition, findings specific to the gender analysis were fed into the gender analysis framework. Also, findings from the perception survey were used to augment overall evaluation findings as well be presented separately as per themes specified in the perception survey tool.

At the end of this phase, an interim presentation for overall SPE findings, gender analysis and perception survey were developed and presented to UNICEF ROSA and BCO office.

Phase 3: Draft Report

This phase focused on data cleaning, synthesis and analysis feeding into the development of the SPE, gender analysis and perception report. The final report including findings and recommendations is presented to UNICEF ROSA and BCO. The phase necessitates the following steps in its completion:

a) Development of the Stand-Alone Reports

Based on the data analysis, three independent reports were carved out. Each of these reports used the common lens of the 10 evaluation themes as a guiding force. Independent themes and reflection arising from the data collection were reflected across the three different deliverables:

- i. Strategic Positioning Evaluation (SPE) Report
- ii. Gender Evaluation Report
- iii. Perception Report

1.3. Limitations and ethical considerations

The evaluation process identified certain limitations pertaining to boundaries of the evaluation and secondary and primary data collection. Further, the evaluation team adhered to certain ethical considerations as per UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system and UNEG norms and standards for Evaluation which have been detailed below.

Limitations

- Stakeholders that hold institutional memory from CP planning and early implementation were purposively included. However, While the evaluators conducted interviews with staff involved during early stages of CP 2017-20 development, not all staff members were covered.
- Secondary literature published post 2016 only was considered for the purpose of the evaluation to draw the boundaries of the evaluation process in consultation with UNICEF ROSA. However, the evaluation did not fully examine the range of inter-UN programme efforts or structures, and these might reveal additional resources beyond what the CP itself has.
- The scope excluded primary target group/ community members from the evaluation process as the aim of the evaluation was not to assess direct impact but to gauge the strategic positioning of the office.
- Participation on Perception Survey was beyond control of the evaluation team. A purposive sampling design was used to map the stakeholders included in the survey in consultation with UNICEF BCO.
- The findings and analysis are also based on the sample of external stakeholders at UNICEF's National and Sub-national level (2 Field Offices) visited during the evaluation phase (July – October 2019). It also included UNICEF counterparts in the government, development partners and private sector at both levels.
- The evaluation process did not include the on-going Rohingya crisis for primary research, as detailed in the ToR. Only indirect impacts of the crisis on delivery of the CP 2017-20 were considered through secondary literature review. However, as the CP made a significant change in its approach using life cycle as the basis for design and implementation of interventions; any delay in achievement of results due to transfer of resources for the crisis were adequately considered and noted.

Ethical considerations

This is an independent evaluation commissioned from the UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia. All views captured from various stakeholders were triangulated with other primary and secondary sources of information and have been presented objectively.

PwC has adhered to the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system and UNEG norms and standards for Evaluation¹⁶. The team always engaged on the evaluation familiarized themselves with the guidelines and ensured that they act with independence, impartiality, credibility, independent of conflicts of interest, honesty and integrity, and accountability.

The team ensured that the evaluation is conducted with the standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs, manners and customs of the social and cultural environment; for human rights and gender equality; and for the 'do no harm' principle for humanitarian assistance. Evaluators respected the rights of institutions and individuals to provide information in confidence and ensured that sensitive data is protected, and that it cannot be traced to its source and validated statements made in the report with those who provided the relevant information. All information was obtained with informed consent for the use of private information from those who provided it.

¹⁶ Retrieved from <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/102>

2. Key findings

The key findings from the evaluation have been presented in alignment with the ten themes detailed in the evaluation framework. Select themes including the LCA and headline results, convergence, new programming areas, adolescents and youth, and gender have further been analyzed using the four parameters as per the analysis framework. Other themes have been addressed in line with the evaluation questions and probe areas that were detailed in the evaluation framework with reference to the ToR. Each theme is analyzed, and detailed findings are discussed separately below.

2.1. Life cycle & Headline results

The BCO shifted its approach from a sector driven approach to a life cycle-based approach (LCA) using age groups to define the outcomes for achievement of headline results in the CP 2017-20. The LCA aims at fostering increased convergence to achieve outputs and contribute to outcomes¹⁷.

The SPE expected to understand the whether the theories of change, both from Programme and Sectoral Strategy notes, are well developed, gender responsive, and free from bias in their articulation and approach across the life cycle and towards developing programme strategies. Further, it also aims to understand the positives and negatives of programming based on life cycle stages in contrast to a sector driven approach and how they are being blended to achieve results across the outcome areas¹⁸.

The analytical framework¹⁶above, focusing on four critical areas (i) planning and institutional arrangements, (ii) programmatic arrangements, (iii) partnership and convergence, and (iv) results and monitoring mapping systems and processes, was used to assess the achievement of life cycle and headline results across the four outcome areas (Exhibit 7). Below is a summary of the findings of the progress in each outcome area vis-à-vis the four parameters of the analytical framework¹⁹.

Exhibit 7: Rating the performance of outcomes of CP 2017-20 using the analytical framework

Outcome areas CP 2017-20, UNICEF BCO	Analytical lens			
	Planning and Institutional Arrangements	Programmatic Arrangements	Partnership and Convergence	Results and Monitoring Mapping Systems and Processes
Outcome 1: Young children and their mothers				
Outcome 2: Girls and boys of primary school age				
Outcome 3: Adolescents as agents of change				
Outcome 4: Social inclusion and increased awareness of children's rights				

Key:



No progress



Partial progress



Good progress



Significant progress



Complete progress

¹⁷ PP4, original PSNs, UNICEF – GOB Country Programme of Cooperation (CP)

¹⁸ Adapted from ToR for SPE of UNICEF BCO

¹⁹ Note for the reader: Below are the parameters for grading used to assess each outcome area vis-à-vis the analytical lens:

(i) **Complete progress:** When the office was able to achieve complete results as per reporting formats across quarterly, annual and cycle-end basis, and the same views were shared by internal and external stakeholders at national and sub-national levels.

(ii) **Significant progress:** When the office was able to achieve complete results as per reporting formats across quarterly, annual and cycle-end basis. However, achieved limited results as per internal and external stakeholders at national and sub-national levels.

(iii) **Good progress:** When the office was able to achieve limited results as per reporting formats across quarterly, annual and cycle-end basis, and the same views were shared by internal and external stakeholders at national and sub-national levels.

(iv) **Partial progress:** When the office initiated planning/interventions/activities to achieve results, but no formal achievement was made as per reporting formats. Similar views were shared by internal and external stakeholders at national and sub-national levels.

(v) **No progress:** When the office was able to achieve no results as per reporting formats across quarterly, annual and cycle-end basis, and the same views were shared by internal and external stakeholders at national and sub-national levels.

Outcome 1 - Young children and their mothers

Exhibit 8: Rating the performance of outcome 1 of CP 2017-20 using the analytical framework

Outcome area	Analytical lens			
	Planning and Institutional Arrangements	Programmatic Arrangements	Partnership and Convergence	Results and Monitoring Mapping Systems and Processes
Outcome 1: Young children and their mothers				

Planning and institutional arrangements

Planning process:

The planning process for each outcome area is primarily conducted through the **overall planning process** used for the entire CP and is anchored by the Planning & Monitoring & Reporting (PMR) section. The overall planning process for CP 2017-20 was initiated prior to the completion of the previous CP cycle and used primary evidence including (but not limited to) SITAN 2016, Bangladesh 7th FYP, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2015, CP audit, sectoral evaluations, and other baseline and endline studies²⁰ for specific interventions to define the outlook for current CP. The 7th FYP, CP audit, and SITAN 2016 mentioned the need for more cross converging approaches. However, no specific evidence base reflected the need for shifting towards the LCA approach directly.

The overall plans are further refined on an annual basis through the development of rolling-work-plans (RWP) by each sector. These plans outline the sector outputs, implementation mechanisms to achieve the same, and monitoring and reporting frameworks to track progress. Given that the CP marked a shift to the LCA, a mismatch between the programme strategic notes (PSN), which are outcome driven, and RWP, which are sector driven was witnessed.

Further, the planning process is primarily top-down driven by headquarter and regional priorities aimed to harness UNICEF's comparative strengths. While the field offices at subnational levels identify and prioritize interventions that need attention at the ground level, the ultimate inclusion of the same across the PSN and RWP is decided by the section chiefs at national level.

“All sectors have been planning and implementing their respective activities separately. There are very few sectors where we observed inter-sectoral collaboration between sectors like WASH and education, WASH and Health.” – Staff member

Specifically, for outcome 1 planning was evidence based that was used to promote scale up of Early Childhood Care and Development Programme (EECD) and make investments for climate change resilient WASH infrastructure in health facilities, communication for development initiatives for uptake of municipal services amongst others²¹. However, few other interventions reflected a more biased planning approach to continue positive relationships with Government institutions with aim to transfer interventions to national actors. For instance, UNICEF BCO continued to work with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) towards adopting a more comprehensive health-systems approach that incorporates a holistic consideration of children's right to health at all stages of the life cycle²². Similarity was seen in planning towards education and WASH interventions.

Institutional mechanisms:

²⁰ Some examples of specific studies conducted include: Nutritional Status among Women and Children in MYCNSIA Areas in Bangladesh (2015), Community Approaches to Total Sanitation endline survey (2016), Monitoring and evaluation of selected child wellbeing practices through Knowledge Management Outreach Sites (KMOS) (2016), Baseline Report: Project on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health in Tangail and Khulna (2016), Evaluation of “Every Mother Every Newborn” quality improvement initiative: A quasi-experimental study (2016), amongst others.

²¹ PP-4,5, UNICEF – GOB Country Programme of Cooperation (CP), 2017-20 Document

²² PP-4, UNICEF – GOB Country Programme of Cooperation (CP), 2017-20 Document

Institutionally, the office initiated ‘outcome based meetings’ since the inception of the CP to be able to effectively deliver the LCA²³. These meetings enabled the different sections working towards a common outcome to plan, develop and execute jointly. The meetings are chaired by a single section for a period of six months – one year on rotation. Each section contributing towards the outcome area, gets the opportunity to chair the meetings. However, ownership of a specific outcome rests with a single anchoring section. Selection of the anchoring section is often driven by the existence of availability of funds and competent human resources.

Human resources (HR) in UNICEF BCO at the national level are adequately trained to work towards common outcomes. However, at field offices, HR capacity strengthening exercises are being conducted to deliver joint outputs effectively and efficiently. Most of these trainings focus on cross converging and new programme areas such as gender, nutrition and adolescent issues. While trainings are consistently provided to staff members, results and impact of the trainings are not frequently assessed. **Financial resources** are largely mobilised sector wise which results in limited ease towards sharing resources with allied sectors. This often acts as a deterrent towards joint programming and operationalising joint interventions.

For instance, for Outcome 1, all sections (health, nutrition, education, child protection, C4D and WASH) hold responsibility to deliver towards certain outputs with maximum financial outlay for the health section and least for the child protection section²⁴. As every section had very specific outputs attached to the outcome as per revised PSN, limited focus on joint programming was witnessed as per the LCA. For example, health raises more resources than nutrition. Despite having common interventions, both sections have not achieved desired joint results due to gaps in human and financial resources.

Programmatic arrangements

Programmatic arrangements in the office flow down from the planning and institutional mechanisms. The theory of change (ToC) for all outcomes lay a strong focus on joint programming by focusing on strategies including (a) evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy; (b) gender equality and equity-responsive and resilient service delivery; and (c) partnership and participation. However, the same does not translate into the results framework of the revised PSN, which see all outputs through a sectoral lens. This mis-match of planning and implementation mechanism has slowed down achievement of results in certain outcome areas.

For example, in Outcome 1, the intervention on improving timely birth registration was envisaged to be a joint intervention of both health and child protection sections towards reducing neonatal mortality. However, it witnessed limited uptake from the child protection section, as the primary national partner for the intervention is the MoHFW. Nevertheless, the outcome continued to witness collaboration between C4D and legacy sectors through continued awareness raising activities and orientation of Health Assistants, Family Welfare Assistants and local Registrars on a larger scale through mass communication media.

Overall, gender and equity as a cross cutting themes, did not receive adequate mention in the results framework. This resulted in limited focus on the same across service delivery interventions for outcome 1. However, both witnessed increased attention through evidence generation mechanisms.

Partnership and convergence models

Fostering positive partnerships and building convergence models are amongst the core strategy across all outcome areas as elaborated across the ToCs across PSNs. However, at the institutional level, the office did not converge very effectively to deliver joint results between sectors as discussed in previous sections.

Nevertheless, the office did partner effectively with national and sub-national actors to deliver joint results. At the national level, partnerships are primarily governed by national priorities and/or by funding provided by donor agencies. At the sub-national level, convergence has been primarily achieved through tri-partite partnerships between different actors including govt, UNICEF and NGOs/CBOs/private sector. Some bottlenecks faced by the office towards downstream partnerships include heavy involvement of the BCO in handholding and supporting the NGO/CBOs with programmatic inputs on interventions, as reflected through interactions with UNICEF sub-national staff and government stakeholders.

²³ Key informant interviews with staff members

²⁴ Revised PSN for Outcome 1

For example, in Outcome 1, focus on 'timely birth registration' which saw convergence from MoWCA, MoHFW, LGD, and Cabinet Division. UNICEF also collaborated with NGOs and academia for research and community mobilization and outreach purposes specifically.

Monitoring and results mapping systems and processes

Results mapping across the PSNs are provided at outcome level with specific outputs and linked progress indicators. The original PSNs²⁵ looked at outputs and indicators through convergent approaches focusing on creating an enabling environment, integrated services, capacity and knowledge generation. The revised PSNs²⁶ marked a shift in the way outputs and indicators were framed, with a strong focus on sectoral alignment. This shift was made keeping in mind two key concerns: (i) the institutional alignment of the office, and (ii) the results assessment module (RAM), which is the formal reporting mechanism for the office. However, this acted as a hinderance towards convergent reporting as only a single section/budget manager could report on RAM at any given point of time. Further, the RAM sees reporting more qualitatively. Additionally, **intermittent monitoring and evaluations** are conducted using a sectoral or intervention-specific lens and used as course correction and/or scale up evidence base. *Discussion on monitoring and reporting mechanisms is further elaborated in section 2.8. of the key findings section.*

As per RAM, **all results for outcome and outputs are on track for achievement**. Some of the critical achievements include (but not limited to):

- **Making an impact in upstream spaces through policy level advocacy campaigns** like 'Every Child Alive' using evolving T4D methods like social media in alignment with MoHFW
- **Mainstreaming interventions to national actors through expansion and scale up** of SCANU programme and Mothers@Work programme
- **System strengthening at national levels through** integration of Nutrition Information System within existing HIS – DHIS2 and **inclusion of WASH budget** tracking system across GOB system

In addition to the RAM, studies like the **EYRs and sectoral evaluations highlight mixed results**. Overall the

“UNICEF needs more depth in programming and approach, and more field level engagement with Govt. of Bangladesh for Health Systems Strengthening, than they have now. They need to work together with other development partners and ensure functional engagement with other partners to a greater extent to increase synergy. They need to jointly work towards.” – Donor agency

results show maximum achievement of health focused results across the outcome area and limited achievement of results towards child protection. Some positive results include, contribution to Universal Health Coverage (UHC), conducting WASH Bottleneck Analysis (WASH BAT) for evidence based WASH life cycle approach, Community engagement and strengthening of community health system through CBHC, and narrowing gap for nutrition services in urban. Some areas of improvement include, increasing birth registration rate by improving/establishing mechanisms, improving quality of infant and young child

feeding programme, and Strengthening system to deliver quality of nutrition, amongst others.

However, **some of the systematic changes have been less achieved like promotion of bottom up planning within UNICEF**. Interactions with field offices suggested limited involvement of them in decision making towards issues to be included and addressed in formulation of CP. This is also showcased in limited involvement of them towards formal reporting mechanisms. Further, **assumption on integration of government departments across cross converging programmes and interventions did not hold true** as existing government structures are sectoral²⁷.

²⁵ Released in 2016

²⁶ Released in 2018

²⁷ Key informant interviews with sub-national staff and NGO/CBO partners

- The revised Programme Strategy Notes recognise the importance of the need for gender mainstreaming across prioritized issues and areas, for instance inclusion for gender differentials in SCANU admissions; understanding the gender dimension towards lack of safe drinking water etc.
- Focus is drawn towards gender results being reflected through more descriptive strategies without mapping it to objective results.
- No specific reporting on gender indicators was found in the RAM or End of the year Review 2018.
- The results structure and key progress indicators as per RAM also do not reflect any gender specific results, targets, and means of verification.

Outcome 2 - Girls and Boys of Primary-School Age

Exhibit 9: Rating the performance of outcome 2 of CP 2017-20 using the analytical framework

Outcome area	Analytical lens			
	Planning and Institutional Arrangements	Programmatic Arrangements	Partnership and Convergence	Results and Monitoring Mapping Systems and Processes
Outcome 2: Girls and boys of primary school age				

Planning and institutional arrangements

Planning process:

The **overall planning process** for the outcome is the same as discussed in outcome 1. **Specifically, for outcome 2**, the selection of the prioritised issues, and headline results is reflected in causal analysis made through the CP audit which identified children of primary school age as a key target audience, the same was corroborated by SITAN which reasoned the right to education and development for children. Further, the UNCRC, SDGs, UNDAF and Bangladesh FYP reflect the need to work for issues of girls and boys of primary-school age.

The selection also flows from the SPE of the previous CP which concluded the need to continue to work on issues of out of school children, improve WASH ins schools, and strengthening child protection systems. Further, it is also aligned to the priorities of the Ministry of Education and as a resultant influence of the same and guiding references shared above, is biased to a certain extent.

In addition, **limited evidence was generated** to plan and design interventions for the outcome area barring the Child Well-being Survey (2016), A paper on Out of School Children (2016) amongst few others²⁸. However, the planning for the outcome witnessed increased focus on cross-cutting issues of disaster risk reduction, gendered social norms, and children in urban areas.

Institutional mechanisms:

Institutionally, the office operated using the outcome based meetings as discussed in the previous section. **Specifically, for outcome 2**, only three sections of the office are responsible to meet outputs as per results framework: WASH, education and child protection. As the outcome is primarily led by Education with WASH and child protection having an allied focus, majority of the financial resource mobilization is also dependent on Education. This has eased in sharing of resources amongst sections, in this specific context.

²⁸ Secondary data received from UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office

In terms of HR, the office is well equipped to manage majority of the progress indicators mapped to different legacy sections anchoring the outcome. This is primarily due to the fact that most of the indicators were carry forward from the previous CP with an aim to scale and sustain previous interventions. In addition, traditionally the sectors of Education and WASH have worked together previously as well. However, due to limited technical knowledge and availability of specialised HR for climate change and disability, integration of these cross sectoral priorities within the overall programming for the outcome was slow.

As mentioned above, **financial resource mobilization** is largely driven by education section. As education was also a strong GoB priority, raising resources for the same was relatively streamlined. However, as cross cutting issues of climate change and disability are housed under WASH and child protection sections respectively, they witnessed set back in due to limited financial resources as well as HR.

Programmatic arrangements

The prioritised issues and ToC for outcome 2 depicted a strong inter-dependent relationship with each other. These further translated into the programmatic interventions to meet outputs. Interventions focused on improving WASH in schools, enhancing secondary education and early child education continued to remain focus areas. However, there was increased focus on softer components of capacity building and sensitization of key partners, curriculum development, and technical support across all output areas. Some interventions in this regard include focus on shifting towards a Sector Wide Approach for Programming (SwAP) to promote enhanced equity, support in revising the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP), amongst others. In addition, the outcome 2 also capitalised on the issues addressed under Outcome 1, especially on ECD, and establishing clear links with all the strategies and interventions to advance the life cycle approach and ensure convergence in programming. The outcome also draws linkages with interventions for adolescents and youth in Outcome 3 by focusing on skill enhancement interventions for out of school children, specially girls.

As preventing violence and exploitation against children is a core prioritised issue for the outcome area, there was increased focus on integrating issues focusing on gender-based violence (both online and offline forms) across interventions for school going children. Further, increased focus was also drawn on working with children affected by emergencies, specifically those affected by the crisis in Cox's Bazar²⁹.

Partnership and convergence models

In alignment with the outcome PSN, the organization internally has initiated collaborations between sections like WASH, Education and Child Protection to deliver on common outputs. However, synergies with Child Protection have been relatively less achieved at an institutional level.

The office worked closely with national actors like Directorate of Primary education, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Department of Social Services and Ministry of Home Affairs, Law and Social Welfare. However, limited convergence was achieved across ministries to deliver joint programmes except towards implementation of 'Child Act 2013' which saw participation from approximately 700 key government stakeholders from Judiciary, Executive, Police, Jail Authority and officials from the Department of Social Services. While the office fostered partnerships with partners at sub-national levels, there is no institutionalized mechanism for coordination between them. This limits the transference of initiatives to national/sub-national actors³⁰.

UNICEF also continued to participate in platforms and forums like Development Partner's Consortium. There are certain challenges existing in such forums, e.g., the (ELCG) is currently without leadership. In addition, UNICEF is often seen as being a part of multiple agendas across platforms and forums resulting dilution comparative strengths.

Monitoring and results mapping systems and processes

As described in the first outcome area, the revised outputs and results framework are not guided by a convergent approach. Further, there is a mismatch of reporting standards between UNICEF national and sub-national levels, resulting in gaps in result mapping. This concern was felt across all outcome areas.

²⁹ Independent evaluation on the Rohingya crisis and key informant interviews with staff members

³⁰ Key informant interviews with sub-national staff members

In addition, the assumption of convergence of government departments in alignment with the LCA adopted by UNICEF, did not hamper achievement of results for outcome 2, as most of the results were aligned to limited ministries at the national level.

As per RAM, all results for outcome and outputs are on track for achievement. Some of the achievements include (but not limited to):

- **Creating an impact in through policy and advocacy** by supporting approval and initiation of a US\$20 billion national primary education strategy, the Fourth Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP4).
- **Transference of interventions to national actors** through sustained usage of the ability-based accelerated learning model developed by UNICEF
- **System strengthening at sub-national level**, through supporting the development of Child Welfare Boards in the 26 Districts towards operationalization of the Children Act 2013
- **Developing relationships with private sector and leveraging technology for development** by partnering with Grameenphone to provide information and advocate for online safety for children and built capacity of secondary stakeholders on the same.

In addition to the RAM, studies and sectoral evaluations reflect certain areas of improvement. For instance, there is a need for more education-service provisions, evidence development and local actions at sub-national levels, need to enhance institutional capacity of national actors especially towards implementation of ECD, need to develop institutional mechanism to manage tripartite partnerships between Government, NGOs and UNICEF, amongst others. In addition, while the outcome stresses on working in emergency situations including areas affected by climate change and urban populations, limited direct focus was drawn on the same due to **diversion of efforts for Rohingya response**.

Gender analysis findings for outcome 2

- The revised PSN includes gender through multiple dimensions including education, and child protection including GBV against children. The outcome also views gender as a cross sectoral issue focusing on areas such as WASH in schools.
- The launch of the child online safety programme which focus on preventing violence against children across online platforms and the increased development of gender friendly curriculum in PEDP 3 are some measurable successes of the outcome.
- There is limited mention of gender differentials across result indicators except for inclusion of critical gender disaggregated data at the national and district level (primary and secondary level) to monitor programme outputs.
- No specific reporting on gender indicators was found in the RAM or End of the Year Review 2018. However, the office has conducted a gender audit in specific interventions. For instance, a WASH Gender audit has been conducted by the BCO, and a road map was developed to guide implementation efforts in the same regard.

Outcome 3 - Adolescents & Youth as Agents of Change

Exhibit 10: Rating the performance of outcome 3 of CP 2017-20 using the analytical framework

Outcome	Analytical lens			
	Planning and Institutional Arrangements	Programmatic Arrangements	Partnership and Convergence	Results and Monitoring Mapping Systems and Processes
Outcome 3: Adolescents as agents of change				

Planning and institutional arrangements

Planning process:

In terms of planning, the selection of the prioritised issues, and headline results is reflected in causal analysis made through the CP audit which identified adolescents as a key target group, the same was corroborated by SITAN which reasoned the need to focus on issues affecting adolescents like child marriage, child labour, trafficking etc. Further, the UNCRC, SDGs, UNDAF and Bangladesh FYP reflect the need to work for adolescents. The need is **largely unbiased** and driven by the changing demographic and economic profile of the country. However **certain unaddressed issued from the previous CP** were prioritised in the current CP including equitable results for male and female adolescents and youth, adequate policy frameworks for adolescents, developing institutional capacities of government and partners and improving engagement of young girls and boys in programme design and planning.

Further, the revised PSN also considered the **impact of the Rohingya crisis** on adolescent and youth programming and the diversion of resources to meet requirements of the host and refugee communities affected by the crisis.

Institutional mechanisms:

Institutionally, the office operated using the outcome based meetings as discussed in the previous section. Outcome 3 saw all sections come together to deliver results for a common beneficiary target audience. As education section began focusing on adolescent issues from the previous CP, adolescent programming focal point was housed within the section. Additionally, **in terms of HR**, every section also has their own adolescent specialists working towards integrating adolescent and youth issues across their interventions ensuring equal accountability of all sections. However, most of these specialists are existing staff members at national and sub-national level, who have been given additional responsibility to work towards achieving results.

Majority of the **financial outlay** for the outcome is parked for the education section, followed closely by the child protection section. This corroborates closely with the human resource outlay with maximum coordination being managed by the adolescent focal point in the education section. Overall, given the national importance towards adolescent issues as highlighted in the previous section, resource mobilization for interventions focused on adolescents was streamlined.

Programmatic arrangements

The prioritised issues for outcome 3 summarise adolescent and youth needs in four main dimensions: (i) create an enabling environment; (ii) adequate supply of goods and services; (iii) ability to generate demand; and (iv) quality in providing all of the above.

The four dimensions laid down in the **prioritised issues were effectively used to design the ToCs and**

“The programme for adolescent health is aligned with national adolescent health strategy and school programme can expand for scale.” – International NGO partner

results framework. There was a strong focus on developing convergent strategies and interventions³¹ such that all four dimensions are well balanced. For instance, the office tried to create an enabling environment for adolescents by programming towards Ending Child Marriage (ECM). At the same time, it focused at strengthening supply by providing second chance

education/non-formal education that enhance life skills and employability such that adolescents are mainstreamed into society.

Additionally, amongst **cross cutting issues**, gender component was well integrated in programme delivery through gender disaggregated indicators and including transgender and MSM across interventions³². However, there is still scope of enhanced integration through normative practices. Other cross converging issues like disability, tea gardens, climate change and equity across interventions were not well integrated. A reason for the same was diversion of resources for working with refugee and host community adolescents in Cox's Bazar.

Partnership and convergence models

In alignment with the revised PSN for the outcome, the office has engaged in partnership between all sections to deliver a common target audience as discussed in the section on institutional arrangements.

The office worked closely with **national actors** like MoWCA, MoHFW, MoE, and Directorate general of Family Planning (DGFP). However, limited convergence was achieved across ministries to deliver joint programmes. UNICEF successfully delivered on joint programming with UNFPA and GoB on Global Programme on Ending Child Marriage which considers child protection, education, WASH, health, and C4D sectors.

UNICEF also closely worked with **donor agencies** including World Bank and Asian Development Bank alongside GoB and other partners to develop the five-year Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) which focuses on education, health and WASH sectors.

“The sectoral approach was myopic but LCA is more futuristic. Further, the LCA looks at the issues of gender more holistically considering the different stages of a child and woman's development.” – Government Representative

UNICEF has also engaged in **partnerships with NGOs/CBOs and academia** at national and sub-national levels for wider reach and upstream impact respectively. For example, the Chittagong Hill Tracts saw adolescent programming through engagement with adolescent clubs, and behavior change of adolescent sex workers towards safe practices.

In addition, UNICEF developed **partnerships with private sector** to encourage participation from adolescents and youth through technology platforms like U-report and child online safety programme.

Monitoring and results mapping systems and processes

The original outputs and results in the PSN looked more closely at convergent approaches focusing on increasing capacities of the overall ecosystem of adolescents as a core target stakeholder focusing on families, communities and government counterparts to plan, budget and deliver for adolescent issues. However, the revised PSN shifted focus on adolescent specific outputs under different sections reducing the need for joint programming between sections. This is in alignment with the reporting structures like RAM, but not in alignment with requirements of LCA. Despite the adopting a silo-driven approach for result tracking, the outcome performed better compared to others. This could be attributed to two-fold reasons. Firstly, the focus was on common target audience as a cross cutting issue across all sections, and secondly, the push received from national actors towards adolescent programming.

As per RAM, all results for outcome and outputs are on track for achievement and have created a value for Bangladeshi adolescents. Some of the achievements include (but not limited to):

³¹ **Note for the reader:** Examples of other programmatic interventions include improving access to education focusing on education and WASH, adolescent health focusing on health and nutrition amongst other sectors, and increasing participation of adolescents focusing on C4D and CAP and all other allied sectors.

³² Gender reviews and output based RAM ratings as on July 2019

- **Integration of normative issues into research.** As future evidence base, UNICEF completed a Public Expenditure Review of national ECM programmes and released ‘first-of-its-kind’ data on the socio normative dimensions of the practice.
- **Leveraging social media to create positive influence and impact.** UNICEF-UNFPA-GOB led national award-winning trans-media ‘Dhol’ campaign continued, reaching 50 million people across all media and engaging more than 25 million through social media. Technology for Development (T4D) has been leveraged not only through social media outreach but also through interactive platform, U-Report, an initiative with Grameen Phone.
- **Strengthening supply side in public institutions. WASH facilities were enhanced across schools** to support increased access and retention of students and towards ECM.
- **Strengthening demand side for enhanced community participation by reaching out to target audience using common platforms.** Adolescent clubs acted as strong platforms for community action and participation. The initiative has been scaled up by GoB.

Gender analysis findings for Outcome 3

- A critical element in the overall findings is the inclusion of transgenders as a key adolescent target group in this outcome area.
- The office has made significant effort to achieve targeted normative results as identified in the outcome group by focusing on capacity development and soft skill support to vulnerable adolescent population groups including MSM, adolescent sex workers, drug users and transgenders.

While most activities are in progress, certain activities with nutrition, child protection, WASH and new programming areas did not achieve desired results as per stakeholder consultations. Some of the reasons highlighted include gap in coordination between relevant ministries and a need to strengthen research and the evidence base, lack of capacity and poor or no allocation of budget for adolescent nutrition programming, and limited financial resources for improving WASH in secondary schools. In addition, the adolescent index³³ has not been piloted³⁴.

Outcome 4 - Social Inclusion and Increased Awareness of Children’s Rights

Exhibit 11: Rating the performance of outcome 4 of CP 2017-20 using the analytical framework

Outcome	Analytical lens			
	Planning and Institutional Arrangements	Programmatic Arrangements	Partnership and Convergence	Results and Monitoring Mapping Systems and Processes
Outcome 4: Social inclusion and increased awareness of children’s rights				

Planning and institutional arrangements

Planning process:

³³ **Note for the reader:** The Adolescent Index would be a tool used to collate evidence to provide a “pulse” regarding the wellbeing of adolescents in the country and serve as a platform for policy discussions. It will seek to increase the capacity of all partners to develop, plan, budget, coordinate, implement and monitor a comprehensive, multi-sector national Adolescent Strategy. The index will provide both high-level visibility to adolescent girls and a user-friendly tool to guide and assess programming for adolescents.

³⁴ Key informant interview with staff member

The selection of the prioritised issues, and headline results is reflected in causal analysis made through the CP audit which identified the need for improved evidence generation and knowledge platforms within and outside the organization. This is corroborated by the UNCRC, and Bangladesh SITAN 2016. The need is also augmented by the changing role of UNICEF (after the country's shift to a lower-middle income economy) as a technical and capacity building agency rather than an implementing partner.

“Programs like Mothers@Work and Better Business for Children are expanding due to positive results. Beneficiaries have greatly benefited. Example Mothers@Work program started with just 2 companies in the pilot of which one is DBL. Perhaps now there are 78 and next year it would reach 200 companies..” – Private sector partner

Further the prioritised issues also reflect cognisance towards platforms and issues gaining momentum in the country including (but not limited to), awareness on climate change and resilience, harnessing investments from private sector through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), equity responsive service delivery, and engagement with academia and national research organizations. While these have been consistently integrated across the previous three outcomes, specific results pertaining to each as delineated in outcome 4.

Institutional mechanisms:

In terms of **HR**, as the outcome is primarily focused on cross cutting functional areas, the newly established Social Policy, Evaluation, Analytics and Research (SPEAR) section and PAM section, and older C4D and CAP sections are primarily responsible for fulfilling the results outlined in the PSN. Outcome based meetings are held to map interim progress of the outcome area and have been chaired by CAP section for two consecutive years. This is against the institutional mechanism which looks at annual rotation of sections chairing outcome meetings. Staff members under each of these sections have adequate skills to conduct activities relevant to their domain.

As a cross cutting outcome, majority of the **financial outlay** is for strengthening capacity at sub-national coordinating structures. However, there is limited direction as to which section is responsible for raising the required resources. Given, this ambiguity **limited headway has been made towards this specific output area.**

Programmatic arrangements

UNICEF interventions across outcome 4 have **strongly focused on convergent strategies and interventions** focused on strengthening capacities through training, evidence base, monitoring and evaluation of different actors working with UNICEF like C4D partners, CAP partners, social policy (upstream partners), government partners, and sub-national partners.

Prioritized issues were triangulated to develop the ToC and results framework. However, **linkages between programmatic arrangements and institutional arrangements were relatively poorly defined.** For instance, output 4 of the results framework in the revised PSN for outcome 4 integrates prioritized issue of capacity building of government actors and reads as, “By 2020, government partners have increased capacities to monitor the situation of girls and boys and their multidimensional vulnerabilities and risks³⁵”. However, there is no direct correlation of which section would be responsible to track the achievement of the specific output.

Amongst all cross cutting areas, the outcome laid specific focus on integration of gender across evidence generation strategies. However, this was primarily achieved through integration of sex-disaggregated indicators across programme delivery as compared to normative issues³⁶. There was also a strong focus towards integrating urban programming and DRR as a cross cutting issue especially towards sub-national capacity enhancement.

Partnership and convergence models

In alignment with the PSN for the outcome, the organization internally has developed partnership between all sections to deliver mutual results. However, as discussed in the sections above, there is **ambiguity on responsibility sharing between sections** to deliver results³⁷.

³⁵ PP 94, Revised PSN, Outcome 4

³⁶ Analysis of different studies and evaluations conducted by office

³⁷ Key informant interviews with staff members

The office has engaged in **partnerships with academia and research organizations** including BBS, IMED, UGC, NILG, Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) and government institutions like General Economics Division (GED), MoI, Cabinet Division, and MoWCA for evidence generation and capacity development. A positive indirect result was the establishment of an inter-ministerial working committee by MoWCA for Agamir Shishu approach to promote convergence between ministries working for children.

In addition, UNICEF developed **relationships with private sector partners** in Readymade garment (RMG) sector and telecom sector creating a shared value through CSR. While the partnerships with telecom sector were more oriented towards leveraging technology for development for enhanced mass communication, partnerships with RMG sector adopted a more multi-sectoral approach towards fulfilling Outcome 1.

Monitoring and results mapping systems and processes

The original outputs and results in the strategic notes looked narrowly at the nature and type of actors UNICEF can work with. The revised PSN adopted a more specific approach by defining the partners and nature of partnership levels to be achieved.

Given the softer nature of interventions such as capacity building, developing partnerships and enhancing evidence base for programme development, no direct alignment of the same was made within the RAM as per different sections. Hence, result tracking has lagged.

As per RAM reporting, the following positive results for outcome and outputs were noted:

- **Developed partnerships with private sector partners** on initiatives like Online Safety for Children, Mothers@Work programme.
- **Increased participation in policy and advocacy platforms and forums** including (but not limited to) initiation of a Child Parliament as a follow up of the South Asia Parliamentarian Platform for Children 2018 and a Climate Change Advocacy initiative in collaboration with World Bank highlighting the inclusion of DRR as a core focus area
- **Increase in evidence generation as several studies and surveys** have been undertaken and supported by SPEAR. In

“UNICEF is much stronger working upstream but working downstream tends not to take a partnership approach. This is perhaps partly due to it trying to protect its role as a conduit of donor funding.” – NGO partner

Gender analysis findings for Outcome 4

- **Increased children and gender friendly budgeting since 2017**
- **Increased Gender focused C4D interventions promoting gender equality and ending traditional gender disparity in households.**
- **Increased involvement by private sector through studies like Better Business for Children and interventions like Mothers@Work which are both driven through CSR initiatives.**
- **Inclusion of gender differentials across various evidence-based studies and in upstream institutions like IMED, BBS and BIDS**
- **Need for capacity building of gender specific project staff and stakeholders on gender at the national and sub national level reflected to strengthen the gender understanding in programme delivery**

collaboration with UNICEF, using MICS 2012-13 dataset, the GED and BBS customized the methodology and produced results children focused Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). However, the extent to which recommendations from these studies are mapped and implemented is less documented.

An assumption for the results to be achieved across all outcome areas was the gradual decentralisation for the Government structure, enabling capacity enhancement at divisional levels³⁸. However, that has not been achieved at the expected rate slowing down achievement of UNICEF priorities alignment towards the same.

³⁸ PP 10 and 94. Revised PSN of UNICEF – GOB Country Programme of Cooperation (CP)

- The **office has made significant progress for delivering interventions** as per the **LCA**. However, **institutionally relatively lesser progress** was made. A primary reason for the same was the alignment of outputs as per sectors across all outcome areas, corroborating with the reporting mechanisms of the office.
- In terms of **partnership and convergence**, while the office was strategically better positioned to develop joint programmes with Government, private sector and UN agencies due to the LCA, the same was not efficiently leveraged within the office. Sections like Health and Nutrition were unable to curate joint programmes as was envisaged in the causal analysis of PSNs. Similarly, Child Protection, being a cross cutting theme, got less visibility in results in the agenda across all outcome areas.
- In terms of **cross converging areas**, the office made good **progress towards integrating issues of gender** through causal analysis and results mapping. However, normative issues pertaining to gender were not effectively integrated.
- **Equity related issues were not addressed** in a targeted manner and were only integrated through interventions focused on hard to reach geographies and tea gardens.

2.2. Moving upstream /mainstreaming

The BCO has traditionally followed the approach of piloting programmes that can then act as evidence-based models for scaling up to mainstream programmes. With this perspective, evidence-based models are initiated with the ultimate aim to be carried over to national actors such that they are scaled and sustainable. Further, these aim to leverage the office's presence in upstream spaces towards scaling up of programmes and influencing policies and budgets formulation.

The SPE aimed to understand how systematically organized the process is, of piloting/assessing-evaluating success/ transitioning to going-to-scale. Further, it sought to understand how the office is, building, maintaining and leveraging upstream spaces towards scale up of strategies and programmes. Lastly, the evaluation aimed to assess how are strategies and programmes completely transferred to national actors through mainstreaming and sustainability efforts³⁹. In sum, the BCO's strategic positioning vis-à-vis this theme is analyzed using three interdependent lenses: (i) Pilot design, transitioning and scale up; (ii) Upstream partnerships, and (iii) Carry over programming.

Pilot design, transitioning and scale up

Pilot designs are often **driven by existing evidence like SITAN, GoB priorities and/or donor priorities**. **Most pilots initiated by the office in current CP are not backed by specific evidence** showcasing the need for the same. Given the adhoc nature of these pilots they are often not discussed with national actors in advance and hence are not linked to learning for scale up and in turn become small scale programmes that run for multiple years. For instance, a short course on Adolescent Health (BSMMU) began in 2018 and is scheduled to close in 2022. However, limited conclusive evidence for the same has been generated for transitioning to national actors.

Further, **pilots are usually initiated for a period of 2-3 years with limited evidence produced to start, end or scale up**. Instances of the same are reflected through the Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) intervention under Local Governance for Children (LGC) programme led by C4D team which began in 2017 and was scheduled to end in 2019. However, there is limited evidence for the end-line or scale up modality of the pilot. Pilots run by the CAP section for adolescent programming witnessed similar concerns. However, there are certain cases where enough evidence has been generated like PCA with adolescent clubs,

³⁹ Adapted from ToR for SPE of UNICEF BCO

population council, child labor proof of concept, RCT for improving integrated nutrition and health interventions in urban slums, competency based training programme for nutrition amongst others.

Transitioning of pilots to national level programmes is not institutionalized. It is more ad-hoc and dependent on the priorities, interest and mutual advantages shared by national actors and UNICEF. However, certain pilots in the current CP effectively informed policy and advocacy decisions. Some of these included the School Effectiveness Piloting which was adopted by PEPD-4. Similarly, a digital platform for survey and collecting data on the overall performance of Adolescent Clubs including GIS Mapping of All Adolescent club in Bhola District to support MOWCA by Child Protection section was scaled up.

Upstream partnerships

The **BCO has an active working relationship with the team at the Cabinet Division, Parliamentary Caucus, and relevant Ministries including MoHFW, MoWCA, MoI, MoLE, MoE** amongst others, covering the highest decision and policy making body that also informs budget decision (success in advocating 20% budget provision for children). BCO has **harnessed its relationship with the cabinet division to promote**

“UNICEF is visible in national forums and on legislative reform. Much less visible in building capacity of partners or working collaboratively with other stakeholders like NGOs” – Academia

increased convergence across various allied ministries. An example includes the ‘Ending Child Marriage’ programme for which UNICEF collaboratively developed a National Action Plan.

The office also closely works with **academia and statistical organizations** at national level like BBS, IMED, Centre of Excellence for the Science of Implementation and Scale-Up (SISU) for evidence based planning, budgeting and programming for children to inform policy and national planning and programming. For example, development of a Child-focused Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index (C-MPI) was initiated with GED and BBS⁴⁰.

UNICEF has **advocated for improving policies and budgets** across different sections like health, WASH, education, child protection. However, there has been limited focus on enhanced public budgeting towards cross cutting issues like gender, DRR, urban programming, tea gardens, and disability.

UNICEF is a part of several key platforms and forums. UNICEF has leveraged its presence on these platforms for various upstream influences. UNICEF’s sustained policy advocacy resulted in mainstreaming of strategic actions, interventions and delivery platforms for adolescent nutrition into the National Adolescent Health Strategy. Similarly, UNICEF’s presence on education platforms led to initiation of interventions to improve adolescent dietary practices. However, as mentioned in the analysis on LCA and headline results, external stakeholders perceive UNICEF to be working and making their presence across multitude of issues resulting in dilution of efforts from UNICEF’s core agendas and comparative strengths.

Limited conversion of efforts undertaken at sub-national level towards upstream activities. This is a relevant gap found in ensuring increased upstream of activities and programmes. For example, the SITAN integrated gender violence and gender inequality focused programmes to be undertaken at Sylhet for tea-garden estates which given sufficient support from both government and donor partners could be converted to an upstream activity and foregrounded as a mainstream initiative instead of remaining under a new programme area category.

Carry over⁴¹ programming

Carry over is phased out primarily through capacity development initiatives to national actors. The BCO laid **strong focus on capacity development of national actors** including government, UN agencies, donors and private sectors towards LCA. **Most capacity enhancement efforts have been delivered at an intervention level** such as behavior change interventions through C4D with government counterparts, front line workers, religious leaders, and community members.

⁴⁰ RAM Outcome based ratings as on July 2019

⁴¹ **Note for the reader:** Carry over refers to transference of strategies, actions and/or interventions to stakeholders outside UNICEF such that they can be institutionalized, scaled and sustained for wider impact.

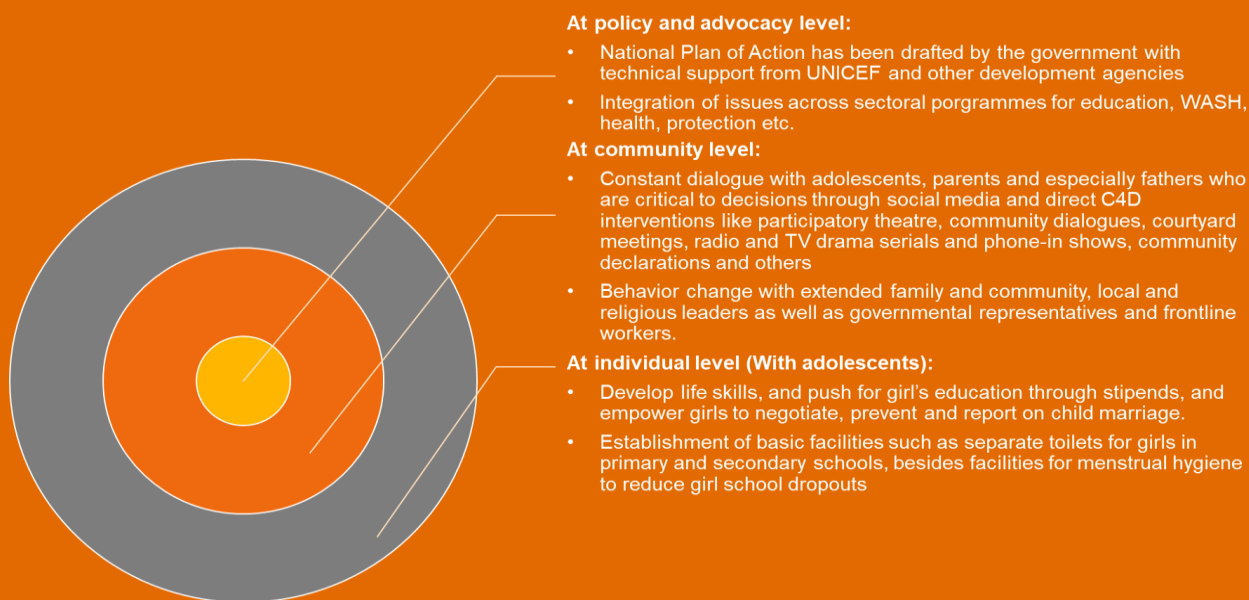
Limited achievement of the same has been found in institutional level resulting in limited sustainability of carry over programming. **Outcome 4 has laid a strong focus towards this but has seen limited achievement** towards the same. For example, in Nutrition, there are increased efforts undertaken for results a capacity building among the placed nutrition officers (in field offices for example in both Sylhet and Mymensingh) to activate increased institutional level convergence efforts. Similarly, in Child Protection, a limited cadre of social workers on ground has restrained scope of transitioning the programme to national actors⁴².

- **UNICEF is presently the co-chair both with the MoWC, GoB and also the World Bank led Local Consultative Group on Women and Gender Equality.** UNICEF is strongly positioned to lead reinforcing focus on national policy and design strategy interventions highlighting gender mainstreaming across cross-cutting themes and issues.
- With the access to such platforms, **alignment with strategy partnerships** is required with CSOs/CBOs to mobilize and leverage public attention towards practice of non-discriminatory social norms and **promote gender neutral shift in family practices** like healthcare seeking behavior, increase in school attendance amongst girls even during menstrual cycle and reduction in child marriages etc.

Ending Child Marriage – Looking at convergence and upstreaming

se study

Gender analysis



⁴² **Note for the reader:** Similar instances were also cited in analysis on Outcome 1 for LCA in section 2.1.

There are certain programmes like the Vitamin A fortification which were earlier more donor supported but now have increased govt involvement in terms of financial and human resources used in implementation. However, they still have a significant hand holding function supported by UNICEF to establish real time monitoring of the program during the campaign. To promote more wide scale upstream conversion, there is a need to keep processes in place to support with active involvement of government leadership. A hindrance towards this is the **quick turnaround of staff with government partners at national levels**, which results in need for refresher training and effective knowledge management. Given this gap, **UNICEF continues to provide technical/financial support to ensure sustainability of interventions.**

Summary of findings

- **Pilots are often used interchangeably for small scale programmes** being implemented for years. Most pilots initiated by the office in current CP are **not backed by specific evidence** showcasing the need for the same. They are often driven by existing evidence like SITAN, GoB priorities and/or donor priorities.
- The office has **increased presence in platforms and forums for advocacy** with improved upstream presence resulting in better budgeting for children. However, the **same was not witnessed for mainstreaming cross-sectoral strategies and interventions** as the government structures are primarily sectorally aligned.
- **Carry over is phased out primarily through capacity development initiatives** to national actors. The BCO laid strong focus on capacity development of national actors including government, UN agencies, donors and private sectors towards LCA. Most capacity enhancement efforts have been delivered at an intervention level. Limited efforts were seen at institutional level resulting in limited sustainability of carry over programming.

2.3. Convergence

The office has traditionally seen convergence as coming together of different sectors to work towards common strategies and interventions. However, with the shift to the LCA, the office was expected to not only develop and foster inter-sectoral convergence but also institutionalize the same within the office and with partners.

The SPE aimed to understand how the office define and plan for convergence, keeping in mind the strategic shift made by the office⁴³. Through this process, the evaluation sought to recognize different variations of convergence in the office i.e. by LCA, geography, sector, new programming areas, cross cutting areas etc. In addition, it also assessed if the office's understanding and perception of convergence aligns with that of external stakeholders. Overall, it aimed to understand if convergence has had an effect on the phenomenon of 'silos' within the office and amongst external stakeholders.

The evaluation process used the analytical framework¹⁶ to analyze the abovementioned evaluation questions.

Institutional arrangements

Convergence has been found to be interpreted as coming together of allied partners in pursuit of a common goal, meeting regularly and sharing information. This is in alignment with what government and other development organizations define convergence. This largely stems from the causal analysis presented across PSNs for CP. For many programmatic elements in the CP, sharing resources, risks and opportunities are not considered while defining convergence⁴⁴.

Within the office, the outcome based meetings discussed in report section 2.1. showcase evidence of sector convergence. In addition, the field offices at sub-national levels also reflect location-based convergence. Both, sectoral and location based convergence are driven by common programmes and priorities. While the office aimed to promote convergence towards delivering as per LCA

"51% internal respondents feel that UNICEF BCO has been effective in leveraging convergence as a way beyond working in silos. While the office was able to programmatically deliver in a coordinated manner for certain interventions like Wash in Schools, ECM etc.; institutionally the organization could not re structure itself to deliver as per outcome areas very effectively.." – Staff member from perception survey

⁴³ Adapted from ToR for SPE of UNICEF BCO

⁴⁴ Workshop conducted at national level for SPE

through the outcome based meetings, benefits of the same were only witnessed primarily in delivery of outcome 2 and 3⁴⁵.

Overall, **there are efforts to move away from the silo-driven approach in the working style** within the BCO, but this still is at a nascent stage and is often limited to thematic coordination within the office at national and sub national level. The office has placed cross sectoral thematic focal points across all legacy sections⁴⁶. For example, there are adolescent and gender focal points across various sections to promote convergence and integration of the subjects across interventions. However, except for the Outcome based meetings, there are limited institutional mechanisms for traditional sections to work collaboratively.

Further, **between office at national and sub-national level, there are limited examples to showcase how bottom-up planning has been institutionalized and convergence developed between the two levels.**

Examples such as SCANO and adolescent club scale up are examples of interventions that were initiated at sub-national levels through identification of on-ground needs.

*“Social media has imputed increased awareness about UNICEF programme functions and activities with specific focus on target beneficiary groups like adolescent and youth and also about gender specific initiatives”
– Private sector*

However, systematic changes in child protection structures and sub-national level saw no improvement despite identification of the same as a core issue.

Outside the domain of the office, Government, which is UNICEF's key partner, does not operate using the LCA as all government structures are sectorally aligned. This lends evidence to the fact that UNICEF's intent towards convergence may not meet facts on ground. However, there are exceptions such as the Government through its national social security schemes (Social Security Policy Support

Programme led by the Cabinet Division) is prioritizing the schemes using the LCA. In addition, convergence with UN agencies and private sector showed promising results. Convergence with external stakeholders has been discussed in detail in subsequent sections.

Programmatic arrangements

The convergent strategy for the office is best reflected through programmes like ECM, ECCD, and WASH in Education led by legacy sections, due to shift towards the LCA. However, for **traditionally cross-convergent sectors like C4D and Gender, literature have shown more progress** towards inter-sectoral convergence. Most of these strategies have been carry over functions from the previous CP or have gained priority (like ECM, ECCD) due to them being priority issues for the Government.

Amongst the new areas of focus introduced in this CP, adolescent programming has leveraged these existing partnerships and delivered positive results. In new programming areas, urban programming and Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have shown positive convergence through joint interventions for women and children. The interventions in climate change, DRR and disability witnessed lesser convergent programming amongst sections. However, the Rohingya response did showcase positive convergence for effective service delivery. This is further discussed in section 2.4. of the report.

Partnerships

Government partners largely work as per sectors, however there is a trend amongst government partners to work in a convergent manner.. The newly forged partnership of the BCO with cabinet division and PMO office has increased potential of building convergence across Ministries. Some positive examples of this include system strengthening and policy advocacy from the highest government counterparts in cabinet division and Prime Minister's Office for ECM⁴⁷, strengthening Local Governance for Children (LGC) Programme with Cabinet Division, with community engagement and SBCC planning as integral components, establishment of 'Child-Responsive Social Protection Policy Support Unit' to support operationalization of child component of National Social Security Strategy and identify best practices, working with Centre of Excellence for Science of Implementation and Scale-Up (SISU) amongst others.

UN agencies showcased increased convergence with UNICEF BCO in this CP to meet SDG targets. For instance, the Government of Bangladesh (GOB) – UNICEF – UNFPA led Global Programme on Ending Child Marriage, the national evidence-based trans-media campaign 'Raise the beat/Dhol' reached close to 50 million

⁴⁵ Please note: Further discussion on the LCA has been presented in section 2.1.

⁴⁶ Please note: Legacy sections includes all traditional UNICEF sections including Health, WASH, child protection, education, and C4D

⁴⁷ Key informant interviews with government stakeholders

people across all media and engaged more than 25 million through social media. Similarly, there was increased **collaboration with multi-lateral banks**. Some examples of the same include advocating with World Bank for results-based financing where 2 of the 16 Disbursement Linked Indicators (DLI) are on Nutrition and developing the five-year Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP) with Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

Partnerships with relatively new actors like Private sector and academia has shown better results in terms of convergence. For example. The Mothers@Work programme promotes ECCD which is a SwAP approach⁴⁸. **UNICEF has also facilitated innovative partnerships leveraging T4D with private sector partners** to promote participation from children, adolescents and their environment through U-report, Child Online Safety Program, and social media platforms like Facebook.

Convergence with downstream partners has not been explored to its optimum capacity, partially due to limited decentralization of the government structures. While field offices share independent relationships with NGO/CBO partners on ground, there is often ambiguity between the modality of programming between UNICEF, sub-national government stakeholders and NGOs/CBO partners. Modalities of tri-partite partnerships between sub-national government structures, UNICEF and NGOs/CBOs is relatively poorly defined in terms of institutional mechanisms, transference of strategies and interventions to local actors, and sustainability of interventions.

“UNICEF through either government or implementing partners are delivering capacity development for community, GO-NGOs but have the resources to reach the extra miles for better leverage.”- NGO partner

Results and monitoring

Internally, the organization at national level have reported on the RAM, which is a sector-based reporting mechanism with no specific mechanism for reporting towards joint programmes. This has resulted in limited scope of convergence between sections to contribute towards ‘outcome-based results⁴⁹’ compared to ‘output based results⁵⁰’. The results framework is aligned with the government reporting structures and requirements which are also largely sectorally driven resulting in ‘silos-based approach’. In addition, independent evaluations and reviews conducted by the office across the CP cycle also do not specifically use convergence as a lens to assess the performance of inter-sectoral work, both inside and outside office.

The CP saw also increased inclusion of indices using sex disaggregated data, decentralized data and age specific indicators across studies, reports and surveys for national actors and internal UNICEF. There has also been an increase in mixed methodology studies focusing on cross converging issues since 2017 like *Ending Child Marriage in Bangladesh*, *Evaluation of Local Capacity Building and Community Empowerment Programme In Bangladesh*, *Tea Garden Survey*, *Baseline Study and Policy Gap Mapping Report on ‘Online Safety for Children’* in Bangladesh, to name a few.

Summary of findings

- Convergence has been found to be interpreted as coming together of allied partners in pursuit of a common goal, meeting regularly and sharing information. However, for many programmatic elements in the CP, sharing resources, risks and opportunities are not considered while defining convergence. There are efforts to move away from the silo-driven approach in the working style within the BCO but this still is at a nascent stage. Evidence of only sectoral and location based convergence is prevalent in the office.
- Convergence was achieved in a more collaborative manner with external stakeholders including Government, UN agencies, multi-lateral banks, NGOs, and private sector as compared to the office. However, most convergence was dependent on the mutual alignment of interests with the actor and the possibility of creating shared value through the same. Successful examples include Chattogram Hill Tracts programme and Child Marriage.

⁴⁸ PP 19, DBL group sustainability report 2017, available on <http://www.dbl-group.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/DBL-Group-Sustainability-Report-2017.pdf>

⁴⁹ **Please note:** Outcome based results in the revised PSN are converging and in alignment with overall headline results.

⁵⁰ **Please note:** Output based results in the revised PSN are sectorally aligned, except for outcome 4, which reflects more converging outputs.

2.4. New programming areas (urban programming; disability; climate change; teagardens)

The causal analysis conducted at the time of framing the CP 2017-20 highlighted the need for the country to focus on emerging new programming areas based on geographic, demographic and socio-economic needs. The SITAN 2016 further highlighted three additional development factors for focus, including: (i) disability, where progress was slowly improving, but there is lack of disaggregated data on the size of the population affected by disabilities; (ii) vulnerability to disaster and to climate-related risks, leaving children and women in particular need of strengthened resilience; and (iii) living in hard-to-reach areas, given the country's challenges of geographic remoteness and isolation. All of the above mentioned areas are seen as major drivers of social stagnation and inequality impeding the country's holistic development. These concerns were reiterated in the audit of the previous country programme and reflected strongly along with the need to focus on urban areas in the ToCs of the present country programme. The new programming areas also align with the priorities identified with GoB in the 6th FYP. Issues of climate change, urbanization, and disability were identified as independent focus areas having cross cutting relationship with other core programmes and sections.

The SPE aimed to understand if the office has been able to internalize their understanding pertaining to new programming areas to the extent that any selected strategies have an effect. With regards to this, the SPE also sought to understand the institutional mechanisms including human and financial resourcing, programmatic interventions and partnerships developed by the office. Lastly, the SPE intended to understand which areas are showing progress and to what extent⁵¹. Below is an analysis of the above-mentioned areas in alignment with the analysis framework:

Institutional arrangements

The office has dedicated staff members specialized to deliver results in most new programming areas at national level (disability, climate change, urban programming) positioned in the Field Offices section, depending on need and scale of interventions in each area. At sub national level, the positioning of staff members for NPA is defined as per specific NPA interventions in that territory. For example, Mymensingh FO, has a dedicated staff member for urban programming and disability given the prioritization of the issues in the division. Similarly, the Sylhet office has dedicated staff members to work for prioritized issues in tea gardens.

With the onset of L3 Rohingya Emergency in Cox's Bazar, an increased fervor was provided to focus on emergency situations (of all natures) across the revised PSN in 2018. However, it was felt later that the office should deploy specialized emergency teams to avoid transference of regular human resources to emergency situations, as it reduces focus on overall identified national priorities and agendas as per CP.

Financial resourcing for NPA is driven by the section that takes a lead for the specific intervention supported by FO section. Urban programming witnessed maximum availability of resources due to CSR, followed by Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) which is also a Government priority. Areas of tea gardens and disability saw lesser attention, as mentioned by staff at UNICEF offices. Disability, being housed under the Child Protection section, received the least attention due to limited financial resources mobilized towards the same.

Programmatic interventions

The NPA have been selected based SITAN which highlighted the need to work for disabled, urban slums, DRR and emergency spaces. This was corroborated by the UN HQ agenda, SDGs, UNCRC, Regional priorities and UNICEF BCO audit report. Analysis reflected that entry points for programmatic interventions for selected areas are mostly driven by government, UN HQ and/or other national actor priorities. These have been integrated across interventions in different outcome areas. An increased emphasis was drawn on focusing on emergency situations in new PSN compared to the original version.

Programmatic interventions for new programming areas are integrated across existing programmatic interventions as climate change, urban programming, and tea gardens are largely geographically defined areas. As gender and equity have been included across different PSN, no specific mention has been made towards the same with respect to any new programming area.

Given the nascent stage across most of the areas, most interventions specific to NPA are in pilot stage or small-scale interventions like Adolescent empowerment programme in Khulna office, Every Mother Every

⁵¹ Adapted from ToR for SPE of UNICEF BCO

Newborn (EMEN) standard implementation in Rangpur office, Education in Emergency' in Chattogram office, Basic services for children in Gazipur City Corporation amongst others. Further, sustained efforts are required to ensure dedicated efforts remain channeled to achieve the desired results. Despite the lag in disability receiving adequate attention from UNICEF, there is a strategic advantage in bringing this area into a focus as it been prioritized as an area of priority for the Government creating scope for innovative pilots and joint programming with potential to be scaled up through systemic efforts.

'Only 10% external respondents felt that UNICEF BCO was planning, implementing and delivering very strongly in urban programming. And, most external respondents had no knowledge of climate change and tea gardens as being UNICEF's new programming areas.' – Perception survey results

Partnerships

UNICEF has developed specific partnerships with select actors such as for tea gardens with Tea Boards, for urban programming with Local Government Division, City Corporations, and private sector players, and for disability with Ministry of Youth and Sports. In addition, UNICEF has also worked closely with UN agencies towards achievement of SDGs focusing on common priorities. UNICEF also developed downstream partnerships with NGOs/CBOs to deliver across NPA.

However, the capacities of actors at sub-national levels is relatively lower to deliver, apart from urban programming and tea gardens. Other NPAs like climate change and disability has limited dedicated human resources. Further, there is little integration of these areas amongst inter-sectoral activities.

Results and monitoring

Urban Programming has shown significant progress, and effective programming is reflected for tea garden interventions too. Disability area is found to lack sufficient attention and effective strategic planning for the results to be visible. While there is a demand for programming in this area, as found in Mymensingh, disability is a rising social problem and would need adequate human and financial resourcing. Interventions towards humanitarian emergencies experienced increased fervor in the emerging and immediate needs arising in Cox's

'Amongst internal respondents, 29% said that they don't know that UNICEF is planning, implementing and supporting delivery across new programming area for tea gardens.' – Perception survey results

Bazar. The office has adopted a preventive and preparedness approach for climate change focusing at policy level changes like undertaking a policy review for Children-Centered Adaptation to Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction and for an Action Plan on Operationalization of Policy Framework on Child-Centered Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation. In addition, the office also initiated advocacy initiatives towards climate change resiliency like Climate Change Advocacy initiative in

collaboration with World Bank. Most of these have focused across sectors including education and WASH.

Overall, there is limited mapping of indicators across the RAM which reports as per sections. Given that many new areas are at nascent stages of developing their RWP, mapping of indicators across sections has also not been sufficiently achieved. Further, amongst external stakeholders, there are no standardized feedback mechanisms for partners to provide assessment on NPA, as most programmes are still in nascent stages and/or only pilots. Further, as iterated by external stakeholders, there are no formal mechanisms to engage with UNICEF regarding NPA.

Summary of findings

- The **office has dedicated staff members specialized to deliver results in most new programming areas at national level.** Financial resourcing for NPA is driven by the section that takes a lead for the specific intervention supported by FO section. The entry points for programmatic interventions for NPA are mostly driven by government, UN HQ and/or other national actor priorities.
- As **gender and equity** have been included across different PSN, **no specific mention** has been made towards the same with respect to any new programming area.
- Amongst the NPA, **urban programming has shown sufficient progress**; disability is found to lack adequate attention and effective strategic planning; Tea-Gardens and Climate change are issues that has experienced increased fervor in CO.

Case studies

Basic services for children in Gazipur City

Institutional integration

- Urban programming is integrated into field offices section
- A rolling work plan (RWP) has been developed for urban programming with clearly demarcated joint outputs with traditional sections
- Field offices are also provided specialised team members to deliver as per requirements

Partnerships

- The intervention has focused on achieving strong government buy in through working alongside city corporation for sustainability
- The intervention looks at working closely with private sector (specially ready made garment industry players) towards leveraging CSR programmes

Results

- Partnership with Local Government Division has been formalized for evidence-based programming for children and preparation for application of Child-Friendly City Initiative framework in the urban context.
- Support to the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) and co-led the national Child Protection in Emergency (CPiE) Cluster in urban areas

Disability as a new programming area

Institutional integration

- Disability has been integrated through the Child Protection section
- No specific RWP has been developed for disability
- Limited financial resources were raised for disability interventions to kick off

Partnerships

- Due to limited planning towards with respect to disability, no specific partnerships have been identified for the same
- The office is not a part of any platforms and forums to promote disability focused upstream partnerships

Results

- Disability has been included across interventions for adolescents and education
- Limited focus has been laid towards systems strengthening and/or policy and advocacy initiative for persons with disabilities

2.5. Adolescents & Youth

With the changing demographic profile of the country after 2015, the government and international development organizations showed an increased focus on adolescents as a target group. This corresponded with UNICEF BCO's life cycle approach which identifies adolescents as a critical target population. The outcome 3 of the CP 2017-20 focused on adolescent programming and received considerable focus in design, delivery and results orientation.

The SPE aims to understand how successful adolescents and youth have contrasted with the previous approach, how external and internal environments have impacted the offices' performance in this space, and to what extent have the interventions added value to adolescents in the country⁵². The analysis is presented across four themes of the analysis framework.

Institutional arrangements

Institutional arrangement for adolescent programming reflects human resources across sections to deliver adolescent focused results leveraging the technical strength of each section. Existing staff members at national and sub-national level have mostly been given additional responsibility to work towards achieving results⁵³.

Further, majority of the financial outlay for the outcome is earmarked for the education section, followed closely by the Child Protection section as discussed in section 2.1. of the report. This relates closely with the human resource outlay with maximum coordination being managed by the adolescent specialist in the education section.

Even though there is no specific section taking a lead towards over adolescent programming, focus on joint programmes to address critical adolescent issues, as discussed in the section below, have promoted sections to come together and work towards common agendas⁵⁴. This can also be attributed to increased attention provided to adolescent issues by government and other development sector partners⁵⁵. Overall, given the focus on adolescents and youth through a completely independent outcome area, there is increased resourcefulness for the office to work for adolescents and youth.

Programmatic interventions

The intensification of efforts for adolescents is largely driven by the shift to the country's economic status, supported by FYP, SITAN, and the CP audit substantiated by UN priorities. The Government's push towards policy initiatives like National Strategy for Adolescent Health 2017-2030 is an example showcasing increased focus on adolescents as a national priority.

'External respondents showcased maximum knowledge about adolescents and youth as one of UNICEF BCO's core programming areas.' – Perception survey results

UNICEF interventions across outcome 3 have strongly focused on convergent strategies and interventions delivered across core issues like ECM focusing on child protection and allied sectors, improving access to education focusing on education and WASH, adolescent health focusing on health and nutrition amongst other sectors, and increasing participation of adolescents focusing on C4D and CAP and all other allied sectors. As detailed in section 2.1. the revised PSN for outcome 3 also paid strong specific attention to impact of Rohingya crisis on adolescents and youth.

UNICEF strategically used the programme on 'ending child marriage (ECM)' as an 'entry-point' and in influencing policy and programme issues on adolescents. However, it was felt that adolescent issues are largely seen as a child protection agenda with ECM being a flagship programme for the same. There is an increasing need to integrate issues such as prevention and protection of adolescents from other forms of violence such as child labor, cyber bullying and child trafficking amongst others⁵⁶.

Further, the gender component was well integrated in programme delivery through sex disaggregated indicators and including transgender and MSM across interventions. However, there is still scope of enhanced

⁵² Adapted from ToR for SPE of UNICEF BCO

⁵³ Organization chart and key informant interviews with staff members

⁵⁴ Workshop for SPE and key informant interview with adolescent focal points

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Key informant interviews with staff members

integration through gender sensitive normative and transformative practices. Other cross converging issues like tea gardens, climate change and equity across interventions were not integrated and achieved universally.

Partnerships

The office has fostered partnerships in upstream spaces like MoWCA, MoHFW, MoE, and Directorate general of Family Planning (DGFP) for programme implementation. However, convergence between these actors has not been achieved as reflected during interactions with them. The organization has lagged in conducting capacity enhancement amongst government counterparts as desired as per PSN 3 due to a limited cadre of specific adolescent experts within the organization. Conversely, UNICEF successfully delivered on joint programming with UNFPA and GoB on Global Programme on ECM which emphasizes on child protection, education, WASH, health, and C4D sectors. UNICEF has also shown increased presence on adolescent and youth platforms (Compared to the previous CP) like National Adolescent Health Coordination Committee (NAHCC), Adolescent Cluster with Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, National Advisory Committee for developing National Adolescent Strategy (NAS) amongst others. However, there is limited evidence of cross-sectoral groups part of platforms built for programme convergence.

UNICEF also closely worked with donor agencies including World Bank and Asian Development Bank towards system strengthening activities including curriculum enhancement such as development of the five-year Secondary Education Development Programme (SEDP).

UNICEF has fostered partnerships with NGOs/CBOs and academia at national and sub-national levels however they are not yet very effective given the relatively newer focus on adolescents as a target audience. Some examples of such collaborations include implementation of Alternative Learning Programmes (ALP) by BRAC and ILO, Child Well Being Survey in Urban areas of Bangladesh with BBS, and Blooming Children with MoF amongst others.

Further, as discussed in section 2.1. and 2.9. the office also developed positive relationships with private sector to programme for adolescents and youth, creating enhanced value for Bangladeshi adolescents.

‘More than 50% external respondents felt that UNICEF has performed strongly for adolescent and youth programming. Similar perspective was shared by internal respondents.’ – Perception survey results

Results and monitoring

UNICEF has leveraged on its comparative strength by creating an impact on upstream spaces through technical support for adolescent programming. Some examples of this include Public Expenditure Review of national ECM programmes, UNICEF-UNFPA-GOB led national award-winning trans-media ‘Dhol’ campaign and scaling up of adolescent clubs by the government.

These interventions have also added some of the greatest value to overall adolescents’ well-being.

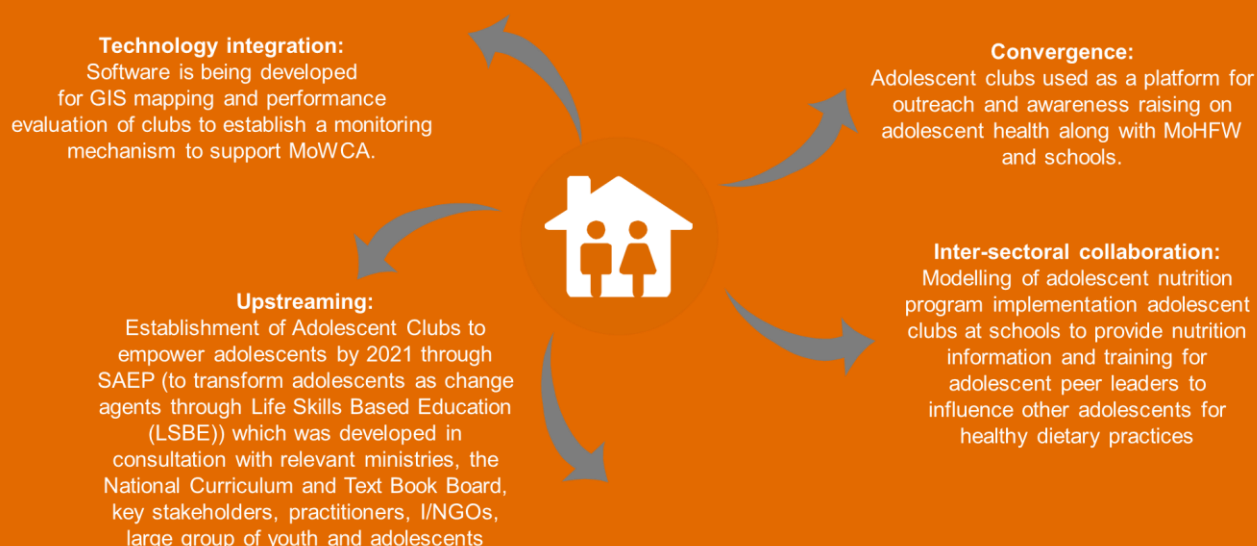
Further, adolescent programming also saw positive results in transference of programmes to national actors to go to scale. An example of this is the adolescent clubs, which is discussed as a case study below. UNICEF has also harnessed on its increasing impetus on T4D across interventions such as U-report, child online safety, with key development actors, resulting in adding pragmatic value to the growth and wellbeing of Bangladesh adolescent and youth. The results of these programs and the impact of the same actively feed in the overall design of the adolescent and youth program.

However, due to no specific reporting structure for outcomes, each section has its own adolescent focused outputs and reporting it done as per them. This has resulted in gaps towards tracking adolescent specific results and interventions.

Summary of findings

- **UNICEF successfully used ECM as an entry point to begin programming for adolescents** with the government and UN agencies, in a convergent manner.
- **UNICEF showed increased presence on A&Y platforms** like National Adolescent Health Coordination Committee (NAHCC), Adolescent Cluster with Ministry of Women and Children Affairs
- **Gender component has been well integrated in programme delivery** through sex disaggregated indicators and including transgender and MSM.

Case study



Adolescent Clubs

2.6. Communications/Social media

Communication for development has been a traditional UNICEF cross cutting function focusing on behavior change for a sustained impact of programmatic interventions. UNICEF has also focused on advocacy for development to harness its comparative advantages such that it creates impact in upstream spaces. More recently, the organization has begun to intertwine innovations in technology and social media platforms as a channel to create mass awareness. The BCO office has utilized this comparative strength using all dimensions of communication to deliver more effectively, impactfully and in a sustained manner. The office has two core sections delivering towards this theme, mainly the communication for development (C4D) team and the communication and partnership (CAP) team.

The SPE aims to understand this theme from three core lenses: (i) Upstream impact through communication and social media, (ii) Role of communication and social media to act as feedback mechanisms and meet Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) ethic⁵⁷, and (iii) Extent to which Technology for Development solutions were integrated across interventions⁵⁸.

Communication and social media for upstream impact

UNICEF has aimed to create shared value with private sector partners by tapping on the potential of newer forms of communication towards creation of public demand for rights of children. Some examples of this include the Child Online Safety programme in partnership with Grameen phone which has resulted in improved cyber presence amongst children⁵⁹. Similarly, the U-report managed by the technology for development (T4D) specialist, has also garnered increased two-way communication between UNICEF and target audience towards better public demand of public services. Being a mobile network-based technology and not an internet

⁵⁷ **Note for the reader:** The report primarily focuses on how communication and technology have been used to support AAP. Limited attention was made to over programming for AAP.

⁵⁸ Adapted from ToR for SPE of UNICEF BCO

⁵⁹ Key informant interview with private sector

supported innovation, it has performed well on gender and equity-based monitoring indicators for adolescents and youth⁶⁰.

At the same time, UNICEF has continued to leverage traditional forms of communication. The C4D team has been effective in using social and behavior change communication (SBCC) and information, education and communication (IEC) as a cross cutting programmatic tool alongside different sections including WASH, health, education and nutrition, and has achieved significant results. Some examples include ECD social mobilization and communication strategy, use of Interactive Popular Theatre (IPT), community dialogue and IEC materials for Early Birth Registration, amongst others.

However, there is no direct correlation of UNICEF's activities across communication resulting in increased budgeting for children⁶¹. Nevertheless, C4D has traditionally been one of UNICEF's essential cross converging area for achievement of normative results and hence may have an indirect influence on the same.

Gender analysis

- **Advocacy campaigns using communications and social media**, e.g. the Meena programme, have reinforced use of non-discriminatory gender practices in social behaviour among communities.
- **U-Report, and child online safety programme have supported to reduce gender digital gaps** since their launch
- **Ending Child Marriage, a UNICEF flagship programme focusing on adolescents effectively used C4D for behavior change amongst community members at all levels**

Feedback mechanisms and attempt to meet the 'Accountability to Affected Populations' ethic

UNICEF harnessed communication as a tool to reach out and engage with affected populations. For example, the presence of U-reports which are a community-based initiative act as an active feedback mechanism for vulnerable adolescents and youth to share their concerns and expectations from society at large. As the U-report platform is available even without access to internet, it acts as an equitable instrument to reach out to affected populations. Further, the linkage of U-report to social media alleviates the concerns shared by adolescents acting as an advocacy platform.

In a similar way, using the changing context of the economy and the active wireless connectivity among adolescents and a wide sample of the population at large, social media (the Facebook page of UNICEF reached out to 7.6 million users) has led to easy interface and increased reach to vulnerable communities. The Child Online Safety program has acted as an information sharing platform with potentially vulnerable children and adolescents having access to internet and vulnerable to abuse on virtual platforms. It aims to educate, both children, adolescents and their parents on how to use social media platforms in a safe manner. Another similar example is that of, the community radio – Betar, which is an information sharing platform anchored by adolescents themselves.

However, a critical concern highlighted by development counterparts and internal stakeholders, is the focus on privacy of adolescents participating on social media forums. Currently, adolescents participating on UNICEF BCO's social media handles are visible to the public, making them vulnerable to various forms of cyber violence. Hence, there is a felt need to monitor adolescent and children related content.

Extent of Technology for Development solutions adopted in CO programming

T4D solutions have been adopted at various levels across the organization. BCO received catalytic funding from headquarters for improved monitoring mechanisms using Rapid Pro to monitor quality of services provided to mothers for early care and for nutrition-based initiatives including distribution of vit A and folic acid etc⁶².

T4D has also been used effectively across a few key sections like WASH, health and education for programmatic interventions. E.g. Implementation of SCANU in field divisions, enhancement in information systems for health, nutrition and WASH towards better beneficiary data management, developing e-learning

⁶⁰ U-report portal

⁶¹ Workshop for SPE and key informant interviews with staff members

⁶² Key informant interviews with staff members

courses, learning apps etc. for out of school children, amongst others⁶³. In addition, the office has leveraged technology in media platforms to effectively create a two-way communication process between beneficiaries and service providers. BCO also received funding for promoting U-report as an innovative communication platform to engage with its target audience.

However, overall programmatic integration with T4D is low and inclusion of T4D as a function across RWP emerges to be an afterthought and not integrated within the design thinking. Additionally, the placement of the T4D specialist under the gender specialist limits the scope for him/her to broaden the scope of operation and integration across section and programme areas⁶⁴. As a cross-cutting thematic specialist, the placement of the T4D specialist may be under a generalist function and/or the BCO leadership.

U-Report – Innovation in Outreach



Mass outreach platform

- The U-report reaches out to Bangladeshi adolescents and youth creating a long term, sustainable and mass impact through an interactive platform



Social media linkages

- The Facebook page of U-report is not data sensitive overlooking ethical and privacy considerations of adolescents and youth posting on the platform, making them vulnerable to cyber crimes



Technology based platform

- The U-report leverages technology for development reaching out to affected and vulnerable populations in society

Case study

Summary of findings

- **CAP team has effectively leveraged on newer forms of communication like social media towards creation of public demand for rights of children. However, there are concerns with respect to end-users safety and privacy on the platforms.**
- **Presence of U-reports which are community based initiatives involve an active feedback mechanisms** in terms of access to report even without access to internet.
- While T4D has been used across initiatives in health, WASH, nutrition, gender etc. However, **overall programmatic integration with T4D is low** and inclusion of T4D as a function across RWP emerges to be an afterthought and not integrated within the design thinking.

⁶³ Output rating, RAM, July 2019, and key informant interviews with staff

⁶⁴ UNICEF BCO organization chart

2.7. Gender

The country programme document 2017-2020 recognizes challenges specific to gender mainstreaming through the situational analysis of children and women in 2016. By proposing a more gender inclusive approach, the programme has strategically included the needs of women and adolescent girls in its agenda for universalizing child rights. This need was further reinforced in 2018 with the Headquarter (HQ) Gender Action Plan (GAP) review which used BCO as a case study, Online Assessment of the Gender Capacity of UNICEF staff in Bangladesh Office and the regional review of gender mainstreaming through a strategy paper.

The SPE aimed to understand how are gender related issues, barriers, and opportunities analyzed and addressed within the ToCs, the institutional mechanisms within the office to integrate gender, and performance of office through a multi-dimensional approach⁶⁵.

The below-mentioned reviews were harnessed to provide insights into the SPE review. The SPE looked at gender through the four-pronged lens used defined in the analysis framework. In addition, a separate gender analysis was conducted which is appended as a separate report.

GAP review

- **Limited evidence of sex-disaggregated data** found to aide gender inclusive tracking of progress of results and draw analysis of the bottlenecks existing across interventions **targeted in health and nutrition interventions**.
- **UNICEF contributed to support girls' retention and learning in secondary schools** through providing information on hygiene practices including menstrual health and installed separate toilets for girls and boys in over 35 schools. **Utilization and impact of these facilities have not been assessed**.
- **A positive initiative has been noted in, 'ostad-shagrid' (Maestro pupil) model focusing on out of school adolescents with more than 60% participation of girls** with inclusion of Persons with Disability (PWDs) and transgender contributing to reducing child marriage through leveraging cultural learning opportunities.
- **Advocacy campaigns using communications and social media**, e.g. the Meena programme, have **reinforced use of non-discriminatory gender practices** in social behavior among communities.

- There is a **need to build a larger gender architecture and team** to ensure requisite human power to help with inter-sectoral gender integration.
- While there are **multiple trainings and learning activities conducted within the CO**, there is found to be a **missing gap in documentation of both pre and post learning assessment to map the capacity of the team for gender programming skills**.
- UNICEF is **presently the co-chair both with the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, GoB and also the World Bank led Local Consultative Group on Women and Gender Equality**. UNICEF is strongly **positioned to lead reinforcing focus on national policy and design strategy interventions highlighting gender mainstreaming** across cross-cutting themes and issues.

Review of Bangladesh Strategy Paper on Gender

⁶⁵ **Note for the reader:** While the evaluation process took an independent stand to assess the evaluation questions laid down for the SPE process with respect to gender; triangulation of information was made with existing body of literature and independent reports and assessments. Two important reviews used to augment the findings included the GAP review, Results of Online Assessment of The Gender Capacity of UNICEF Staff in Bangladesh Office and Bangladesh Strategy Paper on Gender review.

- **Limited understanding of gender amongst staff.** Results reflect limited knowledge on key gender-related documents and strategies among staff and limited understanding of the operational meaning of gender mainstreaming and gender transformative results.
- **Application of gender mainstreaming into UNICEF's programming is weak.** Further, weak gender analysis and gender disaggregated data remain challenges.
- **Lack of budget and human resources specifically for gender work** hinders staff from working on gender issues.
- **Lack of technical follow-up after training** on gender leads to weak application of tools and knowledge in their work

Below is a detailed analysis of gender across the four dimensions of the analytical framework:

Institutional arrangements

The gender architecture of the office showcased **overall gender ratio stands at 51 percent female and 49 per cent male** with commitment towards gender reinforced through positioning of Senior International Gender Specialist, national Gender Specialist and sectoral specialists in the office.

However, the **office staff still has a nascent understanding of gender** with limited uniformity on the definition of gender across the office. For example, the understanding of gender within the office focuses on propagating for equal rights for both women and men. This includes effort to end discriminatory traditional practices that promote gender disparities given Bangladesh's history⁶⁶. Others limited their understanding of gender to improving gender parity within the office and building staff capacity towards gender mainstreaming and/or integration of sex-disaggregated data across results framework for strategies and interventions⁶⁷.

This is reflected in the limited programmatic infusion of gender across section-wise programming. A primary reason for the same is high staff turnover.

Training programmes have been organized however its standardization in design, follow up plan, assessment of its effectiveness is yet to be assessed.

From the total budget for gender, 50 percent is earmarked for integrated priorities/vision, of which maximum was allocated to gender responsive WASH systems in 2018 and 2019 consecutively. *E.g. The SEDP includes a costed sub-component to keep adolescents in schools including availability of toilets for boys and girls, menstrual hygiene facilities and education, and sexual reproductive health.* 5% of the budget is allocated for adolescent girl priorities/vision of which maximum was spent on girls' health and nutrition. This showcases limited inclusion of 'boys' and other genders as target beneficiaries in the adolescent specific gender dialogue, strategies and interventions.

Programmatic interventions

Analysis of gender for programmatic interventions has been done vis-à-vis the LCA and four outcome areas.

Outcome 1: The revised PSN recognise the importance of gender mainstreaming across prioritized issues and areas, for instance inclusion for gender differentials in SCANU admissions towards neo-natal mortality; understanding the gender dimension towards lack of safe drinking water and ensuring ECCD programming is gender-responsive and addresses some of the barriers around damaging masculine and feminine ideals and expectations that persist in society⁶⁸. Taking into consideration any gender specific barriers faced by target groups, outcome 1 also focuses on ensuring gender equality and equity-responsive and resilient service delivery.

⁶⁶ Key informant interviews with staff members

⁶⁷ Perception survey with internal stakeholders

⁶⁸ GAP review, strategy paper on Gender, EYR, Output ratings RAM as on July 2019

However, the results structure and key progress indicators vis-à-vis the PSN do not reflect any gender specific results, targets, and means of verification. In addition, no specific reporting on indicators was found in the RAM.

Outcome 2: The revised PSN includes gender through multiple dimensions viewed from the nature of gender-based violence (GBV) against children (found both online and/or offline); gender stereotyping in schools; access to education for boys and girls (including children with disabilities) and gender disparity for out of school children. It also looks at development of gender sensitive curriculum, gender training of teachers, gender responsive and disaster resilient planning, and gender sensitive WASH facilities in schools drawing increased focus on cross-converging interventions.

A few of the critical success factors in terms of gender mainstreaming include the launch of the child online safety programme which focus on enabling a protective environment to prevent the violence against children across online platforms and the increased development of gender friendly curriculum in Primary Education Development Prog 3 (PEDP). However, except for inclusion of critical gender disaggregated data at the national and district level (primary and secondary level) to monitor programme effectiveness and efficiency, there is no mention of gender related indicators or results.

‘External respondents opined that men’s issues have been less integrated across the strategies for CP 2017-20 – Perception survey results

Outcome 3: The target areas identified to be addressed under Outcome 3 include ECM as a principle gender targeted priority, gender- transformative adolescent and youth engagement platforms, and gender responsive adolescent health, amongst others. A critical element is the inclusion of transgenders as a key adolescent target group.

The office has made significant efforts to achieve targeted normative results as identified in the outcome group. For e.g., Bandhu Social Welfare Society a partner of UNICEF BCO provided support to adolescent Male Sex

‘For ECM programme there is very specific focus to include men, women, boys and youth as target groups– Internal UNICEF stakeholders

with Male (MSM) and transgenders in Dhaka and Khulna, targeting 700 adolescents. In addition, UNICEF supported partners reached out to 3,500 adolescent sex workers, of which, 41% percent of them received Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) management, 52 % received HIV counselling and testing. Amongst cross cutting sectors, as mentioned in section 2.1., sectors including disability, tea gardens, climate change and equity were relatively less integrated. However, the results

mapped in the PSN (primarily looking at inclusion of gender across WASH focused adolescent interventions) have not been achieved as yet.

Outcome 4: The prioritized issues and areas in the PSN has a large focus on gender. An increased awareness on child rights and resilience can be observed from an increased towards children and gender friendly budgeting since 2017. Increased impetus on studies like Better Business for Children and interventions like Mothers@Work depicts increased understanding and involvement of corporates towards gender mainstreaming⁶⁹. Further, the inclusion of gender differentials across various evidence-based studies and in upstream institutions like Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) and Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) showcase institutionalization of gender integration⁷⁰. Lastly, the U-Report, and child online safety programme has supported to reduce gender digital gaps since their launch.

Partnerships

UNICEF through its joint interventions with various actors, augmented by external trainings provided on gender mainstreaming has been **reasonably successful in integrating gender as a universal theme across many interventions**⁷¹. For instance, convergence based programmes such as Ending Child Marriage saw successful integration of gender, education and C4D section.

There is an **increased potential to engage with different actors** including Government, UN agencies, donors and civil society at various levels. However, **discussions with all actors are mostly sectorally driven with limited cross-sectoral involvement from gender or other cross sectoral staff members**. Further, there is

⁶⁹ GAP review and strategy paper on Gender,

⁷⁰ Key informant interviews with stakeholders

⁷¹ Results of Online Assessment of the Gender Capacity of UNICEF Staff in Bangladesh Office, November 2019

limited engagement of UNICEF at sub-national levels with NGOs/CBOs towards gender specific strategies and interventions.

Similarly, there is also an **increased impetus to work with emerging partners in private sector** has been realised through partnerships with organizations like DBL, Grameen Phone, and HM Foundation towards interventions focusing on women in the life cycle approach.

‘About 52% external respondents felt that UNICEF BCO performed better on gender issues through the LCA compared to the previous CP. Amongst these most included respondents from the Government, followed by NGOs and donors.’ – Perception survey results

Results and monitoring

Gender disaggregated data is emphasized upon as a requirement in the revised project strategy notes. Most evidence-based reporting including baseline and end line studies after 2017 reflect Gender disaggregated data collection and findings. E.g. at the national level, Baseline Study and Policy Gap Mapping Report on ‘Online Safety for Children’ in Bangladesh includes children’s (both boys and girls) knowledge, behavior, perception and their exposure to various online risks and harms. Similarly, at the sub-national level, Baseline Survey on Situation of Children in Tea Gardens of Sylhet Division also reflects findings and analysis as per gender disaggregated data⁷².

There is **limited focus on qualitative studies/assessments to understand gaps and barriers in gender based normative attitudes and practices**. There is need for further evidence creation/ benchmarking for facilitating gender transformative policy advocacy and programming for child and youth.

Summary of findings

- **This country programme have ensured gender ratio (51% female) in staffing .**
- **Training programmes have been organized** however its standardization in design, follow up plan, assessment of its **effectiveness is yet to be assessed.**
- **Gender mainstreaming remains a more section driven approach** with respect to the outcome definitions. The gender focus incorporated in programmes undertaken within LCA is relatively weak.
- **The gender inclusion is more driven by progress wrt. resource allocation and access data.** There is limited on the normative issues that drive the results.

⁷² Multiple reviews on gender, and Output ratings RAM as on July 2019

2.8. Planning & Review mechanisms

Planning and review are critical functional areas for UNICEF to be able to deliver more effectively and efficiently towards CP implementation. The addition of the SPEAR team in this country programme aimed towards strengthening this functional aspect of the office such that there is greater impetus towards evidence-based planning and implementation.

The SPE aimed to understand how the major program goals and the application of the core programming strategies have been converted into clear and measurable results statements and indicators clearly aligned with program needs and based in the ToCs. Further, the assessment aimed at understanding if the programme demonstrates evidence generation strategies with sufficient depth, dis-aggregation, inclusion and resourcing as required by the ambition of the CP. Lastly, it also looked at how programmatic success and failure are defined and reacted to.

The abovementioned themes are analyzed using three core lenses, as detailed below:

Conversion of core program strategies into measurable results and statements

The **causal analysis presented across the needs and ToCs designed across PSNs highlights the need for cross converging** three pillars including equity responsive and resilient service delivery, evidence generation, policy dialogue and advocacy, and partnership and participation. This was **included across the original PSN results and monitoring frameworks**; however, they were **later converted into sector-oriented results and statements**. A primary reason cited for this was the **easy measurement of results as per sectors in alignment with the RAM and budgetary heads**.

Very few external respondents felt UNICEF had integrated gender into its activities in upstream spaces like contributing towards gender budgeting or supporting policies to protect gender parity – Perception survey results

Amongst **cross converging issues**, gender is well **represented across ToCs for Outcome 1 and 3**, but not adequately defined as part of the headlines strategies in both aspects. **Disability and tea gardens are less represented** across all result statements. There is a **strong focus on urban programming and DRR and/or emergency situations** across result statements.

Presence of sufficient depth of evidence generation strategy as required by the CP

The country programme was **designed using several evidence bases** including (but not limited to) Bangladesh FYP, SITAN 2016, previous CP SPE, Audit, and Year End Reviews. However, some programmes were initiated/continued basis pre identified priorities of the government e.g. to work for ending child marriage, and adolescent issues. Other programmes like the SCANU, WASH in Schools, Meena programme, continued from the previous CP due to enhanced funding and extended intervention timelines.

While the evidence generated by UNICEF did showcase the need for more convergent strategies towards addressing critical needs of the country, **limited mention was made of the 'lifecycle approach' specifically**.

However, **evidence building has not been found to be an integral and universal part of project designs**. The design of **legacy programmes has found to be lacking sufficient evidence**. This is also closely associated with **pilots that should be evidence-based models but often become small scale programmes that run for years without any assessment to be scaled or stopped**.

There are **positive examples of evidence generation**, e.g. **SCANU initiative by the health section** programmes have been directly scaled up based on data/evidence generated, **technical support provided to PEDP 4** based on assessment conducted of PEDP 3 amongst others.

Definition of programmatic 'success' and 'failure'

The **definition of programmatic success and failure for programmatic strategies and interventions in CP is primarily recorded in the RAM reporting structure** which is also aligned with the revised PSN. However, the same does not align with reporting mechanisms at sub-national level which are still governed by the previous reporting format. While the RAM promotes result based programming, it is **largely a qualitative reporting system**, making it difficult to objectively assess the impact of specific programmatic interventions. During interactions, the office stated that they are **moving towards a matrix-based reporting mechanism** giving scope to map cross sectoral results in the next programme cycle.

In addition, the **SPEAR section also conducts Year End Reviews, section level mid-line and end –line evaluations**, and well as **periodic evaluations of programmatic interventions**. Further, **audits are also conducted at the end of CP to gauge the success/failure of programme strategies** and build evidence for new CPs. These also supported by regional office.

However, there are **limited cases of timebound evidence base interventions/pilots** that are assessed for success or failure. This was discussed in detail in section 2.2. of the report. In addition, scale up of evidence based models is also driven by prior government buy-in and funding. An example of the same includes the Adolescent Clubs, and Adolescent Friendly Corners in health facilities which were scaled up in the current CP.

Summary of findings

- Overall, **evidence building has not been found to be an integral and universal part of project designs**, especially in the case of pilots/small-scale programmes.
- Amongst cross converging issues, **gender is well represented across ToCs for Outcome 1 and 3, but not adequately defined as part of the headlines strategies in both aspects**. Similarly, equity, disability, tea gardens are less represented across all result statements.
- The **definition of programmatic success and failure is majorly measured by the RAM reporting structure** which is aligned with the revised PSN. In addition, the **SPEAR section conducts Year End Reviews, section level mid-line and end –line evaluations**, and well as periodic evaluations. Yet, there is evidence of programmes implemented through years which are not as yet evaluated for scale up or closure.

2.9. Relations with government and major partners

The UNICEF CP 2017-20 strongly promoted a convergent and collaborative mechanism to work alongside stakeholders including (but not limited to) Government counterparts, UN agencies, international development agencies, NGOs/CBO partners and private sector.

In this regard, the SPE aims to understand the shared value UNICEF has been able to create by leveraging its existing and newly formed relations with all partners. The evaluation triangulated information from discussions with stakeholders and synthesized the findings of the perception survey⁷³ to arrive at conclusions.

Perception of UNICEF's operation in its area of comparative strength

UNICEF is **perceived to have a strong convening power and advocacy capability towards bringing value for Bangladeshi women and children**. It is a part of several platforms and forums focusing on different themes and effectively engages with stakeholders to create upstream impact through better budgeting for children. This country programme also saw external stakeholders see adolescents as a core target group for UNICEF interventions, with more than 50% respondents providing an excellent rating to UNICEF on adolescent and child focused programming. However, as discussed in section 2.2. the office is also seen as being involved in a multitude of issues resulting in dilution of efforts from its core agendas.

“UNICEF is visible in national forums and on legislative reform. Much less visible in building capacity of partners or working collaboratively with other stakeholders like NGOs” – Academia

In terms of **programming using a multi-sectoral lens, more than 50% stakeholders felt that UNICEF performed well compared to a sector driven approach**. The same opinion was not shared by internal respondents. This can be attributed to the fact that while the office was able to deliver effectively at a programmatic level on the LCA, the institutional arrangements for the same were relatively weak. Amongst cross cutting areas, **UNICEF's role in contributing to gender and community level programming received limited visibility**. 31% external respondents said that they don't know about UNICEF's role programming for issues pertaining to men and boys. 15% respondents felt very poorly towards

⁷³ **Note for the reader:** The perception survey for external stakeholders was shared with estimated 70 government stakeholders and about 80 other stakeholders including, UN Bodies, donors, private sector and NGO/CBOs. The response rate stood at about ~20%. A total 27 responses were recorded of which there were 14 completed and 13 partial responses. The internal survey was shared with about 150 staff members at national and sub-national level. Collectively 75 responses were recorded of which there were 56 completed and 19 partial responses.

UNICEF's role in the same domain. Further, external respondents saw **UNICEF have relatively lesser skills and staff to deliver on newer areas** including urban programming, adolescents and youth, and other areas.

In the current CP, UNICEF shifted its role from an implementation agency to a capacity building agency. This was recognized by external stakeholders with more than 30% respondents sharing that they feel UNICEF performs excellent as a **capacity development agency** at national and sub-national levels. While BCO is viewed and valued for its technical expertise and knowledge by its partners at the national level and at the sub national level yet at the sub national level it is more recognised as a partner in implementation.

In addition, a core focus of the LCA was to promote enhanced **convergence** both with external stakeholders, and within internal sections to be able to deliver its programmes more effectively. Convergence is also seen as a stepping stone for the organization to enhance its role as a capacity development and development coordination partner. The shift towards LCA supported the organization in developing more convergent mechanisms externally. Nearly 80% of external respondents feel that UNICEF BCO is effective as an actor to promote convergence at decentralized levels. Similar views were shared by internal respondents. 51% respondents feel that UNICEF BCO has been effective in leveraging convergence as a way beyond working in silos.

Appropriate engagement of Private Sector across program goals

The CP aimed to harness the private sector through CSR engagement such that both organization's leverage their comparative strengths to create a shared value for society at large. The PSN's across the CP witnessed integration of private sector involvement in through outcome 4 such that they uphold the UNCRC and UNICEF principles for Better Business for Children⁷⁴. The objective of private sector engagement is to also mobilise additional financial resources for programmes of mutual interest. The CAP team anchors the private sector engagement for the BCO office. There is limited capacity amongst individual sections to directly engage with the private sector to initiate partnerships. This is largely due to the design and response of the programme and operational structure of the office resulting in delay in decision making, understanding of private sector interest.

In terms of implementation, the CP witnessed positive dialogue with private sector partners through advocacy forums, media events, and programming. Two flagship initiatives implemented in the CP include Mothers@Work, focusing on engaging with community working in and around garment factories of DBL, towards ECCD through nutrition and health benefits for women and children. Another initiative is the U-report which leverages the outreach of the user base of Grameen Phone to engage with adolescents to promote two-way communication on social concerns and issues. Limited engagement with private sectors for ensuring gender focused initiatives specifically and for programmes highlighting gender mainstreaming.

Presence of UNICEF at the sub national level – its appropriateness

While BCO is viewed and valued for its technical expertise and knowledge by its partners at the national level and at the sub national level yet at the sub national level it is more recognised as a partner in implementation.

UNICEF's role at the sub-national level in defining policy problems and suggesting solutions is well-recognized. Given, limited decentralization of the government structures, UNICEF's FOs act as an institutional mechanism reducing the gap between UNICEF national office strategies and implementation through local government and NGOs/CBOs.

However, UNICEF has not been able to harness its presence at sub-national level towards enhanced planning and reporting. As mentioned in previous sections, there is limited focus on bottom-up planning and reporting which makes the sub-national field offices less accountable and responsible for their actions. This could be attributed to partial decentralization of government structures resulting in limited buy-in from national actors towards decentralized implementation.

Additionally, there is no institutional mechanism for tri-partite partnerships between field offices, Government and NGO/CBO partners resulting in limited transference and scale-up of programmes.

⁷⁴ For more information please refer to section 2.1.

3. Recommendations

The recommendations presented in this section flow down from findings, observations and commentaries presented across the report. They seek to leverage the BCO's strengths and UNICEF's overall comparative advantages to implement the same.

There are two levels of recommendations that have been provided:

(i) Strategic recommendations that focus on enhancing the over positioning of the office (both internally and externally) such that the strategies adopted by the office create a greater value for the country and towards achievement of global development goals.

(ii) Operational recommendations that focus on supporting the achievement of the strategic recommendations. These recommendations would largely aim at strengthening institutional and implementation mechanisms adopted by the office.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Key finding: *Consistent efforts have been made to programmatically deliver the LCA through joint programmes like ECCD, ECM, adolescent clubs, WASH in schools amongst others, with support from partners including government, private sector, donor agencies and NGO/CBOs. However, the office is still sectorally driven as an institution which acts as a hinderance for different sections to come together to deliver common results.*

Recommendation: While structurally and institutionally UNICEF may continue to function as sectors. **Select programmes with cross sectoral focus may be strengthened with LCA programming**, in alignment with the country's priorities and plans. Working with a life cycle approach will enable UNICEF to harness the shared value it has created with several stakeholders and actualize it's changing role to a capacity development and policy development actor in Bangladesh. Institutionally, the office should continue to work as per sectors and identify select focal points to carry forward cross sectoral interventions.

Key finding: *The office fostered partnerships with several partners at national and sub-national levels during the CP for strengthening its presence in upstream and downstream spaces. However, no institutionalized mechanism for coordination between the partners and UNICEF were observed apart from select mention across rolling work plans of different sections. This limits the transference of initiatives to national/sub-national actors*

Recommendation: Strengthen UNICEF's technical role through collaborative initiatives with other development partners and joint programming. UNICEF with government (national and sub-national level), NGOs/CBOs, private sector, UN agencies, and any other key actor should design a clear system of capabilities, resources, accountability, and reporting processes through joint planning workshops at the time of CPD development. These should be augmented through annual workshops at the time of planning for developing rolling work plan⁷⁵, to reinforce certain priorities through joint programme implementation and advocacy initiatives.

Key finding: *The office currently uses RAM which is a sectorally aligned reporting mechanism with limited integration of cross sectoral and new programming areas. There are limited instances of independent assessments to gauge the performance of joint programmatic interventions.*

Recommendation 3: Facilitate a collaborative environment through cross sectoral reporting within the office aligned to the headline results. With increasing number of cross-sectoral programmatic interventions including integration of cross converging and new

⁷⁵ **Please note:** RWP are the BCO's annual implementation planning mechanism which is followed by every section. The RWP are developed in alignment with PSNs.

programme areas amongst existing sectoral interventions, there is a need for a comprehensive reporting mechanism. UNICEF Bangladesh in collaboration with UNICEF Regional office and any other office(s) (that have adopted the LCA in the region), should develop a cross-sectoral reporting mechanism enabling more objective tracking of results through a convergent lens at national and sub-national levels.

Key finding: *Pilots are usually initiated for a period of 2-3 years with limited evidence produced to start, end or scale up. Further, transitioning of pilots to national level programmes is not institutionalized. It is more ad-hoc and dependent on the priorities, interest and mutual advantages shared by national actors and UNICEF.*

Recommendation: With continued upstream focus the office may rationalize the implementation of pilots. The office needs to integrate pilot planning as a component in the Rolling Work Plans. There is a need to adopt a timebound approach (2-3 years) for pilot implementation supported through evidence generation for assessing its effectiveness and scalability. As the pilot is undertaken, there should be a quantitative and qualitative follow-up that provides a cost-effective systematization of the experience.

Key finding: *There has been limited achievement of results found for adequate efforts in gender mainstreaming. A few reasons for the same include limited focus on normative gender transformative interventions focused on gender, limited inclusion of men and boys in the dialogue, limited achievement of gender mainstreaming in upstream spaces, and inadequate evidence on impact of gender trainings on audience.*

Recommendation: Strengthen strategic planning and advocacy using normative and causal analysis of social and cultural issues, specifically focusing on aspects of gender and equity. The office can reinforce the same through undertaking assessments on behavior change components like 'knowledge, attitude and practice' studies along with baseline, mid-term and endline assessments for various programmes. Secondly, the office can set a target on the outreach to men and boys across different interventions to ensure better inclusivity. To achieve this, the office can jointly increase participation along with partner UN agencies and development actors such as ADB, World Bank, UN Women and UNFPA on platforms for gender mainstreaming in policy and advocacy dialogues.

Key finding: *External stakeholders perceive UNICEF to be working and making their presence across multitude of issues resulting in dilution of efforts from UNICEF's core agendas and comparative strengths.*

Recommendation: UNICEF to prioritize platforms and spaces for stronger role as advocates of child rights and gender. The office should prioritize its strategic presence on platforms and forums, as advocates for child rights and gender. It should rationalize their presence as per the organization's comparative strengths, as being a part of a wide range of platforms may dilute its strategic presence.

Key finding: *The office forged positive relationships with new actors in CP 2017-20. The BCO developed partnerships with academia for evidence based research and surveys towards improved programme management. Similarly, partnerships with private sector through CSR initiatives led to enhanced ratification of UNCRC and UNICEF principles for Better Business for Children.*

Recommendation: The office should leverage its growing relationship with external actors including academia and private sector. Firstly, increased partnerships with academia will enable UNICEF to promote evidence generation as a core strategy. These can specifically be developed to conduct base-line and end-line studies for pilot/evidence-based models which lack adequate empirical evidence to be scaled and/or transferred to the government. Secondly, partnerships with private sector will not only support in creating a shared value in the Bangladeshi society but will also be a strong resource mobilization channel in the long run.

Planning and review mechanisms:

- The office needs to **conduct causal analysis once at the beginning and then mid-course**, to ensure that the need identified at the time of framing the CP is relevant and valid till the end. This can be coordinated through the regional office.
- Planning function to include **Joint Rolling Work Plans** developed with clearly demarcated joint outputs for convergent programmes that are to be delivered by multiple sections with an appropriate financial allocation.
- The office should **encourage involvement of the sub national offices and stakeholders in the planning process by conducting joint workshops with UNICEF field offices** at the national level during CP development.
- **Capacity building efforts should be strengthened with wider coverage and by integrating evidence base and result orientation to facilitate future learning.** The office should conduct pre and post tests for any capacity building workshop/training undertaken by office internally and externally to assess usefulness of capacity building process. Capacity building assessments should be institutionalized along with design of any training programme. These will not only be useful to assess the learning amongst trainees, but also quality of the training and need for course corrections in a timely manner.

Moving upstream:

- **Safe and effective usage of social media platforms.** UNICEF should conduct a “social media safety assessment” periodically to assess the safety of the audience groups participating on its virtual forums and platforms. As many of the participants are not adults, it is imperative for UNICEF to ensure that it provides a safe platform for the audience to engage. Further, it's also important to ensure that UNICEF's credibility as a key development actor and advocate for children's rights in the country is preserved.

Partnerships and convergence:

- The **office should foster deeper partnerships with CSR partners.** Cross learning workshops with relevant team members from UNICEF ROSA and other country offices leveraging CSR can be organized.
- **Coordinated and regular joint workshop sessions with government and other implementing partners at national and sub-national level for capacity development** towards programme implementation through converging mechanisms should be held. This can be implemented at the planning and course correction stages of CP implementation or annually as per RWPs.

Gender mainstreaming:

- **Development and implementation of a convergent gender work plan** that is amenable to be measured and evaluated in CMT/accountability of each section. This needs to be coordinated and monitored by the highest leadership in the Country Office.
- **Ensure dedicated budget and resources for gender equality, gender mainstreaming and both gender integration across both institutional and programmatic interventions.**
- **Promote intentional shifts in gender roles and expectations through innovative intervention designs.** Discussions on this need to have active voice by men to welcome a consultation led change in thought process.

New programme areas:

- Despite the lag in disability receiving adequate attention from UNICEF, there is a **strategic advantage in bringing disability into a focus as it has been prioritized as an area of priority for the Government**. This would create scope for innovative pilots and joint programming with potential to be scaled up through systemic efforts.
- The **office should demarcate financial resource mobilization for new programming and cross-cutting areas** between existing institutional sections in the office.

4. Overall strategic positioning of the office

UNICEF CP 2017-20 identified a major set of new approaches as a necessity to execute in order to reach the position of strategic influence it requires to support children et al in Bangladesh. The SPE aimed at assessing if UNICEF was able to fulfill the mandate of these new approaches such that it supports the development of the next CP and alignment of the office's strategic position vis-à-vis its own comparative strengths and the priorities of the Government of Bangladesh. Below is a summary of the performance of the office against each of the approaches leveraged by the office in the current CP:

- **Consistent efforts have been made to programmatically deliver the LCA** through joint programmes like ECCD, ECM, adolescent clubs, WASH in schools amongst others. The Outcome driven PSN also have been a platform for design integration of LCA through the outcome driven country programme however this may not be true for all aspects of the life cycle within the headline results and critical performance indicators e.g. gender, inclusion and themes such as violence against children. However, the **office is still sectorally driven** as an institution which acts as a hinderance for different sections to come together to deliver common results.
- **Commitment to gender equality is present** through inclusion of sex-disaggregated data across results framework in the PSNs, gender mainstreaming trainings for all staff members and implementation partners and increase in number of gender focal points across different sections in the office. However, there has been **limited achievement of results found for adequate efforts in gender mainstreaming**. A few reasons for the same include limited focus on normative gender transformative interventions focused on gender, limited inclusion of men and boys in the dialogue, limited achievement of gender mainstreaming in upstream spaces, and inadequate evidence on impact of gender trainings on participants.
- Amongst all outcomes, the **outcome 3 focusing on adolescents and youth delivered best partially due to the drive provided by the Government** towards focusing on adolescent issues like ending child marriage. This can also be augmented to the fervor provided to adolescent issues due to changing demographic profile of the country, strategically aligning UNICEF priority with Government priorities.
- **Convergence has been achieved with actors through joint programming** across UN agencies, donor agencies and government **towards achievement of allied SDGs**. Partners have harnessed UNICEF's comparative strengths like capacity building, communication for development, and advocacy through positive messaging to deliver common results. The upstream partnership with government counterparts if also considered as a key positive perception that influences the interest of the partners in collaborating with UNICEF.
- The **office has increased presence in platforms and forums** for advocacy with improved upstream presence resulting in **better budgeting for children**.
- Amongst the **new programming areas**, the office has performed **relatively better on urban programming, tea gardens and emergency response** compared to climate change and disability. This is primarily due to the **convergent approaches adopted by the office to deliver results** as per geography for the programmes performing better.
- The office has **focused on using T4D approaches** including **social media** effectively **engage the population (especially adolescents)**. However, the overall potential for the integration across section is yet to be explored extensively across sections.
- The **office witnessed a L3 level emergency in Cox's Bazar, which led to diversion of resources** to address immediate needs of the emergency resulting in slowdown in implementation of CP priorities. The crisis management educated the office to have skilled staff for emergency response, such that not all office staff are diverted towards emergency response.

Below is a summary of the key areas of strengths and improvement vis-à-vis the strategic positioning of the office:

Key emerging strengths of UNICEF BCO

While the evaluation process discusses the areas of improvement and recommendations that would flow into the next CP as per the management decision within BCO. However, the areas of emerging strengths from the data, consultation with stakeholders and perception of stakeholders have been summarized below.

Institutional Aspects

- **Adequate representation of human resources working on cross-cutting areas across traditional sections** like health, nutrition, WASH, and education etc.
- **Strong upstream positioning of UNICEF** as a child rights advocate leveraging its comparative strength
- **Improved integration of gender**, reinforced through strengthening of the **gender architecture of the office**
- **Adequate international and national staff members** bringing in mixed experience towards programme management
- **Field offices provide a strong community base** and reflects the understanding and presence of the BC

Partnerships

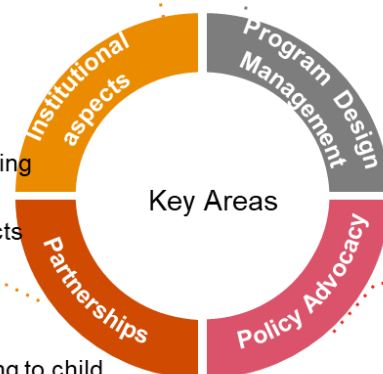
- **UNICEF is viewed as a technical lead on issues** pertaining to child and women related issues with better relationships with government, donors and other UN agencies. Reflected through the perception survey conducted.
- **Growing relationship with academia and statistical organizations** focusing on improving gender and equity integration across research
- An **encouraging partnership with the private sector** leveraging technology driven development to promote two way communication amongst UNICEF and end users
- **Strong network base of NGO/CBO** to deliver programmes on ground.

Programme Design & Management

- **Multi dimensional causal analysis** conducted at the time of framing the CP
- Many **converging issues have gained priority** (like ECM, ECCD) due to them being priority issues for the GoB
- **Result based programming** focused on achieving results given strong impetus
- **Gender component was well integrated in programme delivery for adolescents**
- **C4D continued to be used effectively for outreach and BCC, with enhanced outreach through few T4D interventions**

Policy Advocacy

- **UNICEF's presence and negotiation at policy and planning divisions** have led to increase in government's budget allocation for children. This was also felt by external stakeholders in the perception survey.
- **Focus on joint programming pushes for SDG goals** as against individual organizational goals. UNICEF BCO has aimed at harnessing this to achieve priority goals for children, youth and women.
- **LCA has been used to promote cross sectoral dialogues** at national level especially within the Cabinet Division and PMO, GoB.
- **Engagement of private sector partners through 'Better Business for Children'** is also a welcome move for formal engagement with them, going forward.



An analysis of all findings have been synthesised to highlight the areas of improvement for the office. These are also weaved into the recommendations in the next section providing actionable methods for office to incorporate towards the development of the next CP.

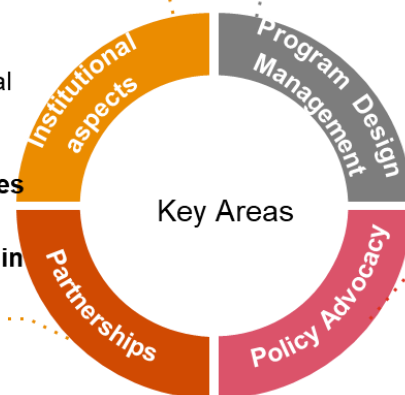
Areas of improvement for UNICEF BCO

Institutional Aspects

- **Quick turn over time for staff and change in leadership positions** often affecting the national programming, inter-sectoral coordination and critical decision making.
- The **BCO uses RAM which is sectorally driven for result assessment vis-à-vis the ToCs in CP which were framed using an life cycle based approach**. This led to institutional resistance towards implementation of inter-sectoral interventions.
- **Limited involvement and empowerment of the field offices** in BCO at the national level.
- **Delays due to poor fund flow and slow turn around time in decision making** with partners

Partnerships

- **Perceived to be dominating in various thematic areas with limited acknowledgement of role of other partners**
- **Limited sharing of information with partners on common themes** (e.g. With UN Women on working with gender and child marriage)
- **Positive partnership experiences** felt by stakeholders has been reported to be **results of individual driven initiatives within UNICEF**.
- **Private sector and other innovative partnership building strategy yet to be visible** across all sections beyond CAP
- **Conflict with respect to intense implementation role compromising persuasive sustainability effort** (with respect to govt. stakeholders)



Programme Design & Management

- **Limited bottom up programme design and planning**
- **Design is often not backed by evidence** and rather adhoc and for external influence (donor interest / govt. perception, HQ pressure)*
- **Extensive number of pilots** and variant understanding
- **Convergent programming yet to be strengthened** with role clarity of stakeholders (national and sub national level)
- **More focus required for integration of cross- cutting areas & critical development issues** in programme design (e.g. disability and equity, nutrition)- inflexible budgetary provisions

Policy Advocacy

- **Too many issues pursued by the organisation** may be at the risk of diluting a few critical ones
- **Leadership (representative of UNICEF) in policy dialogue are not uniform** across issues
- Some of **the issues are managed at the implementation level** and are **yet to transcend into policy dialogue**
- **Gender yet to be foregrounded in policy dialogue** with respect to sectoral initiatives
- **Focus on evidence creation for policy dialogue is yet to be extensively explored** across programmes (barring SPEAR's initiatives)

Creating relationships

Building value

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