FINAL REPORT

Evaluation of UNICEF Philippines' Child Protection Programme from 2017 to 2020



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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ARMM	Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BARRM	Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
BCPC	Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC).
CICL	Children in Conflict with the Law
C4D	Communication for Development
CCC	Climate Change Commission
CCLC	Coram International at Coram Children's Legal Centre
CCT	Conditional Cash Transfer
CHR	Commission on Human Rights
COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
CPC7	7th Country Programme for Children
CPC8	8th Country Programme for Children
CPIMS	Child Protection Information Management System
CPD	Country Programme Document (UNICEF)
CPN	Child Protection Network
CRN	Child Rights Network
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTFMR	Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting
CWC	Council for the Welfare of Children
CWD	children with disability
DBM	Department of Budget and Management
DepEd	Department of Education
DFAT	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DILG	Department of Interior and Local Government
DOH	Department of Health
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOLE	Department of Labour and Employment

DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EAPRO	East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GBVIMS	Gender Based Violence Information Management System
GPH	Government of the Philippines
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV/AIDS	human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ILO	International Labour Organization
JJWC	Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council
LGBTI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex
LGU	local government unit
MaPa	Masayang Pamilya (a parenting support programme)
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front
MRM	monitoring and reporting mechanism
MSSD	Ministry of Social Services and Development (in BARRM)
NBS-VAC	National Baseline Study on Violence against Children
NEDA	National Economic and Development Authority
NGA	national government agency
NYC	National Youth Commission
OCD	Office of Civil Defence
OOC	Office of Cybercrimes
OSAEC	Online sexual abuse and exploitation of children
PCO	Philippine Country Office
PDP	Philippine Development Plan
PLH	Parenting for Lifelong Health
PPAeVAC	Philippine Plan of Action to end Violence against Children

PSA	Philippine Statistics Authority
PSN	Programme Strategy Note
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SITAN	Situation Analysis
TOC	Theory of Change
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNPF	United Nations Partnership Framework
VAC	violence against children
WASH	water, sanitation and hygiene
WCPU	Women and Children Protection Units
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization

1. Executive Summary

In January 2021, UNICEF Philippines engaged Coram International to conduct a formative evaluation of their Child Protection Programme from January 2017 to December 2020. The objectives of the evaluation were to:

1. Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Child Protection Programme components of the GPH-UNICEF 7th and 8th Country Programme focusing on the last four years (Jan 2017- Dec 2020); and

2. Identify lessons learned and make recommendations that can be used by UNICEF and government for future child protection interventions in the country.

The intended primary audience for the evaluation includes decision makers within UNICEF and the Government, including the BARMM Regional Government and technical experts across UNICEF and relevant government departments with a mandate or related function for the protection of children from harm, including the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), specialist coordination bodies and other agencies such as the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), and the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC). The secondary audience include the broader development sector: donors, sister UN agencies, the Human Rights Commission, civil society, academia, research, and policy think tanks. It is intended that the knowledge generated, including lessons learned, will contribute to a growing body of global evidence about what works in protecting children from harm. At risk girls and boys under 18 years old are the key beneficiaries/rights holders impacted by this evaluation.

1.1 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation aimed to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of UNICEF's child protection work, as well as cross-cutting questions of gender, equity, and human rights. It aimed to assess results at the outcome and output levels (rather than including an assessment of impact) using a theory-based approach and non-experimental design. The framework for the theory-based approach was the Theory of Change for UNICEF's 2019 – 2023 Child Protection Programme.



Research was conducted at the national level and in UNICEF's programme areas, namely: the provinces of Samar and Northern Samar, Local Government Units (LGUs) of Valenzuela City, Cagayan de Oro City, Zamboanga City, Angeles City, and the region of BARMM (Maguindanao and Basilan). The evaluation was primarily qualitative, including key informant interviews with UNICEF staff; Government partners; NGOs and experts; key stakeholder interviews with service providers; and 'wrap around' case studies involving in-depth interviews with children, families, and Social Welfare Officers. Quantitative administrative data and programme data was also used to assess programme results concretely and triangulate qualitative data. A survey was also disseminated to Social Welfare Officers in UNICEF's programme LGUs. Data were analysed thematically and in line with an evaluation matrix that was developed by the team before data collection commenced. Findings were validated through a review process with key UNICEF staff members and through participatory virtual validation workshops on 22 September and 10 November with the Evaluation Reference Group (representatives from the Government of the Philippines, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), UNICEF Philippines and UNICEF East Asia Pacific Regional Office).

1.2 Summary of main evaluation findings

UNICEF's Child Protection Programmes – including the two-year extension of the previous programme and the first two years of the current programme (2017 – 2020) – are ambitious, with multiple components and work streams. The context in which both Programmes operated was challenging and complex, including several natural disasters, situations of armed conflict and displacement of children. Most significantly, the Programme was heavily impacted by the emergence and spread of the COVID-19 virus. This impacted on the Programme's workplan, and outputs and it also on the data collection phase of this evaluation, limiting the availability of key stakeholders (including children) to engage in the process (particularly at the sub-national level). The Programme has, nevertheless, achieved some significant positive results and has shown strong resilience to external challenges.

1.2.1 Relevance

Overall, **the objectives, pre-conditions, pathways, change strategies/approaches and implementation modalities of the Child Protection Programme were found to be largely relevant to the programming context**. The programmes were designed and grounded within a child protection system strengthening approach and priorities were selected based on a robust evidence base. The Programme was generally found to be relevant to the priorities and needs of national and sub-national stakeholders. The 'upstream' focus on the Programme was well aligned to the programming context and generally suited to programming in a middle-income country. In addition, programming at the sub-national level, with 10 focus LGUs, was found to be crucial to support the strengthening of systems and service delivery at the local level. It was found that the change strategies and implementation modalities of Programme had adapted well to the Covid-19 context.

There was an assumption that UNICEF's 'upstream' work would automatically flow down to create changes 'on the ground' but this was not clearly articulated in the Programme logic. As part of the Theory of Change review currently underway, the extent to which this assumption still holds true should be assessed and a decision made on whether the results chain needs to be modified in order to link upstream programming with downstream results, especially in light of the implications of the Mandanas judgement, which will result in further devolution of social welfare programmes to the LGU level.[1] It was also found that, while the Programme was responsive to the evidence in terms of the needs of children and families, no systematic process was in place to enable meaningful engagement of children and adolescents in the development and assessment of programme priorities. A systematic engagement process could help demonstrate the programme's relevance to its core beneficiaries. In addition, while gender dynamics and equity issues have been mainstreamed into the Programme – particularly through office-wide gender mainstreaming initiatives –work could be done to strengthen implementation and make the gender and equity focus of the programme more explicit.

1.2.2 Coherence

Overall, it was found that **the Child Protection Programmes are well aligned to global (Sustainable Development Goals) and national (Philippines Development Plan) development priorities**, though the alignment to the Philippines Development Plan could be better explored and articulated, as could

[1] House of Representatives, Congress of the Philippines, Congressional Policy and Budget Research Department, 'Implications of the Supreme Court ruling on Mandanas-Garcia Case.' https://cpbrd.congress.gov.ph/2012-06-30-13-06-51/discussion-paper/1363-dp2021-02-implications-of-the-sc-ruling-on-the-mandanas-garcia-ira-case: In 2018 the Philippine Supreme Court decreed that Local Government Units (LGUs) were to receive more funding from the national budget. The 'Mandanas ruling' mandates Government to compute LGUs' internal revenue allotment share based on 40 per cent of all national taxes. The landmark ruling will decentralize key services to the LGU level across the Philippines and kickstart a new model of localised service delivery.

the pathway toward achieving the SDGs (for instance, through the development of targets and indicators and a roadmap to achieving them). The evaluation findings also demonstrate strong consensus amongst key stakeholders on the relevance of the Child Protection Programme's aims and design, which reflect the priorities of development partners and are in line with UNICEF's current strategic approach. This has been achieved through strong partnerships and UNICEF's involvement in coordination efforts among Government and civil society. However, UNICEF's ability to dominate the child protection agenda could be balanced through a better understanding of the needs and interests of stakeholders and development partners.

1.2.3 Effectiveness

The Child Protection Programme has been effective in the reform of **child protection policy and legislation**, as demonstrated by the number and breath of the results achieved between 2017-2020.

The Philippines was an **early adopter of a systems approach to child protection**, but considerable gaps in the functioning of the system remain, particularly in terms of governance arrangements, capacity, and information management. While notable progress has been achieved in putting in place the various components of a system (such as legislation and services), the structure to ensure coordination of the national child protection response is not clearly delineated. The number of issue-specific or legislative committees/councils was found to be a barrier to a more synergetic, integrated child protection system strengthening approach. A greater investment is required in strengthening the overall child protection structure to ensure coordination of the national child protection response.

The work on promoting **social norms to end violence against children**, including online, has been particularly effective with the SaferKidsPH programme, which was cited by several stakeholders as being an important child protection initiative.

The Child Protection Programme has contributed to the intended results on **strengthened coordination mechanisms and approaches to enhance parenting**. Despite its effectiveness, the ambition for this output is relatively modest when compared to the outputs on legal and policy reform and child protection systems strengthening for service delivery for VAC. Unless there is an intention to rapidly scale up the ambition, funding and reach of this output, it may make more strategic sense to fold it into the output on VAC but doing so without diminishing the importance of positive parenting as a prevention measure for reducing violence against children.

The Child Protection Programme has been particularly effective in leveraging its convening role to ensure that **children and adolescents affected by disasters** and those affected by armed conflict, have increased access to child focused programmes. Several partners pointed to UNICEF's contribution to the various inter agency mechanisms as being highly effective. This included UNICEF's role as the lead agency for Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Force and secretariat support for the UN country taskforce on Monitoring and Reporting grave violations as well as its new leadership role for MHPSS. The MRM was cited by UN agencies and NGOs as contributing to a sustainable child protection response.

In the **Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)**, the Child Protection Programme has been effective in generating evidence to inform **child protection system strengthening**. This conclusion is also based on the findings of a rapid assessment of key social services programmes,[2] which is being used to inform the next phase of this work (from early 2021) which is the development of a roadmap for the creation of child protection system.

[2] Coram International, Rapid Assessment of Key Social Services Programmes in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Phase 1), August 2019

1.2.4 Efficiency

The Child Protection programming approach **is efficient in the achievement of the desired results in terms of resource utilization and timely delivery**. The conclusion is based on the range of results documented by this evaluation and the relatively modest financial base of the programme.

Although the Child Protection Programme has made a significant contribution to the reform of child protection policy and legislation, it has been less effective in its efforts to ensure the full implementation of these reforms, which is a central inefficiency. The increased protection of children enshrined in these reforms is not always translated into action on the ground and, as a result, the full realisation of children's right to protection remains elusive.

Based on the overall results achieved**, the Child Protection Programme staff were found to be highly competent and efficient in terms of their technical capacity to effect positive change for children and adolescents vulnerable to harm**. However, the inefficiency highlighted above points to the need for additional human resources, with high level competencies in operational planning, to support implementation of new legislation and policy.

The **Philippines Country Office has put in place effective coordination mechanisms between UNICEF's Child Protection Programme and other UNICEF programmes** such as education, health, nutrition, WASH, social protection, adolescent, and communication for development. These mechanisms have helped to create and sustain linkages across sectors, and between child protection actors, especially related to VAC. Despite these efforts, within the Philippines County Office it is not clear whether VAC is a whole-of-office / office-wide priority as it is in several other countries in the region.

1.2.5 Sustainability

UNICEF's systems strengthening approach to child protection is key to its sustainability. The legislative reforms conducted within the programmes are sustainable. Building the capacity of the DSWD and other key departments is also likely to support sustainability of interventions. Another key factor influencing the achievement of sustainability is that the Child Protection Programme has invested in strengthening the institutional capacity of government and civil society rather than focusing on service delivery at the project level. However, overall, more work needs to be done to build relationships, financial and human resources and technical skills at the LGU level for child protection work to be sustainable in the long-term, particularly given the increased role of LGUs in delivering child protection services when the Mandanas ruling comes into effect.

The programme has been incredibly resilient to natural disasters and public health crises (i.e., COVID-19) that have severely impacted on UNICEF's work in general, indicating the programme is adaptable and able to respond well to meet children's immediate needs. This is important, given the propensity for natural disasters in the country: UNICEF should reflect on how learning from COVID-19 response can be used to ensure sustainability of future programmes.

1.3 Main recommendations

Based on these findings, the following recommendations have been made:

1.3.1 Programme focus and design

It is recommended that:

- The GPH and the Child Protection Programme **develop and implement a Child Protection Systems Strengthening Strategy, with clear indicators and targets for achieving the child protection**

targets of the SDGs. The strategy should include a commonly agreed vision and definition of what constitutes a child protection system, and the core components of the system, including governance arrangements

- The GPH and UNICEF **revise the Child Protection Programme design**, through conducting a diagnostic of the Theory of Change and Strategy Note and adjusting it accordingly. The preconditions and pathways to change should articulate the need to ensure implementation of child protection laws and policies at all levels of government, and to conceptualise how interventions at the national level will filter down to the level of service delivery. Without this, the assumption remains that changes initiated at the national level will 'automatically' filter down to the level at which services are delivered. The evaluation has seen this assumption has failed in several instances.
- UNICEF **develop a position paper on how it can support the Government in the further devolution of social welfare services that will occur following the Mandanas Supreme Court Ruling**. In particular, UNICEF should consider how to support the Government to devolve services effectively and how to support LGUs to build capacity to ensure it has strong systems and frameworks for the effective delivery of child protection services.

1.3.2 Responsiveness to beneficiary needs – Enhanced participation

It is recommended that GPH and UNICEF **devise a system to ensure that diverse groups of beneficiaries (children, adolescents, parents from different cultures, geographical areas, genders, children with varying levels of ability, LGBTI+ children, care-experienced children etc.) are meaningfully engaged in setting priorities** for the Programme and initiatives that relate to them, in the design of implementation modalities and supported to engage in child protection policy and programme development more generally. This will help to ensure that the Child Protection Programme remains relevant to the needs of beneficiaries and that responsive and effective modalities are utilized.

1.3.3 Harnessing new implementation modalities

It is recommended that **UNICEF consider how COVID-adapted modalities could be utilised more generally by the Child Protection Team** (and office-wide). The Child Protection Programme has been effective in developing new implementation modalities and building capacity among stakeholders in using new methods (e.g., online training; delivery of services to beneficiaries digitally etc.) to overcome challenges presented by the pandemic. These new implementation modalities could be seen as an opportunity to reach more remote populations across the Philippines, increasing the reach of services and contributing to UNICEF's equity goals.

1.3.4 Coordination with development partners

Given the size and complexity of the current Child Protection Programme and the number of other actors involved in the child protection space, it is recommended that the UNICEF Child Protection Team **undertake a stakeholder analysis**. This would help ensure harmonisation and complementarity among various initiatives being implemented by different actors and avoid duplication.

1.3.5 Supporting localised implementation

It is recommended that the GPH and UNICEF **invest in supporting the localized implementation of previous and current legislative and policy reforms**, starting with those reforms that will bring maximum benefit to the protection of children. This would include developing costed implementation plans for each piece of legislation or policy and ensuring that capacity gaps are addressed, and coordination mechanisms are strengthened.

1.3.6 Continued focus on BARMM

UNICEF's Child Protection Programme should **continue to have a separate programme for child protection systems strengthening in BARMM and this should include work to protect children and adolescents affected by disasters and armed conflict in BARMM**. This work was cited by several UN agencies and NGOs as being critically effective. While the Government has an established system in responding to disasters, UNICEF can continue to complement this work by enabling children and their families to access much needed social services.

1.4 Lessons learned

The evaluation generated several 'lessons learned' that may be more broadly relevant to child protection programmes outside this specific context.

1. **Advocating for and supporting the development of rights-based and evidence-based laws and policies is crucial in the building and strengthening of child protection systems and is an area of comparative advantage for UNICEF**. However, it is crucial that efforts aimed at law and policy development and reform are accompanied by support in developing implementation plans and, particularly in heavily decentralised contexts with limited capacity at local levels. Support to implementation of laws and policies at local levels needs to cover financial, technical, staffing, managerial and other needs so child protection results for children at local level can be achieved.
2. In heavily decentralised contexts, **it is important that UNICEF's Programme logic clearly understands and articulates how 'upstream' work at the national level will flow down to changes in systems and service delivery at local levels**.
3. **Systems strengthening approaches to child protection are crucial in ensuring that all children facing violence and protection risks receive support and services**. Where a fully functioning system is not in place, results in addressing violence, abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children will be hampered. In the Philippines, programme effectiveness is constrained at a systems level as it appears that the core components of the Child Protection System are being treated as discrete components whereas in practice the functioning of one part of a system is heavily dependent on other system components, meaning that the Philippines child protection system will not be fully functional and effective until all of the components are in place and working synergistically together. The situation is unlikely to improve without there being an agreed national child protection system strengthening strategy, with a commonly agreed vision and definition of what constitutes a child protection system and the core components of the system, including governance arrangement.
4. **Multi-disciplinary training of key service providers at the local level has the potential not only to build the capacity of different institutions and professionals** (e.g., Social Welfare Officers, police, prosecutors, Court personnel), but also to help foster a more coordinated and multi-sector response to child protection and child justice systems and services.
5. **The use of evidence-based advocacy can be an effective strategy to ensure that laws and policies are and remain rights-based, gender sensitive, and child-friendly**. UNICEF's efforts in generating an evidence case and informing the advocacy efforts of its partners has had some noteworthy results, for example, in convincing law makers not to lower the age of criminal responsibility for alleged juvenile offenders, and the development of a new draft law on protecting child online exploitation, which is currently before the Congress of the Philippines.

2. INTRODUCTION

In January 2021, UNICEF Philippines engaged Coram International to conduct a formative evaluation of their Child Protection Programme from January 2017 to December 2020. The primary purpose of the evaluation, as set out in UNICEF's Terms of Reference (TOR) is to inform the Philippines Country Office mid-term review of its Child Protection Programme and strategic approaches in 2021, its partnership with the government particularly the development/review of rolling workplans, and its advocacy approaches to influence government's policies, strategies, fund allocations and programme priorities to protect Filipino children from violence. More specifically, the aim of the Evaluation was to:

1. Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Child Protection Programme components of the GPH-UNICEF 7th and 8th Country Programme for the last four years (Jan 2017- Dec 2020).

2. Identify lessons learned and make recommendations that can be used by UNICEF and government for future child protection interventions in the country.

The evaluation drew on a variety of evidence sources to answer evaluation questions pertaining to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of UNICEF's child protection work, as well as to cross-cutting questions of gender, equity and human rights. Evidence gathered includes extensive qualitative data collection in Samar, Northern Samar, Valenzuela City, Cagayan de Oro City, Zamboanga City, Angeles City and BARMM (Maguindanao and Basilan), representing a wide variety of beneficiaries and stakeholders: from government partners, NGOs and donors to regional, provincial and LGU level Social Welfare and Development Officers, police officers, representatives of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), prosecutors, family court judges, rights holders who have experienced different aspects of the child protection programme and their parents.

On the basis of the activities set out above, this final report sets out: relevant information on context, including an overview of the Philippines child protection system and the environment relevant to child protection in the Philippines; a review of the 'object of the evaluation' or what has been delivered under UNICEF's child protection programme since 2017; the overall purpose, objectives and scope for the evaluation; criteria and evaluative questions; methodology including ethical guidelines; findings and preliminary conclusions; lessons learned; final conclusions and recommendations.

The emergence of a global public health crisis caused by the spread of the COVID-19 virus, which began in late 2019 and was declared a public health crisis by the World Health Organisation on 11 March 2019, impacted on the planning, inception and data collection phases of this evaluation and has had an overall impact on the implementation of this evaluation.

3. CONTEXT OF THE EVALUATION

Geographically, the Philippines consists of an archipelago of 7,107 islands situated in South East Asia in the Western Pacific Ocean. It has a total land area of 300,000 km^2 and a population of 108.8 million in 2020,[3] the thirteenth largest population in the world.

The Philippines has a large population of children and young people. In 2015, the last census to contain data on the number of children, there were 38,363,884 children aged 0-17 years in the population which equated to 38 per cent of the total population.[4] The population of the Philippines is ethnically diverse, and there are estimated to be 14 – 17 million Indigenous Peoples (IPs) across the Philippines, belonging to 110 ethno-linguistic groups.

The major languages spoken in the Philippines are Filipino and English, both of which are used as official languages, but there are several other languages and dialects which are widely spoken. According to the 2010 census 24.44 per cent of households have Tagalog as their mother tongue, 11.44 per cent have Bisaya or Binisaya as their mother tongue and 9.91 per cent have Cebuano as their mother tongue.[5] The major religion is Christianity, with approximately 80 per cent of the population Roman Catholic. The second major religion is Islam (6 per cent) with the majority of adherents living in BARMM.[6]

3.1 Governance

The Philippines has been an independent country since 1946, following colonialization by Spain and, later, by the USA (as well as occupation by Japan between 1942 and 1945). The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines establishes a democratic Republic, headed by a President, with power divided between three branches: the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. The last mid-term national election in May 2019 for Senate, the House of Representatives and local government offices and the 2016 election (which included the Presidential election) were generally regarded as successful and credible.[7] A further election, which includes the Presidential election, will take place in 2022.

The country is divided up into 17 administrative regions. Sixteen of these are administrative groupings while one, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), has an elected government to which the central government has delegated certain powers and responsibilities.

Since 1991, with the enactment of the Local Government Code the Philippines has been undergoing a slow process of devolution, empowering local government units (LGUs) as duty bearers to take a key role in the delivery of public services.[8]

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3 Philippines Statistics Authority. Updated Population Projections based on the 2015 Census of Population.
[4] Statistica. Children as a percentage of the population in the Philippines 2009-2018. 8 December 2020. https://www.statista.com/statistics/678279/philippines-children-as-a-percentage-of-the-population/#statisticContainer.
5 Philippine Statistics Authority. Philippine Yearbook - Table 5.21, Demography. 2013. Philippine Statistics Authority
6 Encyclopedia Britanica. Philippines – Religion. 2015. https://www.britannica.com/place/Philippines/Plant-and-animal-life#ref23732.
7 Freedom House. Freedom in the World Report. 2020. https://freedomhouse.org/country/philippines/freedom-world/2020
[8] Local Government Code (1991), Section 2a.

3.2 Economics and poverty

The Philippines is a lower middle-income country[9] with a fast-growing economy. According to the International Monetary Fund, the economy of the Philippines is the 32nd largest in the world and the 13th largest economy in Asia. It is the 3rd highest in South East Asia, after Thailand and Indonesia.[10] A period of sustained economic growth of 6.4 per cent between 2010 and 2019 has slowed however, contracting by 9.5 per cent in 2020 due to Covid-19.[11]

Despite strong economic growth, rates of poverty remain high in the Philippines, and available data indicate pockets of significant and persistent poverty in some areas, suggesting that high economic growth has not reached the bottom quarter of the population.[12] Overall, however, poverty has decreased, with the poverty rate falling from 26.6 per cent in 2006 to 16.6 per cent in 2018. Inequality has also reduced, from a Gini Index of 47.2 in 2006 to 42.3 in 2018.[13] While poverty rates have decreased for children, they remain high. In 2018, 23.9 per cent of children (under the age of 18) were classified as living in poverty. Undoubtedly, these figures will have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

3.3 Education

Despite some encouraging progress in recent years, there are still limitations to children's access to education in the Philippines. Less than 50 per cent of children aged 3-4 are enrolled in day care. Net enrolment in primary education is higher, with a 97.4 per cent enrolment rate in 2010, but a falling rate since that date, to 96.22 in 2015 and 95.18 per cent in 2017.[14] The numbers completing primary education, on the other hand, has been rising, with a rate of 83.43 completion in 201515 and 115 per cent in 2018.[16] Secondary enrolment stood at 84 per cent as of 2018.[17]

3.4 Social protection

The Government of the Philippines, as the key duty bearer in ensuring children's access to their rights, has developed a range of social protection programmes, including health insurance (covering 84.9 per cent of the population in 2015) and conditional cash transfer programmes for poor families. The Pantawid Pamilya (the 4Ps Conditional Cash Transfer Programme), introduced in 2007, has become the 'cornerstone' of social protection reforms for the country, reaching a total of 9 million children

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[9] World Bank. World Development Indicators.http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=PHILIPPINES
[10] International Monetary Fund. World Economic Outlook Database, October 2020. IMF.org. 2 August 2021.
[11] Philippine Statistics Authority., Philippine GDP posts -8.3 percent in the fourth Quarter 2020; -9.5 percent for full-year 2020, 28 January 2021. https://psa.gov.ph/content/philippine-gdp-posts-83-percent-fourth-quarter-2020-95-percent-full-year-2020.
12 Philippine Institute of Development Studies. 'Unintended consequences: The folly of uncritical thinking', 2017. p148.
[13] The Gini index measures the extent to which the distribution of income among individuals or households deviates from a perfectly equal distribution; zero represents perfect equality and 100, perfect inequality. World Bank. Gini Index – Philippines. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=PH [Accessed 2 August 2021].
[14] World Bank. Philippines Education Statistics – Repeaters, Primary Female % of female enrolment 1981-2015. https://www.ceicdata.com/en/philippines/education-statistics?page=2
15 Philippines Development Plan 2017-2022. Table 10.2 Basic Education Indicators. p121.
[16] World Bank. Primary completion rate (% of total age group). 2018. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.CMPT.ZS?locations=PH
17 World Bank. Secondary enrolment. Data as of September 2020. https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.ENRR

belonging to 4.4 million households. It has been shown to improve access to health services, to keep children in school and has reduced child labour.[18] The programme is managed by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and involves the giving of direct cash transfers to beneficiaries with children, who live in a poor municipality and are living below the poverty line.[19] The 4Ps programme operates in all 17 regions of the Philippines.

3.5 Children in emergencies

The Philippines is one of the countries most at risk of adverse impacts from climate change due its sensitive ecological systems, large coastal population and exposure to frequent weather extremes and rising sea levels. Using a mid-range emissions scenario, the climate predictions by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration for 2020 and 2050 indicate that all areas of the Philippines will get warmer by 0.9–1.1 degrees by 2020 and 1.8–2.1 degrees in 2050.[20] The sea levels in the Philippines are projected to continue to rise by between 7.6 and 10 centimetres every 10 years, which is significantly more than the average worldwide sea level rise of 3.1 centimetres per decade.[21] This will place a significant portion of the population at risk from flooding and sea water inundation.

The Philippines is vulnerable to both natural and man-made disasters. Its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire, makes the country particularly vulnerable to earthquakes, cyclones and volcanic hazards.[22] There are around 20 tropical storms[23] and around seven to nine typhoons make landfall every year.[24] In terms of disaster risk, the Philippines ranked ninth among all of the countries with the highest risks worldwide according to the World Risk Report 2019.[25] Since 1990, the Philippines has been affected by 565 disaster events which have caused an estimated $US 23 billion in damages.[26] Much of the damage has been caused by recurrent typhoons, including Haiyan in 2013, Koppu in 2015, Haima in 2016, Mangkhut in 2018, Vamco and Goni in 2020.

In addition to natural disasters, large areas of the country, especially Mindanao and BARMM have also experienced an extended period of armed conflict which has disrupted development (and development programmes) and caused wide-spread cycles of displacement.

Context on the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM)

Following several years of internationally brokered peace talks, and after almost five decades of armed conflict in the region between the Government of the Philippines and several overlapping, yet distinct, armed groups fighting for independence for the Moro peoples, a framework agreement, the

[18] Asian Development Bank. The Social Protection Indicators for Asia: Assessing Progress. 2019. p19. https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/516586/spi-asia-2019.pdf
[19] DSWD. Official Gazette, Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program. http://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/programs/conditional-cash-transfer/
20 Climate Change Commission. National Climate Change Action Plan 2011-2028. p2.
21 UNICEF. Working Paper: Climate Landscape Analysis for Children in the Philippines. 1 July 2017. p10.
22 United Nations Development Programme. About the Philippines, http://www.ph.undp.org/content/philippines/en/home/countryinfo.html.
23 Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. Philippines country profile. http://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/philippines/ [Accessed 3 March 2021].
24 Second National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change: Philippines. p15.
25 The World Risk Report. World Risk Index. 2020. https://weltrisikobericht.de/#downloads
26 Asian Development Bank. 'Natural Disasters, Public Spending, and Creative Destruction: A Case Study of the Philippines'. March 2018. https://www.adb.org/publications/natural-disasters-public-spending-and-creative-destruction-philippines

Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro was reached in 2014, bringing peace to the region. Two legally binding referendums on the future of the region followed on 21st January and 6th February 2019. Following the referendums, the Bangsamoro Organic Law was ratified, and the BARMM came into being, replacing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).[27]

The Bangsamoro Organic Law sets out the transitional administrative structure for BARMM. It creates a parliamentary democracy headed ceremonially by the Wa'lī. The executive is headed by the Chief Minister and supported by the Council of Leaders. The 80-member strong Parliament serves as the legislature and is led by the Speaker.

Muslims comprise more than 90 per cent of the total population of BARMM, followed by Roman Catholics (5 per cent), and the Philippine Episcopal Church (1 per cent).[28] A significant proportion of IPs (61 per cent) are located in Mindanao.[29] A wide range of languages are spoken, with the major dialects being Maguindanao, Maranao, Tausug, Iranun and Samal.[30]

BARMM has the highest incidence of poverty out of all regions in the Philippines, largely driven by the protracted armed conflict. Concerningly, while poverty has lowered in the Philippines over the last 18 years, in BARMM it has doubled. The labour force participation rate is relatively low, with only 50.6 per cent of the population in employment.[31]

The impact of the armed conflict on children in the region has been great, with reports documenting widespread human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law by actors on all sides of the conflict. The August 2020 report of the United Nations Secretary-General noted that the country task-force verified the recruitment and use of 67 children, with teenage boys continuing to be the most at-risk group.[32] Despite the peace agreement bringing a dramatic decline in political violence challenges remain in decommissioning soldiers (including children), and rebuilding communities who have been heavily affected by the conflict.[33]

3.6 Impact of Covid-19

The Philippines has amongst the highest levels of Covid-19 transmission in the Asia Pacific region. As of 29 November 2021, 2,832,375 Covid-19 cases have been confirmed by the Department of Health (DOH), of which 16,289 are active, and 48,501 people have died.[34] However these figures are likely to significantly underestimate the scale of the pandemic, and some estimates suggest that only 21 per

[27] As a result of the plebiscites, 63 barangays in Cotabato City were added to BARMM, increasing the size of the autonomous region.
[28] UNICEF. Situation Analysis of Children in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. 2017. p11.
[29] United National Development Programme. Fast Facts: Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines. 2013. http://www.ph.undp.org/content/philippines/en/home/library/democratic_governance/FastFacts-IPs.html.
[30] UNICEF. Situation Analysis of Children in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. 2017. p11.
[31] UNICEF. Situation Analysis of Children in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. 2017. p32.
32 United Nations Security Council. Report of the Secretary-General, Children and armed conflict in the Philippines. S/2020/777. p7. https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/document/report-of-the-secretary-general-on-children-and-armed-conflict-in-the-philippines-5/
33 Abuza, Z., and Lischin, L., (June 2020). The Challenges Facing the Philippines' Bangsamoro Autonomous Region at One Year. p8. https://www.usip.org/publications/2020/06/challenges-facing-philippines-bangsamoro-autonomous-region-one-year.
[34] Republic of the Philippines Department of Health. Covid-19 Tracker. As of 29 November 2021. https://doh.gov.ph/covid19tracker

cent of current rated Covid-19 testing capacity is in use.[35] Progress on vaccinations in the Philippines is slow with 78,528,357 doses delivered by 29 November 2021, covering around 36.3 per cent of the population.[36]

Covid-19 restrictions have had a huge impact on the wellbeing and rights of children in the Philippines. Enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) measures under the Bayanihan (United Efforts) to Heal as One Act (Republic Act 11469), have prohibited children from leaving their home (except for limited reasons such as exercise) or accessing essential services since March 2020.[37] Additionally, all state schools have been closed for in person teaching, disrupting the education of more than 22 million children and young people.[38] Children in residential care have been affected disproportionately by restrictions which have impacted on their ability to meet physically with their family and anecdotal evidence suggests that family reintegration efforts have been stalled by differences in health restrictions between LGUs. Indeed, application of ECQ restrictions has been uneven across LGUs with some LGUs allowing children more freedom of movement than others.

Early evidence shows that the dual public health and economic crises caused by the Covid-19 pandemic have been felt particularly acutely in the Philippines. In October 2020, the World Bank forecasted that the Philippine economy would contract by 6.9 per cent in 2020, by far the largest drop for any Southeast Asian country.[39] A nationwide survey of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) conducted by UNDP in May 2020 found that 71 per cent of MSMEs in the sample had closed due to the lockdown.[40] Concerningly, the Covid-19 pandemic also threatens to reverse the trend of a steady decline in poverty in recent years, with estimates suggesting that the crisis could put close to 3 million additional Filipinos into poverty.[41] These economic shocks have had a major impact on children and families. In a rapid assessment conducted by World Vision in June 2020, 92 per cent of surveyed households had had their livelihoods disrupted by the pandemic.[42]

Covid-19 restrictions on children's movement coupled with lack of access to institutions, such as schools has meant that Filipino children are especially vulnerable to abuse, neglect and exploitation.

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[35] Alder, C., 'COVID-19 Testing in the Philippines: Enhancing Testing Productivity'. British Medical Journal Blog – Covid-19. 26 August 2020. https://blogs.bmj.com/covid-19/2020/08/26/covid-19-testing-in-the-philippines-enhancing-testing-productivity/

[36] Reuters., Covis-19 Tracker – Philippines. https://graphics.reuters.com/world-coronavirus-tracker-and-maps/countries-and-territories/philippines/

[37] The Joint Memorandum Circular published by the DILG and CWC in April 2020 created exemptions to ECQ regulations do exist for those with "specific vulnerabilities" who have left their homes to "report and/or seek protection from abuse and exploitation". However, many members of the public are not aware of these exemptions and fear of breaking ECQ regulations continues to act as a barrier to reporting instances of violence.

[38] International Development Law Organisation. Rule of Law in the time of Covid-19: The Philippines. 30 July 2020. https://www.idlo.int/news/notes-from-the-field/rule-law-time-covid-19-philippines

[39] The World Bank. From Containment to Recovery: Economic Update for East Asia and the Pacific. October 2020.

[40] United Nations Development Programme. MSME Value Chain Rapid Response Survey. 2020. https://www.ph.undp.org/content/philippines/en/home/library/msme-value-chain-rapid-response-survey.html

[40] Cho, Y. 2020. The Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on Low Income Households in the Philippines: Deepening Distress despite Rebounding Economy. World Bank. p2.

[41] Cho, Y. 2020. The Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on Low Income Households in the Philippines: Deepening Distress despite Rebounding Economy. World Bank. p2.

[42] https://www.unicef.org/media/79626/file/EAPRO-COVID19-SitRep-5-June-2020.pdf
https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/impact-covid-19-children-and-their-families-rapid-assessment-philippines

According to the Department of Justice (DOJ), Cases of online sexual exploitation of children in the Philippines increased by 264.6 per cent during ECQ restrictions between March and May 2020, compared to the same period in 2019.[43] Reiterating the findings of Save the Children's report the US-based National Center for Missing and Exploited Children reported a 209 per cent increase in the cyber tip reports for the Philippines, from January to December 2020 (1,294,750 cyber tips) compared to 2019 (418,422 cyber tips), coinciding with the period of the Covid-19 pandemic.[44] Reports from the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and NGOs suggest that domestic violence within the home has also increased, with vulnerable children often confined at home with their abusers and limited access to traditional reporting mechanisms.[45]

3.7 Child protection context

The 2015 National Baseline Study on Violence against Children,[46] which contains the latest statistics of the prevalence of violence against Filipino children, reported a high level of violence against children during their childhood.

- 2 in 3 children reported as having experienced physical violence.
- 3 in 5 children were reported having experienced some form of psychological violence.
- 1 in 4 children reported suffering from some form of sexual violence.[47]

The Study noted the high prevalence of all forms of violence, including physical, psychological and sexual violence, as well as peer to peer violence, gender-based violence, cyber violence and collective violence. According to the National Baseline Survey 15.2 per cent of respondents reported having experienced all forms of physical, psychological and sexual violence in their childhood. Half of children (48.2 per cent) aged 13-17 had experienced both physical and psychological harm.[48]

Children in street situations and homeless children are particularly at risk of abuse, neglect and exploitation in the Philippines. An estimated 30,000 children are in street situations in Metro Manila and the National Capital Region (NCR), while nationwide, 250,000 street children are believed to be in

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[43] Save the Children Philippines. 9 February 2021. Online sexual abuse of children rising amid COVID-19 pandemic.
https://reliefweb.int/report/philippines/online-sexual-abuse-children-rising-amid-covid-19-pandemic-save-children

[44] UNICEF. The Child Rights Network and SaferKidsPH join the call for a safer and better internet for children and young people amid rising cases of online abuse and exploitation. 8 February 2021.
https://www.unicef.org/philippines/press-releases/child-rights-network-and-saferkidsph-join-call-safer-and-better-internet-children

[45] Council for the Welfare of Children. Quick Data of Children's Situation during the Covid-19 Pandemic. September 2020. P11/12. and Dignity: Danish Institute Against Torture. 24 May 2020. Children and youth in the Philippines at heightened risk of abuse under COVID-19 quarantine.
https://www.dignity.dk/en/nyheder/children-and-youth-in-the-philippines-at-heightened-risk-of-abuse-under-covid-19-quarantine/.

46 Council for the Welfare of Children, UNICEF. National Baseline Study on Violence against Children: Philippines, Executive Summary. 2016. Available at:
https://www.unicef.org/philippines/PHL_NBSVAC_Results_ES.pdf.

47 For further details of the prevalence of violence see UNICEF. 2018. A Situation Analysis of Children and Women in the Philippines. https://www.unicef.org/philippines/reports/situation-analysis-children-philippines

48 Council for the Welfare of Children, UNICEF. National Baseline Study on Violence against Children: Philippines, Executive Summary. 2016. P.9.Available at:
https://www.unicef.org/philippines/PHL_NBSVAC_Results_ES.pdf.

street situations.[49] Research suggests that these children are mainly boys aged between 7 and 16 years old.

Corporal Punishment

Public attitudes towards corporal punishment in the Philippines see it as being necessary and helpful; 57.2 per cent of respondents to the NBS-VAC reported that they became more resilient and stronger because of experiencing violence, and community leaders and teachers stated that without it, children would become disrespectful and unruly.[50] The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has raised concerns that corporal punishment is not explicitly prohibited in Philippine legislation. [51] Attempts have been made by Congress through the passage of the Positive Discipline Bill in December 2018 to prohibit corporal punishment. However, this Bill was vetoed by President Duterte on 23 February 2019[52].

Sexual Violence

The 2017 NDHS reported that five per cent of women ages 15-49 had experienced sexual violence at some point in their lifetime, with 2 per cent of women reporting that they first experienced sexual violence when they were under the age of 18.[53] This is a considerable drop from the same study in 2013 which found that 6.3 per cent of women aged 15–49 had experienced sexual violence.

According to the Philippines Child Protection Network, 68 per cent of cases of abuse reported to the Philippines General Hospital Child Protection Unit in 2018 were cases of sexual violence. Statistics from the Women and Children Protection Units for 2018 also shows that sexual violence against children is most often perpetrated in the home, by a neighbour or male relative. However, these statistics are likely to underestimate the widespread nature of sexual violence, as underreporting of sexual violence remains common due to persistent traditional attitudes. In particular, official statistics show that very few boys come forward to report sexual violence.[54]

Online sexual abuse and exploitation

Use of technology by children and young people in the Philippines is high, with more than 4 in 5 children using Facebook and a significant number having access to other platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, access to mobile phones and the internet.[55] This widespread use of technology comes with both benefits and risks to children. Concerningly, however, a recent study by UNICEF Philippines

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[49] Hope., Street Children at Risk. http://www.hope.org.ph/street-children-at-risk.html

50 Council for the Welfare of Children, UNICEF. National Baseline Study on Violence against Children: Philippines, Executive Summary. 2016. P. 17. Available at: https://www.unicef.org/philippines/PHL_NBSVAC_Results_ES.pdf.

51 United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Concluding observations - Philippines, CRC/C/PHL/CO/3-4. 22 October 2009.

[52] End Corporal Punishment. Philippines President vetoes Positive Discipline Bill. 5 March 2019. https://endcorporalpunishment.org/philippines-president-vetoes-positive-discipline-bill/

[53] Philippines Statistics Authority. 2017. National Demographic and Health Survey. p221. https://psa.gov.ph/content/psa-conducts-11th-ndhs-2017

[54] In 2018 only 289 boy children reported sexual violence to a Women and Children Protection Unit (WCPU), whilst 6,569 cases of sexual violence against girl children were reported. Child Protection Network. 2018. Annual Report 2018: Protecting the child from the many faces of abuse. p17.

[55] UNICEF Philippines., Philippines Kids Online, The Online Experiences of Children in the Philippines: Opportunities, Risks and Barriers, 2020. p46. https://www.unicef.org/philippines/media/2706/file/UNIPH-2021-PhilippinesKidsOnline-FullReport.pdf

found that half of children in the Philippines reported not feeling safe online, with more boys than girls reporting that they feel this way.[56]

The Philippines is the largest source of livestreamed sexual abuse of children globally, according to global law enforcement data.[57] A 2019 study by International Justice Mission (IJM) has found that rates of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC) have increased in recent years: increasing from 43 of every 10,000 internet protocol (IP) addresses being used for child sexual exploitation in 2014, to 149 of every 10,000 IP addresses in 2017.[58] According to UNICEF Philippines, OSAEC remains a highly gendered crime in the Philippines with the majority of OSAEC victims being girls.[59] However, increasing numbers of boys are being targeted as victims of OSAEC. The same report notes that victims of OSEC are "getting younger" with victims ranging in age from 18 months to 17 years old.[60] Online sexual abuse has also drastically increased due to the financial pressures on families exacerbated by Covid-19, with the Department of Justice and the OOC reporting an exponential increase of 260 per cent.[61]

Gender based violence and child marriage

Under Republic Act 9262, the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act of 2004, violence against women and children is a crime and the Act penalises all forms of abuse and violence within the family and intimate relationships.[62] However, according to a 2017 survey on violence against women by the Philippines NDHS, one in four (26 per cent) ever-married women aged 15-49 had ever experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence by their husband or partner.[63]

The NGO Girls Not Brides estimates that 17 per cent of Filipino girls are married before the age of 18.[64] Although the marriage age is set at 18 by Articles 5 and 14 of the Family Code, and a marriage is only valid under the Family Code if it is consensual, there are few effective penalties relating to early or forced marriage.[65] Furthermore, the Family Code conflicts with the Code of Muslim Personal Laws and indigenous peoples' customary laws which permit marriage under the age of 18. Additionally, the

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[56] UNICEF Philippines., Philippines Kids Online, The Online Experiences of Children in the Philippines: Opportunities, Risks and Barriers, 2020. p46. https://www.unicef.org/philippines/media/2706/file/UNIPH-2021-PhilippinesKidsOnline-FullReport.pdf

[57] International Justice Mission. (2020). Online Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Philippines: Analysis and Recommendations for Governments, Industry, and Civil Society. p60.

[58] International Justice Mission. (2020). Online Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Philippines: Analysis and Recommendations for Governments, Industry, and Civil Society. p45.

[59] Tarojja, M. C. H., et al., National Study on Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines. UNICEF Philippines, 2020. p28. https://www.unicef.org/philippines/media/2711/file/UNIPH-2021-NationalStudyOSAEC-FullReport.pdf

[60] Tarojja, M. C. H., et al., National Study on Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines. UNICEF Philippines, 2020. p28. https://www.unicef.org/philippines/media/2711/file/UNIPH-2021-NationalStudyOSAEC-FullReport.pdf

61 SaferKidsPH. What is Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children? https://www.saferkidsph.org/learn-about-osaec

62 Philippine Commission on Women. Republic Act 9262: Anti-violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004. p.3. Available at: https://pcw.gov.ph/republic-act-9262-anti-violence-against-women-and-their-children-act-of-2004/ [8.3.21].

[63] Philippines Statistics Authority. National Demographic and Health Survey, 2017. p223. https://psa.gov.ph/content/psa-conducts-11th-ndhs-2017

[64] Girls Not Brides., Child Marriage Atlas – Philippines. Accessed 2 August 2020. https://atlas.girlsnotbrides.org/map/philippines

[65] Article 350 of the Penal Code in the Philippines provides a weak protective provision: that if one of the contracting parties to a marriage obtains the consent of the other by means of violence, intimidation or fraud, he shall be punished through a fine and/or Arresto Mayor (the lowest level of penalty for a criminal offence).

Philippines also has legal provisions that could be seen as condoning forced marriage. Article 344 of the Penal Code and Article 266-C of the Anti-Rape Law 1997 both provide that a subsequent valid marriage between the perpetrator and the offended party extinguishes the criminal action or the penalty for rape.[66] Further, under Articles 337 and 338 of the Penal Code the crimes of qualified and simple seduction require that in order for the crime of rape to have taken place the child aged between 12 and 18 years of age must be both female and a virgin. These criteria are discriminatory and implies that children are capable of consenting to sexual intercourse, which is contrary to the principles of the UNCRC.

Child labour

The United States Department of Labour's 2018 findings on the worst forms of child labour, estimated that 3.2 million children in the Philippines aged five to 17 were engaged in child labour, including approximately 3 million involved in hazardous work.[67] The majority of these were boys (62.9 per cent), and aged between 15 and 17 (53.2 per cent).[68]

Despite strong ratification of international treaties on child labour[69] and comprehensive national legislation that prohibits hazardous work for those aged under 18,[70] and sets the minimum age for full time work at 15 years old, child labour practices persist. The use of child labour is likely to have increased since the start of the pandemic, due to higher than normal levels of poverty. The Philippine Program Against Child Labour 2020 – 2022 Strategic Framework aimed at strengthening local National Councils Against Child Labour, improved and inclusive enforcement of anti-child labour laws at the national and local level; expanded access of child labourers and their families to education, health, child protection and decent work and improved generation, dissemination and use of knowledge on child labour amongst stakeholders and the general public.[71] It also establishes a national monitoring and evaluation framework on child labour.

Child Trafficking

The Philippines is known as a source, transit and destination country for domestic and cross border trafficking of women and children for sexual exploitation and forced labour.[72] The Philippines ratified the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, on child sale, child prostitution and child pornography in 2002. Following the ratification, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2003 (Republic Act 9208), was passed to address sexual exploitation and to incorporate the Optional Protocol. Protection was broadened by the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2012, which provides for more severe penalties for traffickers and decriminalises victims of trafficking. The

66 Anti-Rape Law (1997), Article 266-C.

[67] US Department of Labor. Department of Labor's 2018 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2018/ChildLaborReportBook.pdf

[68] Philippines Statistics Authority. 9 December 2015. Estimated Number of Working Children 5 to 17 Years Old Who Worked During The Past Week Was 3.3 Million. https://psa.gov.ph/content/estimated-number-working-children-5-17-years-old-who-worked-during-past-week-was-33-million.

[69] International Labour Organisation. Child Labour in the Philippines. https://www.ilo.org/manila/areasofwork/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm

70 The Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) has also issued Department Order No 4, which prohibits persons below 18 years old engaging in hazardous work.

[71] Republic of the Philippines Department of Labour and Employment. Philippines Program against Child Labour 2020-2022 Strategic Framework. https://bwsc.dole.gov.ph/programs-and-projects-submenu1/clpep/philippine-program-against-child-labor.html

72 US State Department. (2020). Trafficking in Persons Report. p408. https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-TIP-Report-Complete-062420-FINAL.pdf

Government established an Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking to monitor and oversee the strict implementation of these trafficking laws.

Despite these innovations, the CEDAW Committee noted in their Concluding Observations to the 7th and 8th Periodic Report by the Philippines Government in 2016 that the prevention of trafficking remained weak, and that the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2012 was not being effectively implemented.[73] Very similar comments were made by the Committee of Experts supervising the application of International Labour Standards (CEACR) in 2019. The Committee of Experts found the legal framework to be adequate, but implementation of those Laws very much less so.[74] According to the Philippines Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking 265 cases of child trafficking were recorded in 2019 and 168 cases were recorded in 2020. The majority of recorded cases involved female children (in 2021 80.2 per cent of cases involved female victims).

Birth Registration

The Law on Registry of Civil Status (Republic Act No. 3753), as amended, provides for birth registration. However, according to the Philippines Statistics Office, an estimated 7.5 million Filipinos have not had their birth registered.[75] For children, a lack of legal registration leaves them at risk of being made stateless, and prohibits them from accessing key public services, such as healthcare and education. Two major groups of children are vulnerable to being unregistered: persons of Indonesian decent in Southern Philippines and the indigenous Sama Bajau - a sea-thriving tribe which at present, can be found in almost all the major cities of the country. A Bill is currently sitting before Congress on civil registration and vital statistics which is intended to address the accessibility of birth registration.

3.8 Legal and policy framework for child protection

The Philippines ratified the UNCRC on 21 August 1990, the Optional Protocol to the CRC on sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, but has not yet ratified Optional Protocol 3, on a communications procedure. In addition to the CRC, the Philippines has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention against Torture, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). The Philippines has further ratified ILO Conventions 138 (the Minimum Age Convention 1983), and 189 (Domestic Workers Convention 2011) and has ratified and domesticated ILO Convention 182 (Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention 1999).[76]

Further protection is provided by national laws. Article 13 of the 1987 Philippines Constitution obligates Congress to "give highest priority to the enactment of measures that protect and enhance the right of all the people to human dignity, reduce social, economic, and political inequalities, and remove cultural inequities by equitably diffusing wealth and political power for the common good".[77]

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73 Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, Concluding Observations, CEDAW/C/PHL/CO 7-8, 25 July 2016, Para 28.

[74] International Labour Organisation. Observation (CEACR) – adopted 2019, published 109th ILC session (2021), https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:4012549:NO

75 Plan International. My birth certificate is not just a piece of paper. https://plan-international.org/case-studies/my-birth-certificate-not-just-piece-paper

[76] In Republic Act 9231: An Act Providing for the Elimination Of the Worst Forms of Child Labour and Affording Stronger Protection for the Working Child. The Department of Labour and Employment (DOLE) has also issued Department Order No 4, which prohibits persons below 18 years old engaging in hazardous work.

[77] Philippines Constitution (1987), Article 13, Section 1.

In addition, Article XV Section 3 of the Constitution, imposes upon the State the obligation to defend the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation and other conditions prejudicial to their development.

The Philippines has passed a wide range of domestic laws relating to the protection of children, including laws on family support; protection of children against abuse; exploitation and discrimination; birth registration; domestic violence and violence in schools; on street children, children in conflict with the law, child victims and witnesses, children with disabilities, protection against trafficking, children affected by migration and the involvement of children in armed conflict. Further legislation is being prepared and is before Parliament, particularly in relation to online sexual exploitation and cybercrime. While there are some gaps in the law, the issue lies not so much with the adequacy of the laws, but with their implementation. Further details on the legal framework are contained in Annex J.

3.8.1 Child protection

Section 2 of the Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act 1991[78] provides that it is the policy of the State to provide special protection to children from all forms of abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation and discrimination and other conditions prejudicial to their development and sets out penalties for the commission of such conduct. The Act defines children in need of special protection as including those:[79]

1. Being in a community where there is armed conflict or being affected by armed conflict-related activities;
2. Working under conditions hazardous to life, safety and morals which unduly interfere with their normal development;
3. Living in or fending for themselves in the streets of urban or rural areas without the care of parents or a guardian or any adult supervision needed for their welfare;
4. Being a member of an indigenous cultural community and/or living under conditions of extreme poverty or in an area which is undeveloped and/or lack or has inadequate access to basic services needed for a good quality of life;
5. Being a victim of a man-made or natural disaster calamity; or
6. Circumstances analogous to those above stated which endanger life, safety or normal development of children.

Although there are a comprehensive set of laws relating to child protection (see Annex J), these laws still need to be implemented fully. Apart from wide-ranging legislation, the Government has developed a number of different national plans. Following the publication of the UN General Assembly Special Session outcome document, 'A World Fit for Children,' the Government published the Philippine National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children, or 'Child 21', which sets out a vision for children's welfare and development up to the year 2025. Its goal is to build a 'child-sensitive' and 'child friendly' society. Following on from Child 21, the Filipino Child of the Millennium: National Plan of Action for Children 2005-2010 (the 1st National Plan of Action for Children) was developed to concretise the vision in Child 21 and provide a structure to deliver special protection to those children who required it. To complement the interventions in the 1st National Plan of Action, a Comprehensive Program on the Protection of Children was also developed jointly by the Department of Justice and the Department of Social Welfare and Development. The policy envisaged the local government units as the body responsible for the delivery of child protection programmes. A 2nd

78 Republic Act No. 7610, as amended by Republic Act 9231, 2003.
79 Republic Act No. 7610, Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act 1997 as amended by Republic Act 9231, 2003, Section 3.

National Plan of Action for Children covering 2012-2017 built on the work of the first action plan in planning how the country would meet the Millennium Development Goals.

The 3rd National Plan of Action for Children covering 2017-2022 and the 3rd Comprehensive Program on the Protection of Children 2019-2022 followed. The 3rd National Plan focuses on children's rights under the UNCRC, with a clear focus on rights to improve the quality and standard of life for children, secure their rights to survival and development, protection and participation.[80] They are largely replaced by the Philippine Plan of Action to end Violence against Children (PPAeVAC) 2017-2022, the purpose of which is to provide a multi-sectoral road map designed for the progressive reduction of violence against children over the period of the Plan, and to translate the findings of the 2015 National Baseline Study on Violence against Children into action. The PPAeVAC identifies key strategies to address violence against children, which will be implemented over the 5 years of the Plan.

3.8.2 Children in conflict with the law

The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act 2006 (RA 9344) (as amended by RA 10630) established a comprehensive restorative juvenile justice system in the Philippines. It provides for the protection of the rights of children in conflict with the law (CICL); promotes the use of diversion from formal judicial proceedings; has rehabilitation and reintegration of children as its underlying philosophy and makes detention of a child in conflict with the law a matter of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. Its provisions are consistent with international standards.

The Act created a Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC), initially under the DOJ but now headed by the DSWD, as an inter-agency body, responsible for coordinating the implementation of the juvenile justice system as set out in the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act. The mission of the Council is to institutionalise the restorative justice and welfare system for children at risk and children in conflict with the law through effective implementation of the law and the coordination of stakeholders.[81] The membership of the Council is set out in the Act and includes the various departments and agencies of government as well as NGOs who play a part in juvenile justice.

The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council has issued Rules and Regulations implementing the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act[82] consisting of Guidelines and Procedures on the Management of Children at Risk and Children in Conflict with the Law; the PNP National Police Manual on Handling and Treatment of Children at Risk and Children in Conflict with the Law; the Department of the Interior and Local Government Guidelines for the LGUs on the development of Comprehensive Local Juvenile Intervention programs and the Barangay Protocol in Managing Cases of Children in Conflict with the Law.[83]

Overall, the implementation of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act has been challenging and has faced challenges efficiency and coordination challenges since it was passed in 2006.[84] An evaluation of intervention and diversion programs for CICLs[85] in 2015, found that there were several obstacles to ensuring that children had access to interventions and diversion programmes in the manner intended

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[80] Council for the Welfare of Children. 3rd National Plan of Action for Children (2017-2022). 2018.

81 The various tasks allocated to the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council are set out in section 9 of the Act.

82 Justice and Welfare Council, Resolution No 4.

[83] Published by the Juvenile Justice Welfare Council issued through DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2017-43, March 9, 2017, and endorsed by the JJWC.

[84] CRC Coalition. NGO Alternative Report: Still in the Sidelines, Children's Rights in the Philippines 2009-2019. para. 228, https://www.csc-crc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CRC-COALITION_FINAL-NGO-ALTERNATIVE-REPORT.pdf

85 Yang, S. X. (2015). Evaluation of the Intervention and Rehabilitation Program in Residential Facilities and Diversion Progams for Children in Conflict with the Law, Universalia.

by the Act. These included delay in bring children to trial, which resulted in children staying for long periods of time in pre-trial detention institutions before being admitted into diversion programs; a lack of developed and available intervention programmes for CICLs; a lack of capacity on the part of juvenile justice actors and the weak commitment of the LGUs on whom the responsibility (and cost) of providing intervention and diversion programmes lies. It has also been found, in an audit of Family Court cases, that diversion has not been utilised as an effective mechanism for the child's rehabilitation and integration in society.[86] There is little evidence available to indicate whether the use of diversion has increased to any significant degree in the intervening years.

Despite the fact that the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act provides that the child has a right to have restrictions on his or her personal liberty kept to a minimum, detention of children, including children under the minimum age of criminal responsibility and administrative detention of children (i.e., without a court order) remains an issue. In January 2016 spot inspections at four detention centres in Manila were carried out.[87] Numerous children were found to have been detained, some of them for up to 21 months, in overcrowded cells and in squalid conditions.[88] The Committee against Torture has also expressed concern that children are arrested without warrant, while the UPR of the Philippines in 2017 noted that children are kept in pre-trial detention for an excessive length of time.[89] It would appear from the data that a very low number of these cases results in the prosecution and conviction of the child, which raises the issue of whether deprivation of liberty was a matter of last resort.[90] In addition to these issues, the Commission on Human Rights in reporting to the Senate Committee on Justice in 2018 noted that hundreds of children were still detained with adult offenders in deplorable and congested prisons.[91]

The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act 2006 raised the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 9 to 15. However, a child who is aged 12–15 and who commits a serious offence will be deemed to be a neglected child and must be placed in a *Bahay Pag-asa*, or an Intensive Juvenile Intervention and Support Centre.[92] Public opinion has been sharply divided on the issue on the minimum age of criminal responsibility and attempts were made in 2020 to introduce a Bill before Congress which would reduce the minimum age to 9 years old once more.[93] The UN Committee Against Torture expressed concern

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86 UNICEF Situational Analysis of the Family Courts, unpublished.

87 These were carried out at the request of the Social Welfare Secretary following reports in the foreign media. The inspection team included senior representatives of the DSWD-Standards Bureau, DSWD – Protective Services Bureau, the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council National Secretariat and the Regional Juvenile Justice Council and the Representative of the Commission on Human Rights. See Preda Foundation, 'What Philippine Officials Found in Child Detention Centers'. January 15, 2016.

88 The inspection also found that no education or activity was offered, other than cleaning and food preparation and some children were kept in their cells 24 hours of the day with limited daylight. Older children were mixed with younger children, some below the age of criminal responsibility. Many children had no form of identification and no papers concerning their detention.

89 United Nations Human Rights Council, Universal Periodic Review - Compilation on the Philippines - Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. A/HRC/WG.6/27/PHL, 2017. The comments with respect to pre-trial detention are not exclusively relevant to children and there is no available data on the length of time that children are held in pre-trial detention.

90 United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. Concluding observations - Philippines, CRC/C/PHL/CO/3-4. 22 October 2009, para 40.

91 CRC Coalition. NGO Alternative Report: Still in the Sidelines, Children's Rights in the Philippines 2009-2019. para. 228, https://www.csc-crc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CRC-COALITION_FINAL-NGO-ALTERNATIVE-REPORT.pdf

92 Serious offences include homicide, rape or robbery, or any other offence punishable by more than 12 years' imprisonment.

93UNICEF Philippines. 27 September 2018. UNICEF: do not lower minimum age of criminal responsibility.

at the move, and instructed the Philippines to withdraw the Bill (No. 922) from consideration by Congress.[94] UNICEF has also stated their reservations to the proposed changes, stating that lowering the minimum age of criminal responsibility would be contrary to General Comment No. 24 of the UNCRC which states that "under no circumstances reduce the minimum age of criminal responsibility."

3.9 Child protection structure

The child protection system in the Philippines is coordinated by the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), created by the Child and Youth Welfare Code 1974. It is the focal inter-agency body of the Philippines on child welfare and is chaired by the DSWD, who are the central duty bearer responsible for child protection. The role of the Council for the Welfare of Children includes:

- Integration of children's development agenda in national and local development plans;
- Putting in place a fully operational and highly effective management information system, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for national plans of action and the implementation of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and other international conventions as well as resource bank on children;
- Heighten advocacy and social mobilization for an effective and wide scale implementation of the UNCRC within the Philippine social and cultural context; and
- Legislative and policy review and revisions to harmonize national and local laws with CRC and other international conventions.[95]

Underneath the Council are the Regional Committee/Subcommittees for the Welfare of Children, which guide the development and implementation of CWC policy and directives under the guidance of the National Child Protection Working Group (NCPWG).[96] Below them sits the Provincial, municipal and city local child protection councils and, at the lowest level, the barangay child protection councils who are responsible under Article 87 of Presidential Decree No. 603 for coordinating with the CWC on developing and implementing plans for the promotion of child and youth welfare.[97]

The Municipal and City Councils for Child Protection through their mandate set out in Republic Act 9344 and Presidential Decree 603 have responsibility as duty bearers for policy making and planning for child protection services as well as implementation of those social services and child protection programs,[98] as well as for preparing the annual work and financial plan; coordinating stakeholders; maintaining a database on children in their area; advocating for the establishment and maintenance of playgrounds, day care centres and other facilities; assisting children in need of special protection and referring cases filed against child abusers to proper agencies and institutions; provision of capacity building programmes for those working with children; documenting best barangay practices etc.[99]

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https://www.unicef.org/philippines/press-releases/unicef-do-not-lower-minimum-age-criminal-responsibility#:~:text=The%20Philippines%2C%20in%20line%20with,responsibility%20from%20nine%20to%2015.

94 Committee Against Torture, Concluding Observations, CAT/C/PHL/CO/3, 2 June 2016, Paras. 41 and 42b.

95 Council for the Welfare of Children, 'Thrusts and priorities,' cwc.gov.ph.

96 Republic Act 10821. Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act. Section 2. 2016.

97 Presidential Decree No. 603. Child and Youth Welfare Code. Article. 87. 1974.

98 Arce C., Improving National and Local Systems and Capacities Towards Better Child Protection in the Philippines, PLPCD Briefing, UNICEF, July 2016, p7.

99 DILG Memorandum Circular 2002-121 (Revised Guidelines on the Organization and Strengthening of the LCPC Incorporating Thereat Early Childhood Care and Development Coordinating Committees at the Provincial,

At the Provincial level the Councils for Child Protection support this work undertaken at the Municipal and City level whilst also providing technical advice and supervisory support requested by Municipal and City Councils for Child Protection.

The role of the barangay child protection council is set out in Article 87 of the Child and Youth Welfare Code (PD 603), reflecting a wide scope of functions. One part of its remit is to protect, and assist abandoned or maltreated children which generally involves reporting alleged cases to the social worker in the LGU. Not all barangays have functional local child protection councils, and even where they do, they often lack resources for the protection of children, limiting the work that they do.[100] Some barangays have existing organizational structures but lack operational activities focused on the protection of children.

In addition to the CWC, the Committee for the Special Protection of Children was created following the passing of the Special Protection of Children against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act 1997 (Republic Act 7610). It is formally managed by the Department of Justice who is principally responsible for coordinating and monitoring the investigation and prosecution of cases involving violations of Republic Act 7610 and other child-related criminal laws. Executive Order No. 275 sets out the responsibilities of the body (as amended by Executive Order No53 series of 2011).

The management of child abuse is seen as multi-sectoral and efforts have been made to standardise this through the DOJ-CSPC-led Case Management Protocol, and surfaces in competency-building programmes such child-oriented curricula of the Philippine Judicial Academy. It is comprised of national and local government agencies, NGOs and FBOs, and multi-disciplinary professionals, including the police, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, social workers, doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists, barangay officials and others working together as a team to provide appropriate protection, legal and social services to a child victim of abuse, neglect and exploitation. It is up to the LGUs social worker to coordinate this multi-sectoral team.

In addition to the CWC and the Committee on the Special Protection of Children (which is not as active as the CWC), there are several other active bodies involved in child protection: the Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography (IACACP); the Inter-Agency Council for Children in Situations of Armed Conflict; the Inter-Agency Council Against Violence Against Women and Their Children; the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking and the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council. Lastly the National Council on Disability Affairs is the national government body mandated to formulate disability policy and coordinate the activities of all relevant agencies. Please see diagram of all agency bodies involved in child protection in Annex I.

The Department for Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is mandated by the law to develop, implement, and coordinate comprehensive social welfare programs designed to uplift the living conditions and empower the disadvantaged children, youth, women, older persons, person with disabilities, families in crisis or at-risk and communities needing assistance. It is also the primary agency who oversee, monitor and provide technical assistance and resource augmentation to social welfare and development programs at all levels through its regional field offices to other national

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City, Municipality, and Barangay Levels). See also Guidelines in Monitoring the Functionality of the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) at all Levels and for Other Purposes. DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2005-07. Manila: DILG; Revised Guidelines in Monitoring the Functionality of the Local Council for the Protection of Children (LCPC) at all Levels and for Other Purposes. DILG Memorandum Circular No. 2008-126. Manila.

100 UNICEF. 2016. Strengthening Child Protection systems in the Philippines: Child Protection in Emergencies, p51. http://www.socialserviceworkforce.org/resources/strengthening-child-protection-systems-philippines-child-protection-emergencies.

government agonies, local government units (LGUs), non-government organizations and people's organization and members of the civil society.

Consistent with the local autonomy and decentralization stipulated by the Local Government Code of 1991 (RA 7160), the provision for the delivery of basic services and facilities shall be devolved from the national government to provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays. The LGUs are given additional responsibility and resources to develop a stronger and more accessible local government structure. Hence at the local level, the Provincial/City/Municipal Social Welfare and Development offices are established (P/C/MSWDOs) as frontline service providers of social welfare programs and services.

4. OBJECT OF THE EVALUATION

4.1 2017-2020 Child Protection Program, programme extension and results framework

This evaluation covers the UNICEF Philippines child protection work from 2017 to 2020, which occurred under two different country programme cycles as a result of the 2012 -2016 UNICEF Country Programme being extended for a further two years to cover the years 2017-2018. The reasons for the extension were to allow for better alignment with the Government's Philippines Development Plan, to take into account the impact of the 2016 national elections on country programme planning and to enable UNICEF to accelerate and sustain the results agreed upon in the 2012-2016 CPD that were impacted by Typhoon Haiyan.[101] The Evaluation also covers 2019 and 2020 under the new Philippines Country Programme.

The seven-year UNICEF Child Protection Programme (2012-2016 and 2017-2018) was substantial in both size and scope covering the whole of the Philippines, including the newly autonomous region of BARMM. The two stated programme outcomes[102] were that: "*By 2016, improved national and local level public sector institutional gender sensitive framework in place enabling improved access to well-coordinated child protection services for the most vulnerable in at least 5 disadvantaged LGUs."*[103] The outcome was designed to improve monitoring and knowledge management on child protection, by the development of a Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) and to increase and enhance the awareness and capacity of local governments and communities to prevent and respond to abuse, exploitation and violence against children. The second outcome was that: "*By 2016, an improved and inclusive peace conditions and social service delivery achieved through conflict analysis, integration of child rights violations information and peace initiatives (UNICEF Action Plans with conflict parties on child soldiers) in national and local plans especially for conflict affected LGUs*". In part, this outcome was designed to ensure the functioning of systems to prevent and respond to grave violations of child rights in situations of armed conflict (MRM).[104]

The five-year UNICEF Philippines Child Protection Programme (2019-2023) is also substantial in size and scope. It is designed to support the Government of the Philippines (GPH) to address systemic and complex child protection violations in both development and humanitarian settings. Its outcome is that: "*By 2023, more children and adolescents, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from more effective, quality, gender-sensitive, preventive, and responsive child protection system, and live in communities that better protect children from violence.*" It is anchored in the Philippine Development Plan (2019-2023) and its corresponding commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Its planned budget for the duration of the programmes was US$ 112,180,00 with an actual budget ceiling of USD 1,952.303.00 for both 2017 and 2018.[105] the estimated indicative budget for Outcome 3, Children and Adolescents Live in a Protection Environment (child protection and access to justice), was $20,160,000 of which US$ 2,260,000 was estimated as being available from Regular Resources and US$ 17,900,000 expected to be mobilised from international and national resources.

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[101] Typhoon Haiyan, also known as Super Typhoon Yolanda, struck the Philippines on 8 November 2013, as a Category 5 storm. It created a humanitarian disaster, particularly in Visayas group of islands, home to 17 million people.

[102] The terms 'outcome(s)' and 'output(s)' are used in the narrative (but not the matrixes) to encompass 'programme component result(s)' and 'intermediate result(s)' which were the terms used when the Philippines designed the 2012-2016 country programme.

[103] UNICEF Philippines, 'Country Programme Action Plan 2012-2016', March 2012. P. 39.

[104] Ibid, p35.

[105] Information provided by UNICEF.

Both programmes take a systems-strengthening approach with the aim of effecting legislative and policy reform, strengthening child protection systems, particularly as a means of improving child protection and welfare service delivery for the most vulnerable, including children affected by violence and armed conflict, and supporting behaviour and social change.

More information on the programme objectives can be found in Annex K.

4.2 Programme beneficiaries and stakeholders

The primary beneficiaries of the Child Protection Programme 2012-2018 and 2019-2023 are rights holders, including boys and girls and male and female adolescents who are at risk of or have experienced any form of violence: either online or offline; children in conflict with the law; children and adolescents affected by armed conflict and disasters in Mindanao and adolescents advocating for legislative changes. Mothers, fathers and other caregivers, particularly those targeted or reached through parenting support interventions and efforts to influence are also beneficiaries. Other beneficiaries include community members and staff of child protection services, including social welfare actors, the police, the judiciary, and health care workers.

The Child Protection Programme collaborates with a diverse range of government and civil society partners at a national, regional and local government unit levels (for a full list, see Appendix N) to advance the protection of children from harm. At the national level, the DSWD is the lead agency for child protection. In BARMM, this function is carried out by the Ministry of Social Services and Development (MSSD).

The Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) plays a critical role in VAC as does the BARRM Regional CWC. The Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC) is also a major partner in the area of children's access to justice, especially in relation to implementation of the recommendations of the 2016 Evaluation of the Children in Conflict with the Law. Additionally, the Commission on Human Rights of the Philippines is also a major partner in advocating for children's rights. Other partners include the BARRM Regional Government and local government units in the provinces, cities and municipalities in which the Child Protection Programme operates as well as NGOs and civil society organisations who are part of the broader child protection sector.

UNICEF partners with other international development organisations across the broad child protection and international development sector, covering donors, fellow UN agencies, academia, research and policy think tanks. For a full list, see Appendix N. Description of interventions

COVID-19 and child protection

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, children around the world are facing an increased risk of abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect that are unprecedented in their global reach. Evidence from this pandemic, as well as from previous infectious disease outbreaks such as Ebola, shows that in these situations existing child protection risks are exacerbated, and new ones emerge, from both the disease and from the prevention and control measures put in place to contain it.[106]

The closure of schools and childcare facilities, increased caregiver stress, and crowded living spaces where families are confined, are contributing to children's heightened risk of violence, neglect, and exploitation. Further, some children are experiencing the death of their caregiver while others are being separated from their families for multiple reasons, including COVID-19 related public health containment measures. As these risks are often hidden within communities, it can become even more

[106] UNICEF, 'Access to Justice for Children in the era of Covid-19: Lessons from the Field', New York, 2020. P 7-8. https://www.unicef.org/media/92261/file/Access-to-Justice-COVID-19-Learning-Brief-2021.pdf.

difficult to identify vulnerable children without home visits or other forms of follow-up by caseworkers under COVID-19-related social distancing measures. Children's sources of support outside of the family, including child protective services, health services and school, are likely to continue to be out of reach for extended periods of time.

In the programme area of justice for children, COVID-19 has left rights holders more vulnerable to neglect, abuse and violence, including gender-based violence (GBV), as a result of staffing levels or the provision of care being negatively impacted by the pandemic or containment measures. Children often spent longer periods of time in detention due to court processes being completely stopped or slowed down as a result of the pandemic. This includes children detained for violations of curfew and movement restriction orders. Children in detention facilities often have inadequate access to clean water and sanitation, nutrition and medical care. These conditions are highly conducive to the spread of diseases like COVID-19, placing children at heightened risk of infection.[107]

Against this backdrop, UNICEF country offices in collaborating with governments and other partners have adapted their programme interventions and introduced new interventions to address the impact of COVID-19 on children.

The GPH and UNICEF adaptations to the child protection programme as well as the introduction of new interventions have been extensive. This included upstream adaptation through the provision of technical support to the JJWC in Business Continuity Planning to enable continued service delivery in the context of lockdowns. Another noteworthy adaptation was in the delivery of the parenting programme (Ma-Pa). This entailed using digital platforms such as Viber for the Ma-Pa in the Electronic Family Development Sessions of the 4Ps Programme. A component included the dissemination of information on child protection, parenting and MHPSS through digital and other platforms reaching over 700,000 individuals.

Other significant adaptations included:

- Digitalization of core elements of the case management processes for the Women and Children Protection Units. This included the introduction of tele medicine/tele consultations to ensure the provision of integrated medical, psychological, legal and social services to child victims;
- Convening a series of capacity building programmes for Government and CSOs personnel on various aspects of child protection and MHPSS and conducting a baseline survey in the city of Valenzuela to specifically measure the prevalence of VAC during containment measures;
- Scaling up support to Child Helplines to facilitate child-sensitive reporting, including through chat-box functions;
- Conducing a Rapid Assessment of Child Protection cases and the drafting of the NCPWG Health, Nutrition and Child Protection Referral Pathway for COVID-19 Emergency;
- Consultations with children in UNICEF focus areas were conducted about their needs and situation during the pandemic and this resulted in the development of a workbook for children addressing their mental health and on health safety protocols;
- Increased efforts to support the implementation of the National Response Plan on OSAEC in collaboration with IACACP; and
- Training of 77 Social Workers nation-wide on child protection and case management to ensure the continuation of services during COVID-19.

[107] UNICEF, 'Access to Justice for Children in the era of Covid-19: Lessons from the Field', New York, 2020. P 9. https://www.unicef.org/media/92261/file/Access-to-Justice-COVID-19-Learning-Brief-2021.pdf

Brief description of interventions

UNICEF Philippines has focused on delivering results in several programme areas covering child protection legislation and policy, child protection systems and VAC, social change to end VAC, parenting support, and children affected by conflict in BARMM and other locations. In 2020, UNICEF scaled-up service delivery efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic - an area of programming which was largely absent in the Country Programme. Preventing and responding to VAC is a cross cutting themes across all six outputs, in both humanitarian and development contexts.

For the 2012-2018, the strategic focus of the Child Protection Programme was to improve national and local public sector institutional frameworks based on the assumption that this approach would increase access to well-coordinated child protection services for the most vulnerable children in at least five disadvantaged LGUs. The number of LGUs was increased to ten with the extension of the country programme from 2017-2018. The specific focus of the programme was to provide policy advice, technical assistance and targeted advocacy to address violence against children, including increasing evidence to address online sexual exploitation. For children affected by armed conflict, the priorities were to prevent child recruitment and support disengaged children.

A major child protection intervention entailed expanding support for parenting education through the Pantawid Pamilya (4Ps) conditional cash transfer programme.

For 2019-2023, the strategic focus of the Child Protection Programme is to support the strengthening of the legal and regulatory child protection framework. Priorities include coordination of the child protection system at national and local levels, and across government departments, with a focus on addressing social norms that encourage and condone VAC. A heightened priority for this country programme is the provision of upstream policy work and strengthening of regional and provincial structures for improved financing and delivery of child protection services. To address social norms that encourage and condone VAC, and as a means for promoting VAC prevention and response, the Child Protection Programme is supporting the design of an evidence-based parenting support interventions. This has included a number of social and behaviour change interventions to disseminate accurate information on child protection risks and services.

The headings used below correspond with the six outputs of the current country programme and are broadly aligned with the focus of the programme for 2012-2018.

Child Protection legislation and policy

Advocacy for an improved legislative and policy enabling environment for children vulnerable to harm is central to UNICEF's work in child protection globally and in the Philippines.

For the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme, output 3.1 is designed to ensure that the legislative and institutional framework is strengthened to better protect girls and boys vulnerable and exposed to violence, abuse, exploitation, and harmful gender norms.

For 2020, the Child Protection Programme reported that the output was on track despite the impact of COVID-19.[108] Specifically, the enabling environment was strengthened through the formulation of new child protection policies and legislative reforms. UNICEF's work in policy and legislative advocacy led to the formulation of new child protection policies for the Philippine National Police, the Department of Information and Communications Technology, the Department of Health's Women and Children Protection Programme, and the Department for Education. Engagement with lawmakers contributed to the approval of a draft law to increase the minimum age of statutory rape from 12 to

[108] UNICEF Philippines, 'RAM Report: Output: 3420/A0/06/003/001 Child Protection Policy and Legislation', 2021.

16 and the drafting of the first Magna Carta of Children. UNICEF is providing ongoing support for the development of the Implementing Rules and Regulations of the Family Courts Act.

The two main child protection change strategies deployed to deliver this stream of work are strengthening partnerships; and support for legal and policy reforms.

To deliver this area of work, the Child Protection Programme collaborates with multi partners in the public and private sectors. This includes the Council for the Welfare of Children; Philippine National Police; Department of Education; Department of Information and Communications Technology; UNICEF also nurtured an ongoing dialogue with Congress as part of its advocacy efforts for increasing the minimum age of statutory rape from 12 to 16 years and on the introduction of a Magna Carta of Children.

Children in conflict with the law

For the 2012-2018 Child Protection Programme, the work around justice for children focussed primarily on data collection and monitoring the situation of children, as part of a larger effort to support partners to design and operate a Child Protection Information Management System. Support for the implementation of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act 2006,[109] including alternatives to detention was limited.

The context for prioritising children's access to justice in the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme, was the findings of an evaluation on the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Law.[110] This confirmed that implementation of the Law, including significant aspects of the law such as rehabilitation and diversion programmes, was weak and inconsistent. The reach of diversion programmes was found to be limited to a few municipalities and cities, while court-led diversion designed to provide alternatives to detention was not being applied. A further challenge related to the minimum age of criminal responsibility. This is set at 15 in the Philippines,[111] but there was a move to lower the age to 9 or 12 years as legislators attributed increasing criminality amongst young people to the law's perceived leniency.

Given these findings, the Child Protection Programme is scaling up its investments to ensure that the justice sector has the capacity to implement the Juvenile Justice Law within a child friendly framework. This includes ensuring that girls and boys in contact with justice and administrative bodies have access to diversion programmes as alternatives to being given custodial sentences.

The three main child protection change strategies deployed to deliver this output were strengthening partnerships; support for legal and policy reforms; and increasing access to justice for children. The primary partners for this aspect of the Child Protection Programme are the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC), the Philippine National Police, the Commission on Human Rights and the Judiciary via the Philippine Judicial Academy and the Child Rights Network. The three main child protection change strategies deployed to deliver this output were strengthening partnerships; support for legal and policy reforms; and increasing access to justice for children.

Violence against children

[109] Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, 2006.
[110] Bilog Freddy E, Implementation of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006 (RA 9344): Inputs to Policy Amendments. Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, Vol. 2, No. 3, June 2014. http://research.lpubatangas.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/APJMR-Implementation-of-the-Juvenile-Justice.pdf
[111] Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, 2006, p 9.

The Child Protection Programme had adopted a broad definition of VAC in recognition that many children in the Philippines experience poly-victimization, which means more than one type of violence. Children often experience both violence at school and violence in the home. They can also face bullying from other children and be sexually abused and exploited in their communities and online. Children in conflict situations are particularly vulnerable to experiencing multiple forms of violence.

As noted earlier, preventing and responding to VAC is a cross cutting theme across all six outputs of the current programme, in both humanitarian and development contexts. However, the work on VAC is primarily delivered through output 3.1. A central aspect of this work is supporting government and other partners to implement the PPAeVAC. This includes the provision of technical and financial support to expand the number of national agencies with costed plans to prevent and respond to VAC, as well as the localization of the PPAeVAC in targeted LGUs, with the CWC being supported to coordinate and monitor the multi-sectoral response to VAC. With the Philippines being a Pathfinder[112] country, these efforts are designed, in part, to ensure that ensue that VAC programmes are aligned with *'INSPIRE: Seven strategies to end violence against children.*[113] A related priority is the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation frameworks so that they can measure results, including core indicators that ensure inclusivity (of children with disabilities, LGBTI+ children and indigenous children) and capture gender dimensions, in the implementation of the PPAeVAC.

Key activities and results for 2020 included supporting the enhancement of a nationwide network of Women and Children Protection Units, which are an integrated service delivery model (One Stop Centres), in 8 cities and 25 hotspot areas, to facilitate access to multi-disciplinary services, including through telemedicine for child victims of crime and in the context of COVID-19 related restrictions on and lockdowns. A total of 47 Barangay Violence against Women and Children Desk Officers were trained on Identification and Frontline Case Management. To support this work, new triage approaches and reception/intake for patients were set up to prevent the risk of COVID-19 infections. This included a child helpline which serves as an online triage and referral system. In addition, scale-up plans with three regions with high reported incidence of VAC are currently being rolled-out, with three Women and Children Protection Units having developed localised models for implementing tele consultations based on their context and needs.

The main child protection change strategy deployed to deliver this area of work was to support the development of strategies that strengthen the national commitments to a multisectoral response to VAC.

Online child sexual abuse and exploitation

The context for the inclusion of online child sexual abuse and exploitation in the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme is the high rates of cases reported to the DOJ's Office of Cybercrimes (OOC) relating to the online sexual exploitation of children. The Philippines is ranked amongst the top 10 countries for online sexual exploitation of children.[114]

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[112] The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children promotes the concept of Pathfinding which aims to raise awareness, stimulate leadership commitment, galvanize action, and establish a standard of national violence prevention throughout the world. Currently, 30 countries have joined the partnership as Pathfinders. https://www.end-violence.org/pathfinding-countries

[113] Inspire identifies a select group of strategies that have shown success in reducing violence against children. They are: Implementation and enforcement of laws; Norms and values; Safe environments; Parent and caregiver support; Income and economic strengthening; Response and support services; and Education and life skills. World Health Organisation, Inspire: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire-package/en/

[114] UNICEF Philippines. (2018) Programme Strategy Note for UNICEF Philippines 2019-2023. p 69.

As a result of demonstrated technical expertise and leadership over several years, the Child Protection Programme successfully mobilised resources for an innovative partnership model for protecting children online. The SaferKidsPH programme is a six-year initiative delivered by the consortium led by UNICEF with Save the Children and The Asia Foundation and supported by the Australian Government. It is designed to reduce online sexual abuse and exploitation of children in the Philippines by enhancing the child protection system. It includes strengthening investigation, prosecution and adjudication of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) cases and increasing access to protection and better quality of services for victims. SaferKidsPH has established ongoing partnerships with telecommunication companies and is working with Facebook, Google, Twitter and TikTok to advocate for policies and practices to promote and ensure online safety for children. In 2020, in partnership with the Child Rights Network, UNICEF conducted a 10-day campaign to end child trafficking, linking such call for accountability with its programme priority of ending child online sexual abuse and exploitation.

UNICEF has been able to respond to COVID-19 by significantly scaling-up information dissemination activities through campaigns and engagement with the private sector. UNICEF is also developing policy briefs for Congress to influence legislative reforms on OSAEC and coordinating with the Department of Information and Communication Technology in the implementation of a Child Online Safeguarding Policy.

Child protection system strengthening for violence against children (VAC)

For the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme, output 3.2 is designed to ensure that the Child Protection system has strengthened capacity to deliver local, multi-sectoral, gender/conflict/culturally sensitive and child focused programs that prevent and respond to VAC. This entails supporting LGUs to include child justice and VAC related interventions in local development investment plans and expanding the number LGUs with at least the minimum ratio of child-centred social workers with capacity to provide gender-responsive child and family social services.

For 2020, the Child Protection Programme reported that implementation of this output was constrained, primarily due to COVID-19 and the need to adapt approaches to ensure continuity of service delivery for children and families who were not able to access face-to-face services.

Overall, the Child Protection Programme reported[115] that positive progress has been made in migrating the case management system to a digital electronic platform. The longer- term vision is to align the system with the Primero CPIMS,[116] and Gender based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS), commencing in 2021.

The main child protection change strategies deployed to deliver this output are to enhance the planning and delivery of childcare services with a particular focus on family strengthening programmes and the enhancement of cash transfer schemes with social case management.

To deliver this output, the Child Protection Programme collaborated with a range of agencies including DSWD and the Child Protection Network. UNFPA is a major partner for developing a digital case management system.

[115] UNICEF Philippines, 'RAM Report: Output: 3420/A0/06/003/002 Child Welfare Systems', 2021.

[116] Primero is an open-source software platform that helps social services, humanitarian and development workers manage protection-related data, with tools that facilitate case management, incident monitoring and family tracing and reunification. It was developed by UNICEF and partners at the global level.

Social change to end VAC

For the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme, output 3.3 is designed to ensure that the Filipino public are more informed and equipped to engage Government and to call for its commitment and action to eliminate all forms of violence against children. This entails engaging communities to declare their support for efforts to eliminate corporal punishment and sexual violence against children. This includes mobilising children and youth through online and offline platforms in efforts to end violence in the community.

For 2020, the Child Protection Programme reported that the output is on track and provided the following examples of progress.[117] Specifically, more than 750,000 individuals were reached through information disseminated on VAC prevention and access to services, using online and offline platforms. In addition, the Child Protection Programme invested in building the capacity of partners on Communication for Development (C4D) programming, while youth members were mobilized to document their experiences during the pandemic as well as to engage in youth-led calls to end VAC.

UNICEF is providing technical support to the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) in the drafting of the Advocacy and Communication Strategy to support the implementation of the PPAeVAC. The plan was approved by the CWC Board in June 2021. As part of this initiative and in collaboration with the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council and the Commission on Human Rights, UNICEF is strengthening local capacity in Communication for Development (C4D), Risk Communication and Community Engagement.

A focus for this area of work, is supporting adolescents and young people to mobilise their peers and advocate for greater awareness on the right of children to be protected from violence. SaferKidsPH also provide support to this piece of work, underscoring collaboration across outputs.

The three main child protection change strategies being deployed to deliver this output are: promote public discussion and advocacy on the risk and threat of violence against children; engage the participation of children and support the training on Social Norms and VAC.

To deliver this area of work, the Child Protection Programme collaborates with the National Child Protection Working Group as well as the established partnerships with government agencies, including CWC, JJWC, CRN, CHR, UNFPA, DSWD, and UN agencies, including UNFPA and UNHCR.

Parenting

For the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme, output 3.4 is designed to ensure that the Government has strengthened coordination mechanisms and approaches to enhance the capacities of parents and caregivers to practice behaviours and demonstrate attitudes which help children and adolescents to learn, thrive and be protected from violence. Although the output was initially designed to strengthen national capacity for programme design, coordination and implementation, the focus expanded to rapidly scaling up parenting advice that could be delivered through social media and online platforms in the context of COVID-19 related restrictions and lockdowns.

For 2020, the Child Protection Programme reported that the output is on track and provided the following examples of progress.[118] Most importantly, the contextualization and rollout of the Masayang Pamilya (MaPa) parenting resources, which was adapted from the WHO global Parenting Lifelong Health,[119] commenced. Parenting for Lifelong Health (PLH) is a suite of evidence-based

[117] UNIEF Philippines, 'RAM Report: Output: 3420/A0/06/003/003 Social Change to End VAC', 2021.
[118] UNICEF Philippines, 'RAM Report: Output: 3420/A0/06/003/004 Holistic Parenting', 2021.
[119] World Health Organisation, Parenting for Lifelong Health: A suite of parenting programmes to prevent violence. https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/parenting-for-lifelong-health.

parenting programmes to prevent violence in low-resource settings. The main MaPa parenting tips were translated into seven local languages and disseminated to 70,000 parents, social workers and other service providers through webinars, radio, and social media with the goal of protecting children from abuse, neglect and exploitation in the home and community. Efforts are underway to scale-up the implementation of MaPa by integrating it into the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme.

To deliver this output, the Child Protection Programme is collaborating with a range of government, academic and civil society organizations. They include the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the Ateneo de Manila University and the Child Protection Network.

Children affected by armed conflict and natural emergencies

For the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme, output 3.5 is designed to ensure that children and adolescents affected by disasters and those affected by armed conflict, particularly in Mindanao are increasingly able to access critical multi-sectoral, gender/conflict/ culturally sensitive and child focused programmes. It has two key components. The first is the protection of children affected by armed conflict. An ongoing priority is the continuous improvement of the coordination and implementation of Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations against children. The second component is Child Protection in Humanitarian Action. This includes expanding the number of Regional Sub-Committees for the Welfare of Children/Regional Child Protection Working Groups (RSCWCs/ RCPWGs) with child protection and GBV humanitarian response initiatives in their annual investment plans/ work plans. Related interventions include scaling up of the number social service workers trained to deliver essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic and the scaling up of risk mitigation, prevention or response interventions to address gender-based violence.

For 2020, the Child Protection Programme reported that this output is on track and provided the following examples of this progress.[120] Specifically, as part of the COVID-19 response, more than 25,000 individuals were reached with mental health and case management support. A further 5,000 children were able to access Child Friendly Spaces as part of the response to Typhoons Goni and Vamco.[121]

Given the ongoing threats to the safety and wellbeing of children, UNICEF restarted its engagement with the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) to promote the State's compliance with the protection of children in conflict-affected areas and gained their commitment to implement a strategic plan to prevent and respond to grave violations. The AFP Strategic Plan, which was formally signed on 9 June 2021, outlines commitments, benchmarks, and activities for the AFP to perform and fully comply to its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, as well as other relevant, international standards and national laws to better protect children during the course of military operations.

UNICEF supported the preparation of the government's inter-agency Handling Protocol for the protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict. The protocol also contains measures to prevent the recruitment, re-recruitment, use, displacement of, or grave child rights violations against, these children. It was developed with the Department of National Defence, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police, Commission on Human Rights, DepEd, and Council for the Welfare of Children.

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[120] UNICEF Philippines, 'RAM Report: Output: 3420/A0/06/003/005 Child Protection Humanitarian Action', 2021.

[121] On November 1, 2020, Typhoon Goni made landfall in the Philippines and is the strongest typhoon to hit the country that year. Just over a week later, Typhoon Vamco made landfall becoming the fifth tropical storm to reach the country in a three-week period.

The main child protection change strategy being deployed to deliver this output is the implementation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave child rights violations, as mandate by the UN Security Council. These UN Security Council Resolutions further required the establishment of the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) to oversee the implementation of these United Nations security council resolutions concerning children and armed conflict. In 2007, the Philippines was one of the conflict-affected countries prioritized for the implementation of the MRM and in the same year, the Philippine CTFMR was established.

To deliver this area of work on MRM, the Child Protection Programme collaborates with the Philippine CTFMR, co-chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator and UNICEF Representative with members comprising of UN agencies and other humanitarian counterparts with specific or extended mandates on human rights monitoring. UNICEF provides secretariat support to the country taskforce, including the preparation, verification, and submission of MRM periodic reports to the office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG CAAC). It also facilitates response to verified cases, through the network of partners of the country taskforce.

For humanitarian response, the Child Protection Programme participates in the UN Inter-Cluster Coordination Group, which is managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The focus of this collaboration is the response to COVID-19 and the response to typhoons and other disasters. Specifically, for Child Protection humanitarian response UNICEF co-chairs the National Child Protection Working Group (NCPWG), a sub-cluster to the Protection Cluster, together with the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC). Sub-national CPWGs were established on the basis of Regional Sub-Committee on the Welfare of Children (RSCWC)'s expanded function to include CPWG coordination, and as mandated by Republic Act 10821 or the Children's Emergency Relief and Protection Act of 2016. As of December 2018, the NCPWG has organised presence in all 17 regions in the Philippines, through the Regional Child Protection Working Group (RCPWG) under the RSCWCs.

UNICEF chaired the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Force from 2019 to 2020 and supported inter-agency initiatives that led to the adoption and promulgation of the inter-agency PSEA referral pathway.

Outside the chairmanship of the PSEA Task Force, UNICEF as an active member contributes to other outcome priorities of the PSEA Task Force workplan. This includes but not limited to PSEA Assessments of CSOs, technical support to implementing partners in building capacity on PSEA. Last, technical assistance in supporting workshops and orientation related to addressing sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment.

Peace building and child protection in BARMM

For the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme, output 3.6 is designed to ensure strengthened capacities of the child protection system (services, families and communities) to protect at-risk children and adolescents in BARMM.

Peace building and child protection have been a UNICEF child protection priority for more than a decade. Replacing the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) was established in 2019 by the Bangsamoro Organic Law. This Law was passed following two legally binding referendums on the region's future on 21 January and 6 February 2019. The creation of BARMM was the result of several years of internationally brokered peace talks, after almost five decades of armed conflict in the region between the Government of the Philippines and several overlapping, yet distinct, armed groups fighting for the Bangsamoro peoples' Right to Self-Determination (RSD).

For 2020, the Child Protection Programme reported that this output is constrained, primarily because the in-depth review of the Child Protection System was postponed to 2021 due to COVID-19. Reported progress is other areas included[122] a follow-up assessment of 730 children of the 1,869 children disengaged in 2016-2017 from the non-state group Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which found that none of them have re-associated with any of the armed groups. The Child Protection Programme reported that 48 (80%) of the 60 grave violations were verified, which highlighted the continued risks to children.

As part of the focus on strengthening positive social norms, child protection and broader child rights, messages were included in sermons/Khutba reaching over 98,478 people. Regular weekly use of polls on U-Report saw approximately 8,000 adolescents and youth voicing their ideas and issues related to Covid-19, education, child protection, mental health, youth engagement, and peacebuilding. In partnership with Ministry of Social Services and Development-BARMM, UNICEF also supported the provision of Emergency Cash Transfers to 1,000 families with young children as part of its programme on strengthening Shock Responsive Social Protection Systems in BARMM.

4.3 Relevant human rights, equity and gender equality issues

At the global, regional and country office level**,** UNICEF is guided by a mutual commitment to the core values and standards of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and other international treaties and conventions ratified and acceded to by the Government.

At the Child Protection Programme level, a range of approaches are deployed to promote human rights, equity and gender equality. Under both the 7th and 8th programme cycles, the programme was explicitly designed to target the most vulnerable children in the Philippines, as reflected in its logical frameworks. The 2012-2018 Child Protection Programme outcomes were focussed on the *most vulnerable children* in the *most deprived regions*. Similarly, the overall outcome of the 2019-2023 programme is focussed on ensuring more children and adolescents, *particularly the most vulnerable* benefit from more effective, quality, gender-sensitive, preventive, and responsive child protection system, and live in communities that better protect children from violence.

As is described in further detail below, the evaluation will reflect on the degree to which UNICEF's programme has effectively promoted gender equality, equity and human rights.

[122] UNICEF Philippines, 'RAM Report: Output: 3420/A0/06/003/006 Peacebuilding and child protection', 2021.

5. Purpose, Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

5.1 Purpose of the evaluation

As set out in the Terms of Reference (TOR), the purpose of the formative evaluation is to "inform the Philippine Country Office (PCO) midterm review of its Child Protection Programme and strategic approaches in 2021, its partnerships with the government, particularly the development/review of rolling workplans, and its advocacy approaches to influence government's policies, strategies, fund allocations, and programme priorities to protect the Filipino children from violence." The evaluation has two aims. The first is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Child Protection Programme for a four-year period covering the last two years of the 7th Country Programme (2017-2018) and first two years of the 8th Country Programme (2019 to 2020). The second is to "identify lessons learned and make recommendations that can be used by UNICEF and government for future child protection interventions in the country.[123]

As per the TOR, the end users of the evaluation include a range of primary and secondary audiences. Primary users include decision makers within UNICEF and the Government, including the BARMM Regional Government and technical experts across UNICEF and relevant government departments with a mandate or related function for the protection of children from harm, including specialist coordination bodies and other agencies such as the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council (JJWC). Secondary users include the broader development sector, including donors, sister UN agencies, the Human Rights Commission, civil society, academia, research and policy think tanks. It is intended that the knowledge generated, including lessons learned, will be of value to other UNICEF country offices, UNICEF regional offices and UNICEF headquarters and contribute to a growing body of global evidence about what works in protecting children from harm.

In addition to this, the evaluation will hold UNICEF accountable for contributing to child protection outcomes for children (or failing to do so) in the Philippines since 2017. Finally, by examining, collecting and analysing credible evidence, this evaluation will help to clarify the changes in child protection in the Philippines that have been brought about by UNICEF's child protection programme, and whether the programme has the right strategic focus to contribute to the development of child protection in the Philippines going forward. In order to reflect on the programme's strategic approach, the Evaluation Team will consider the assumptions contained in the child protection theory of change included in the 'Programme Strategy Note for UNICEF Philippines 2019-2023.'[124]

The table in Annex N shows the primary and secondary audience of the evaluation and the intended use of the results.

5.2 Objectives of the evaluation

As set out in the TOR, the purpose of this formative evaluation is to inform the PCO midterm review of its Child Protection Programme and strategic approaches in 2021, its partnerships with the government, particularly the development/review of rolling workplans, and its advocacy approaches to influence government policies, strategies, fund allocations, and programme priorities to protect the Filipino children from violence.

The evaluation aims to:

[123] UNICEF Philippines, Request for Proposals for Services: LRPS-2020-9161742: Evaluation of UNICEF Philippines' Child Protection Programme from 2017 to 2020, 28 September 2020, p3.
[124] UNICEF Philippines, 'Programme Strategy Note for UNICEF Philippines 2019-2023', 2018, p67-86.

1. Assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the Child Protection Programme component of the GPH-UNICEF 7th [and the GPH-UNICEF 8th][125] Country Programme for the last four years (Jan 2017- Dec 2020); and
2. Identify lessons learned and make recommendations that can be used by UNICEF and government for future child protection interventions in the country.

5.3 Scope of the evaluation

Thematic scope

The knowledge, data and information generated through the evaluation is to support learning and decision-making that will in turn support better child protection outcomes for children in the future. By collecting and analysing credible evidence, the evaluation will be able to clarify the degree to which the programme has contributed to changes in the field of child protection in the Philippines and to determine whether UNICEF is taking the right strategic focus: one that will enable it to contribute to the development of the Philippines's child protection and social welfare systems in the future.

The scope of the evaluation covers one programme outcome and three outputs for 2017-2018 and one outcome and six outputs for 2019-2020, along with nine office-wide change strategies implemented at the national level and in the UNICEF focus Local Government Units (LGUs).

The programme intervention areas:

1. Child protection policy and legislation;
2. Child protection systems;
3. Social change to end VAC;
4. Parenting;
5. Children in emergencies; and
6. Child protection systems strengthening in BARMM.

The nine office-wide change strategies are:

1. High-level policy advocacy to influence decision makers;
2. Scaling up tested interventions and innovations for children;
3. Coordination across multiple agencies and levels of government;
4. Evidence generation, analysis, and utilization;
5. Expanding private sector fundraising;
6. Harnessing corporate social responsibility and 'Children's rights and business principles;'
7. Planning and working together more with other UN agencies;
8. Gender-responsive programming; and
9. Risk-informed programming.

In addition to this, the evaluation will consider linkages between child protection programming and other components of the Philippines Country Programme that relate to child protection, namely: Survive and thrive; Quality and inclusive lifelong learning; Social policy and governance; and specific focus areas such as communications for development and youth participation. This will include the integration of core messages on the prevention of violence against children and response to such

125 The text in brackets has been included as it is assumed that its omission in the ToR was an error.

violence in the health, education and WASH sectors as part of the broader office wide support of a multisectoral response to VAC.[126]

It is noted that the evaluation will not include UNICEF's emergency response programming; however, Child Protection emergency preparedness will be included in terms of risk and evidence informed strategy, programmatic priorities and resources, including staff and capacity. Ongoing child protection emergency recovery programmes in the UNICEF focus LGUs will also be included.

Geographical scope

UNICEF aims to balance efforts to influence service delivery (i.e., downstream activities) and to influence the enabling environment (i.e., upstream activities). Accordingly, the geographical scope of the evaluation covers upstream' (national) work / focus and the 'downstream' / (local) work focus (though the local work supports the upstream approach also. It includes UNICEF's focus Local Government Units (LGUs) for child protection which are the four cities of Angeles, Valenzuela, Cagayan de Oro, and Zamboanga in the two provinces of Northern Samar and Western Samar and BARMM.

Chronological scope

The chronological scope of the evaluation is limited to two distinct but overlapping Child Protection Programmes covering the last two years of the 7th Country Programme (2017-2018) and the first two years of the 8th Country Programme (2019 to 2020).

Finally, the evaluation will seek to establish the contribution of the UNICEF Child Protection Programme in the achievement of national level results and the effectiveness of the programme in achieving its desired results at outcome and output levels, noting that for a range of reasons, the evaluation will not seek to establish the impact of the programme interventions (for more detail, see section 6, 'methodology').

5.4 Theory of change

While the 2019-2023 programme Theory of Change (TOC) is expressed both visually and in writing in the programme strategy note,[127] there was no evidence of a TOC for the 2012-2016 programme or the 2017-2018 extension.

The child protection deprivation statement in the Philippines is that too many children in the Philippines are experiencing violence at home, schools, in communities and online.[128] Based on this overarching child deprivation statement, the overall long-term change envisioned is that "*more children and adolescents, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from more effective, quality, gender-sensitive, preventive, and responsive child protection system, and live in communities that better protect children from violence*."

To achieve this change, the Child Protection Programme (2019-2023) is investing its human and financial resources in a series of pathways of change to create three preconditions. These are:

- The Philippines' legal, policy, frameworks and institutional practices meet international standards regarding protecting children from violence.

[126] UNICEF Philippines, Country Programme Document 2019-2023, p8.
[127] UNICEF Philippines, 'Programme Strategy Note for UNICEF Philippines 2019-2023', 2018, p 85.
[128] Ibid, p70.

- Children and families will have improved and equitable access to, and use, age-appropriate, gender-sensitive, high-quality child protection prevention and response services linking with multisectoral coordination and efforts especially during emergencies.
- Children, parents, caregivers and communities encourage, support, and practice behaviours and positive social norms that are not violent.

The TOC sets out several preconditions and pathways to change for each output and areas for investments and collaboration to achieve the output. These are set out in a table in Annex L.

To deliver these results, the Child Protection Programme is using fifteen change strategies. They are:

1. ***Research and evidence generation***: The purpose of this change strategy is to use the knowledge generated from two flagship reports. The first report is the *National Study on Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines*,[129] which provides recommendations on how to protect children and address OSAEC in the Philippines. The second study is the *Philippines Kids Online*, which documents the online experiences of children in the Philippines[130] and identifies opportunities, risks and barriers for children online.
2. National Study on the Online Exploitation of Children and the KidsOnline Survey, to inform and guide upstream policy development work to better protect children from violence.
3. ***Strengthen partnerships with government, convene and coordinate partners, and to share critical and innovative knowledge, tools and resources***: The purpose of this change strategy is to strengthen capacity and ensure effective leadership of efforts to address child online protection, including in conjunction with broader efforts to prevent and address child sexual exploitation in offline environments.
4. ***Development of strategies that strengthens national commitment to a multisectoral response to VAC***: This change strategy seeks to build on existing gains in building a multisectoral coordinated response to VAC across the WASH, Health, Education and social welfare sectors by leveraging the Philippines expertise as a Pathfinder[131] country and by ensuring that VAC programmes are aligned with *'INSPIRE: Seven strategies to end violence against children.*[132]
5. ***Build evidence on the effectiveness of existing Parenting Support Interventions***: This change strategy is primarily designed to enable the scale-up of tested and proven parenting support initiatives. It also entails using regional learning and sharing of information and experience, particularly among ASEAN countries.

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[129] UNICEF Philippines, <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/reports/national-study-online-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-children-philippines>, accessed on 10 October 2021.
[130] UNICEF Philippines, <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/reports/philippines-kids-online>, accessed on 10 October 2021.
[131] The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children promotes the concept of Pathfinding which aims to raise awareness, stimulate leadership commitment, galvanize action, and establish a standard of national violence prevention throughout the world. Currently, 30 countries have joined the partnership as Pathfinders. https://www.end-violence.org/pathfinding-countries
[132] Inspire identifies a select group of strategies that have shown success in reducing violence against children. They are: Implementation and enforcement of laws; Norms and values; Safe environments; Parent and caregiver support; Income and economic strengthening; Response and support services; and Education and life skills. World Health Organisation, Inspire: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire-package/en/

6. ***Build alliances with non-traditional child protection partners****:* This change strategy is being deployed to a range of type of partnerships such as Internet Service Providers and financial and remittance centres as part of broader efforts to reduce abuse and exploitation of children online. This work began under the previous country programme.
7. ***Support legal and policy reforms***: The purpose of this change strategy is to address challenges in law enforcement, including providing continued support for child friendly justice systems, advocacy around the age of criminal responsibility, and specific attention to the age of sexual consent.
8. ***Strengthen gender-sensitive, emergency-resilient, multisectoral Child protection systems*** *with emphasis on regional mechanisms* to better support LGUs, LCPCs and their social welfare and child protection services and linking with health, education and WASH sectors for an integrated approach.
9. ***Increase access to justice for children*** through improving the family courts system, and diversion programmes and tracking of diversion cases.
10. **P*romote public discussion and advocacy on the risk and threat of violence against children*** to increase knowledge and skills for the care and protection of children.
11. ***Engage the participation of children*** on behaviour change strategies for the protection and empowerment of their peers in the use of the Internet.
12. ***Training on social norms and VAC*** and social mobilization towards desired behaviour change and positive social and gender norms.
13. **I*mplementation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism*** *on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict*.
14. ***Normalization and prevention efforts regarding the recruitment of children as part of broader peace building efforts***.
15. ***Eliciting support and commitment in the implementation of LGUs Annual Investment Plan integrating child protection concerns***, by expanding partnership with national social welfare consortiums, and other similar groups.
16. ***Utilize the findings of the evaluation*** of the Government-UNICEF Child Protection Programme.

In addition, the UNICEF Philippines Country Office has identified an overarching goal for programme effectiveness which is to ensure that all programme components of the Country Programme are implemented in a 'linked up' manner in both development and humanitarian setting. This includes ensuring in particular, strategic alignment and coherence with UNICEF regional and global priorities and the SDGs. The Programme Outcome to achieve this goal is: "*Programmes are efficiently designed, coordinated, managed and supported to meet quality programming standards in achieving results for children in development and humanitarian settings."*[133] Nine office wide change strategies are being deployed as follows:

1. High-level policy advocacy to influence decision makers;
2. Scaling up tested interventions and innovations for children;
3. Coordination across multiple agencies and levels of government;
4. Evidence generation, analysis, and utilization;
5. Expanding private sector fundraising;

133 UNICEF Philippines, 'Programme Strategy Note for UNICEF Philippines 2019-2023, 2018, p90-91.

6. Harnessing corporate social responsibility and 'Children's rights and business principles;'
7. Planning and working together more with other UN agencies;
8. Gender-responsive programming; and
9. Risk-informed programming.

The Child Protection Programme-specific and office-wide change strategies fall into two main categories. The first category relates to change strategies that are specific to one or more outputs. The second category of change strategies are cross cutting. More detailed information on each of the change strategies can be found in Annex L.

The TOC identifies eight assumptions on which the success of the programme depends. They can be grouped under three stakeholder types. In essence, the TOC assumes that the government will provide the required leadership needed to ensure implementation of the child protection response, with the UN working together on cross cutting issues, and with NGOs and non-state actors playing a substantial role. They are:

The Government will:

1. Continue to acknowledge the need to strengthen the social welfare and child protection system and agree to work with UNICEF to address issues and challenges at the national and local level.
2. Continue to prioritise addressing and preventing VAC.
3. Remain open to cooperating with the UN, including in the implementation of recommendations from the concluding observations of the CRC and SG reports on children and armed conflict in the Philippines.
4. Concur and continue to endorse UN's negotiation with non-state armed groups for the development and implementation of MRM Action Plans.
5. Continue to collaborate with the UN in implementing support to the communities of disengaged and children at risk of recruitment and use by armed groups.

The UN will:

1. Continue to enjoy a collegial relationship with DND and AFP, will acknowledge the issues raised in the United Nation's Secretary-General's Reports and agree to develop proactive measures through a Strategic Plan with the UN.

NGOs and non-state actors will:

1. In the case of non-state armed groups, continue to acknowledge the issues raised in the United Nation's Secretary-General's Reports on Children and Armed Conflict in the Philippines and agree to develop MRM Action Plans with the UN.
2. In the case of NGOs, continue to be impartial in verifying grave violations.

In addition, the TOC identifies three critical risks. They are:

1. Legal limitations on children's protection rights:

- The possibility that the minimum age of criminal responsibility will be reduced from 15 years of age to 12 or 9 years of age.
- Lack of prohibition on corporal punishment and lack of emphasis on promotion of positive discipline.
- Not passing legislation to increase the age of consent / statutory rape.

2. Insufficient investment in human resources by Government to allow for scale up the number of paraprofessionals and child protection specialists in the social welfare workforce or to build the capacity of this workforce.
3. Reform of federalism affecting the implementation of child protection laws and policies at sub-national and local level.

In summary, the Child Protection Programme's lines of action and inputs aim to support and strengthen three pillars of work, as expressed in the preconditions, in order to generate the six programme outputs that will contribute to the overall outcome. First, the enabling environment formed by the legal and regulatory framework must be more conducive for child protection, in both development and humanitarian settings. Second, the supply of effective and efficient child protection services, including in both development and humanitarian settings, and including specialised VAC services, must be better able to prevent and respond to child protection concerns in a timely and appropriate way. Third, the demand for VAC prevention and response interventions must be strengthened through social and behavioural change, particularly with regard to gender-related norms and behaviours. Through these pillars of work, laws and regulations will be aligned to national policies and international standards, access to child and family welfare services will be improved, the justice system will be more child-friendly, and communities will have an increased understanding of violence against children and how to prevent it.

The programme has several assumptions and risks as highlighted above. In addition, the TOC assumes that crucial terms and concepts are understood, particularly terms such as a 'protective environment' and concepts such as 'child protection' and a 'systems approach.' An additional assumption appears to be that VAC is the main child protection violation in the Philippines. This approach is based on its TOC, the findings of the prioritization exercises and the understanding that VAC is the main driver for other child protection violations. This includes violations relating to children in conflict with the law; online child sexual abuse and exploitation and children affected by armed conflict and in emergencies.

Annex M contains a visual representation of the Theory of Change for the UNICEF Philippines Child Protection Programme 2019-2023.

6. Criteria and Evaluative questions

The evaluation sought to generate evidence in relation to five of the six evaluation criteria of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), namely: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

As specified in the ToR, the evaluation did not seek to establish the impact of the programme interventions. The reason for this is that the complexity of the Child Protection Programme, with its national / system-wide focus and the multiple partners working on the programme would have made it difficult to assess impact in a concrete way and to assess UNICEF's attribution to these impacts. However, the evaluation did seek to establish the contribution of the UNICEF Child Protection Programme to the achievement of national level results and the effectiveness of the programme in achieving its desired results at outcome and output levels.

In addition to these criteria, the evaluation methodology incorporated UNICEF's guiding principles of gender, human rights and equity. A set of research questions in relation to each of these criteria is set out below. These have been developed to meet the aims outlined above. They are broadly in line with the questions contained in the ToR; however, they have been refined following the analysis carried out during the inception phase.

6.1 Evaluation questions

6.1.1 Relevance

Questions	Sub-questions
1. To what extent are the objectives, pre-conditions, pathways, change strategies/approaches and implementation modalities of the Child Protection Programme (still) valid and respond to the current needs, priorities and policies of the relevant national and sub-national stakeholders, and rights holders?	To what extent are the objectives, pre-conditions, pathways, change strategies/approaches, implementation modalities of the Child Protection Programme, (still) valid and respond to the current needs, priorities and policies of: 1.1 The relevant *national stakeholders*? 1.2 The relevant *sub-national stakeholders*? 1.3 The relevant *rights holders*?

These questions are designed to determine the extent to which the UNICEF Child Protection Programme is suited to the needs, priorities and policies of relevant national stakeholders, LGUs, and beneficiaries.

6.1.2 Coherence

Questions	Sub-questions
2. To what extent is the Child Protection Programme aligned with the Philippine Development Plan, and the SDGs?	2.1 To what extent has the CP Programme been informed by and consistent with the interventions of child protection development actors?

	2.2 To what extent has the child protection programme complemented / added value to the efforts of other development partners?
3. To what extent is the CP Programme consistent with other actors' interventions in the same context? (Including complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort)	3.1 To what extent has the CP Programme been informed by and consistent with the interventions of child protection development actors?
	3.2. To what extent has the child protection programme complemented / added value to the efforts of other development partners?
	3.3 To what extent has the child protection programme duplicated or detracted from the efforts of other development partners?

These questions are designed to determine the compatibility of the Child Protection Programme interventions with other priorities and interventions in the country, in the Child Protection sector.

6.1.3 Effectiveness

Questions	Sub-questions
4. To what extent were the desired results of the Child Protection Programme achieved on the protection of girls and boys (covering six programme areas/outputs) as per the country programme documents and subsequent annual work plans? To what extent and how can the results be attributed to the Child Protection Programme (i.e., UNICEF's contribution)? What were the major factors influencing these results? Please note that the three ''effectiveness' questions from the TOR have been merged into one as they are quite dependent / connected and are best be considered under one overarching question.	4.1 To what extent did the Child Protection Programme's interventions contribute to the intended results on the *reform of child protection policy and legislation*? ○ Results achieved; ○ Change strategies; ○ UNICEF contribution.
	4.2 To what extent did the Child Protection Programme's interventions contribute to the intended results on *child protection system strengthening*? ○ Results achieved; ○ Change strategies; ○ UNICEF contribution.
	4.3 To what extent did the Child Protection Programme's interventions contribute to the intended results on *community attitudes and behaviours*? ○ Results achieved;

	○ Change strategies; ○ UNICEF contribution.
	4.4 To what extent did the Child Protection Programme's interventions contribute to the intended results on strengthened coordination mechanisms and approaches to *enhance parenting*? ○ Results achieved; ○ Change strategies; ○ UNICEF contribution.
	4.5 To what extent did the Child Protection Programme contribute to the intended results for *children and adolescents affected by armed conflict?* ○ Results achieved; ○ Change strategies; ○ UNICEF contribution.
	4.6 To what extent did the Child Protection Programme contribute to the intended results for strengthened capacities of the child protection system (services, families and communities) to protect at-risk children and adolescents in BARMM ○ Results achieved; ○ Change strategies; ○ UNICEF contribution.
5. To what degree have gender and equity results been achieved? [Note that this question was added to incorporate gender and equity criteria]	5.1. To what degree has the national child protection system been able to respond to the needs of vulnerable girls and boys, especially the most marginalised, that were exposed to violence?
6. What has the level of satisfaction been among women, girls, boys and men, and communities on UNICEF's Child Protection Programme? with the quality of prevention and response services that they have received through the child protection programme? [Note that this question was added to ensure a space for beneficiary feedback and child participation]	6.1 What has the level of satisfaction been among women, girls, boys and men with the quality of prevention and response services that they have received through the child protection programme?

7. Has sufficient attention been given to measuring, monitoring and reporting results including results, including those related to gender and equity? How effectively has evidence been used to inform programmatic changes and adjustments? [Note this question was added to capture cross-cutting importance of monitoring and use of data etc.]	7.1. Has sufficient attention been given to measuring, monitoring and reporting results including results related to gender and equity?
	7.2. How effectively has evidence been generated and used to inform programmatic changes and adjustments and what are the enabling factors and barriers to the effective use of evidence and lessons learned to inform programmatic changes and adjustments?

This set of questions is designed to determine the extent to which the Child Protection Programme attains its objectives. Additional questions have been added, as mentioned above, to incorporate cross-cutting issues into the analysis of programme effectiveness.

6.1.4 Efficiency

Questions	Sub-questions
8. To what extent is the Child Protection Programming approach efficient in achieving desired results in terms of resource utilisation and timely delivery?	8.1. How has UNICEF mobilised and used its resources (human, technical and financial) to achieve its planned results for child protection?
	8.2. To what extent have resources (human, technical, financial) been sufficient, both in quantity and quality?
	8.3. How adequate are the capacities of UNICEF staff and implementing partners?
	8.4. To what extent have human resources been sufficient to provide the necessary technical support to national partners for the operation of the national child protection systems?
9. Do more cost-effective ways of achieving the same child protection results exist?	9.1 To what extent has the CP Programme been informed by and consistent with the interventions of child protection development actors?
	3.2. To what extent has the child protection programme complemented / added value to the efforts of other development partners?
	3.3 To what extent has the child protection programme duplicated or detracted from the efforts of other development partners?
10. How effectively have coordination mechanisms been working between UNICEF's	10.1. How effectively have coordination mechanisms been working between UNICEF's

child protection programme and other UNICEF programme outcomes (across education, health, nutrition, WASH, social protection, adolescent, and communication for development) to create and sustain linkages across sectors, and between child protection actors, especially related to violence against children?	child protection programme and other UNICEF programme outcomes to create and sustain linkages across sectors, and between child protection actors to prevent violence against children?

These questions are designed to determine measure the Child Programme outputs in relation to the inputs and whether it used the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results.

6.1.5 Sustainability

Questions	Sub-questions
11. To what extent are the activities and results of the Child Protection Programme likely to continue after UNICEF support has ceased? What measures were taken so that the Government of Philippines and targeted communities could take ownership of the child protection programme?	11.1 To what extent are the activities and results of the Child Protection Programme likely to continue after UNICEF support ceased?
	11.2 To what extent are activities and results likely to be sustained through scalability and use of partnerships?
	11.3 To what extent are activities and results likely to be sustained through changes at family and community level?
12. To what extent has the child protection programme contributed to the generation of capacities at national and sub-national levels? How likely are these to be used after the end of the programme? To what degree have these changes been embedded into the national and sub-national child protection systems?	12.1 To what extent has the child protection programme contributed to the generation of capacities at national and sub-national levels?
	12.2 to what extent have these capacities been embedded into the national and sub-national child protection systems?
	12.3. How likely are these to be used after the end of the programme?
13. What are the major factors which influence the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?	13.1. What are the major enabling factors that are likely to influence replication and sustainability? What are the major factors which influence the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?
	13.2. What are the major constraining factors that are likely to influence replication and sustainability?

This set of questions is designed to determine whether the benefits of the Child Protection Programme are likely to continue after UNICEF support has been withdrawn.

6.1.6 Gender, equity and human rights

Questions	Sub-questions
14. To what extent were gender, equity (including disability, geographic location, socio-economic circumstances, ethnicity etc.) and human rights principles integrated into the design, implementation and monitoring of the child protection programme?	14.1. To what extent were gender, equity and human rights principles integrated into the design of the child protection programme?
	14.2. To what extent were gender, equity and human rights principles integrated into the implementation of the child protection programme?
	14.3. To what extent were gender, equity and human rights principles (for instance to ensure the relevance of programming to the particular needs of girls, to enable their participation) integrated into the monitoring of the child protection programme?

These questions are overarching / cross-cutting and relevant findings and analysis have been integrated throughout the evaluation report to avoid repetition and enrich analysis.

6.2 Evaluation matrix

An analytical framework for the evaluation was developed during the inception phase, based on the questions set out above. The matrix sets out the specific information (indicators and sub questions) which are necessary to answer the evaluation questions, and methods and data sources for measuring / answering these questions. The evaluation matrix informed the development of the methodology for the evaluation and was used to guide the analysis of data. Specifically, the evaluation matrix contains:

- The research questions the evaluation will attempt to answer (across the evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and gender, equity and human rights);
- Qualitative and quantitative indicators which emerge from / relate to the evaluation questions;
- Data sources for answering research questions and measuring indicators; and
- And any limitations in data or the ability of researchers to analyse it.

For full evaluation matrix please see Annex C.

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1 Evaluation design

As noted in the ToR, given the complexity of the UNICEF Philippines Child Protection Programme, involving multiple partners, the evaluation did not attempt to measure impact (i.e., the extent to which the programme achieved its results), making an experimental or quasi-experimental design unnecessary. Instead, as the evaluation aimed to assess results at the outcome and output levels, a theory-based approach and non-experimental design was used. The framework for the theory-based approach was the Theory of Change for UNICEF's 2019 – 2023 Child Protection Programme, as set out above (see Section 4.4). The Theory of Change reflects UNICEF's approach to child protection systems building in the current programme cycle and articulates how programme interventions and strategies are expected to achieve outputs and outcomes, and ultimately contribute to a broader vision of change in line with the overall result: "by 2023, more children and adolescents, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from more effective, quality, gender-sensitive, preventive, and responsive child protection system, and live in communities that better protect children from violence."

The results for the 2012 – 2018 programme was also used as the evaluation time-frame included the final two years of the 2012 – 2018 programme: "By 2016, improved national and local level public sector institutional gender sensitive framework in place enabling improved access to well-coordinated child protection services for the most vulnerable in at least 5 disadvantaged LGUs (programme component 3);" and "By 2016, an improved and inclusive peace conditions and social service delivery achieved through conflict analysis, integration of child rights violations information and peace initiatives (UNICEF Action Plans with conflict parties on child soldiers) in national and local plans especially for conflict affected LGUs (programme component 5). It is noted these results fall within three of the specific outcomes of the 2019 – 2023 Programme, so were considered in this evaluation as steps toward and benchmarks against which to measure progress toward the achievement of Outputs 2, 3 and 6 of the current Programme:

Figure 1: Programme outputs, results and outcome: consolidation of 2017 – 2018 and 2019 – 2023 Programmes

Results, 2017-2018 Extended Programme	Outputs, 2019 – 2023 Programme
Output 1: Strengthened institutional frameworks to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation of children. **Output 2**: The social welfare system has strengthened approaches and evidence to improve services for children and families at risk.	**Output 1**: The legislative and institutional framework is strengthened to better protect girls and boys vulnerable and exposed to violence, abuse, exploitation, and harmful gender norms. **Output 2:** The child welfare system has strengthened capacity to deliver local, multisectoral, gender-sensitive services that prevent and respond to violence against children. **Output 3**: The general public in the Philippines, adolescents in particular, are better informed and act to eliminate all forms of violence. **Output 4**: The Government have strengthened coordination mechanisms and approaches to enhance the capacities of parents and caregivers to practice behaviours and demonstrate attitudes which help children and adolescents to learn, thrive and be protected from violence.
Output 3: Strengthened national, local and individual capacities and responses for	**Output 5:** Children and adolescents affected by disasters and in Mindanao affected by armed conflict are increasingly able to access critical social services.

child protection in humanitarian situations.	**Output 6:** Strengthened capacities of the child protection system (services, families and communities) to protect at-risk children and adolescents in BARMM.

Result: By 2016, improved national and local level public sector institutional gender sensitive framework in place enabling improved access to well-coordinated child protection services for the most vulnerable in at least 5 disadvantaged LGUs (programme component 3)

… and

Result: By 2016, an improved and inclusive peace conditions and social service delivery achieved through conflict analysis, integration of child rights violations information and peace initiatives (UNICEF Action Plans with conflict parties on child soldiers) in national and local plans especially for conflict affected LGUs.

Outcome for 2017 and 2018: By end of country programme, improved and inclusive access to well-coordinated national and local child protection services in 10 LGUs supported by a functional public sector institutional framework focused on protective elements of ECD, and promoting equity and social inclusion, in coordination with Social Protection and a broader Social Protection strategy.

2019 – 2023 Overall Programme result: By 2023, more children and adolescents, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from more effective, quality, gender-sensitive, preventive, and responsive child protection system, and live in communities that better protect children from violence.

The following components were central to the evaluation design:

The evaluation team used a **theory-based approach** to determine whether, how, and why UNICEF's child protection programme is (or is not) on track to achieve its vision for change. The evaluation also applied an 'outcome harvesting' approach. This approach collects ("harvests") evidence of what has changed ("outcomes") and then works backwards to determine whether and how these outcomes are caused by an intervention. Outcome harvesting is particularly useful when the programming context is complex, and for supporting learning about the achievement of different outcomes as part of an evaluation such as this one.[134]

Given the centrality of systems thinking to the UNICEF Philippines Child Protection Programme and the key framework for UNICEF's child protection programming globally), a **child protection systems framework** was applied to interpreting knowledge, data and information generated through the research. A systems approach recognises that programming toward building and strengthening the child protection system as a whole is crucial to the protection of children and adolescents from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, rather than shorter-term projects or narrow policy changes that do not contribute to strengthening the child protection system itself. This involved assessing the programme's achievements against the extent to which it has contributed to strengthening the child protection system (i.e., its contribution to achieving the elements listed above). The key elements of a child protection system are explained at Annex I.

The evaluation used a **mixed-methods approach** to data collection, including both quantitative and qualitative methods. A mixed methodology was used in order to draw from the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods; to gather data that is rich, accurate and measurable; and, to

134 Wilson-Grau, R., 'Outcome Harvesting', Better Evaluation, 2015. www.betterevaluation.org/en/plan/approach/outcome_harvesting [2 April 2020].

improve the validity of results through triangulation. The evaluation was primarily qualitative, and qualitative data was used to provide deep, explanatory analysis in relation to the evaluation questions. Qualitative research methods have greater interpretative and explanatory potential than quantitative approaches and provide the best opportunity for exploring how and why particular strategies or approaches have, or have not, worked in the Philippines context. Given the need to engage in a process of critical reflection and learning about the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of UNICEF's strategies for undertaking child protection work in the Philippines, qualitative data was particularly useful. However, quantitative data was also used to provide an overall description and numerical measure of programme characteristics and results, and of the context in which the programme operates.

The evaluation took a **consultative and participatory approach** with UNICEF, stakeholders, and beneficiaries. This approach was considered essential to ensuring that the evaluation design and findings are context-appropriate and that stakeholders have overall ownership of the process and outputs, along with reinforcing accountability for the evaluation.

7.2 Data and sources

A range of data sources were used to ensure the reliability of results, promote impartiality, reduce bias, and ensure that the evaluation is based on the most comprehensive and relevant information possible. Data sources and methods were identified to ensure that evaluators are able to obtain in-depth and accurate information on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of programming, as well as to address cross-cutting issues (i.e., equity, gender equality and human rights sensitivity).

It is important to note that all data collection was carried out remotely, owing to the travel restrictions present in the country at the time of the evaluation, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Some adjustments were therefore made to adapt the data collection methods to this unique context, with the aim of ensuring that data collection methods are robust and ethically sound within a remote or virtual context.

Given these considerations, the evaluation following sources data sources were utilised. Please see Annex C – the evaluation matrix – which sets out in detail which data sources correspond with each research question / sub-question.

Quantitative data sources

- Existing (published) collated administrative and survey data was used to examine the programme context, and this was particularly relevant to evaluation questions focusing on relevance and coherence;
- Raw or collated administrative data from programmes supported by UNICEF during the programming phase, which was used to assess whether outputs have been achieved and the extent to which programme outcomes have been achieved (i.e., have key targets been met?). This was particularly relevant to evaluation questions focusing on effectiveness; and
- Primary survey data collected by the team from service providers involved in UNICEF's programmes (LGU Social Welfare Officers and Para Social Workers), to determine the extent to which UNICEF programming has strengthened service delivery.

Qualitative data sources:

- Key informant interviews with a range of stakeholders – UNICEF staff; Government partners; NGOs and experts;

- Key stakeholder interviews with a range of service providers in LGUs – implementing partners, including Government and NGO service providers;
- In-depth interviews with children and families who have received child protection services / interventions; and
- Case file reviews / case studies of children and families who have received child protection services / interventions.

7.3 Data collection methods

7.3.1 Desk review

The first stage of the evaluation involved an extensive desk review of programme documents provided by UNICEF Philippines. These documents included: programme design documents and the results frameworks for both country programme cycles; policies and strategic plans; stakeholder engagement, mappings and contact lists; programming monitoring and data reports; assessments, evaluations and reports related to programme interventions; communication outputs; and financial and donor information.

In addition, the team carried out a review of existing administrative and survey data, studies and reports, policies and laws relating to child protection in the Philippines, in order to examine the context for the Child Protection Programme, which is particularly important in ensuring a robust assessment of the Programme's relevance and coherence.

7.3.2 Key informant interviews (virtual)

Much of the data collection was conducted through key informant interviews of stakeholders at both national and sub-national levels. The aim of these interviews was to obtain detailed and specific information from experts or key informants who have in-depth knowledge in a particular area relevant to the evaluation. Individual interviews allowed respondents to engage with evaluators in a private and confidential setting where they are likely to feel more comfortable sharing their experiences and views than they would in a group setting. A semi-standardised approach was adopted, guided by a structured tool, but which allowed for a participant and response-directed interaction.

7.3.3 Case studies

In order to gain a concrete understanding and examine, in an in-depth manner, the results or impacts of UNICEF interventions in the programming areas, a series of case studies will be carried out. This will involve selecting a range of cases held by UNICEF's implementing partners (primarily DSWD Social Welfare Officers and / or LGU Social Workers / Para-Social Workers) in which there has been a child protection intervention and examining the case from a range of perspectives. Interviews were, where possible, also done with those involved in the child's case, including members of their family and the district social welfare officer or caseworker assigned to the case. The purpose of the case study interviews was to learn about these children's experiences and the outcomes of their case from multiple perspectives. These interviews were designed to provide the evaluation team with a series of in-depth case studies to achieve a clear, concrete and multi-perspective understanding of how the child protection system / child protection services are functioning in practice, as well as their effectiveness and impact. Specific case studies also aimed to illustrate whether UNICEF's support has had any direct impact on children in need of protection, influenced local response and/or impacted the application of international standards in policy/legislation.

Given the challenges in accessing children, families and Social Workers in the research (which took place during a period of highly restricted movement as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, see below for more detail), only three case studies were able to be completed.

The following methods were used:

In-depth individual interviews with children and their carers (virtual)

In-depth life history interviews were also carried out with children whose cases have been subject to a child protection or child justice intervention by DSWD Social Welfare Officers and / or LGU Social Workers / Para-Social Workers, police or other service providers. In-depth interviews were carried out remotely (due to the travel restrictions imposed by Covid-19). They were guided by a participatory, responsive, child-friendly question schedule.

In-depth interviews with social workers and service providers (virtual)

The key / allocated DSWD Social Welfare Officers and / or LGU Social Worker / Para-Social Worker were interviewed about the case, including on the process, the decision-making, case management and case outcomes, along with questions designed to identify the contribution of UNICEF inputs to any changes in case management and processes. Question schedules were developed to guide these interviews; however, interviews will be semi-structured, in order to ensure that they are participant-led.

Case file reviews

The evaluation team aimed to triangulate information gathered from child protection practitioners and clients, through reviewing a sample of files kept by DSWD Social Welfare Officers and / or LGU Social Workers / Para-Social Workers concerning individual child protection cases that have been serviced by the child protection system, involved in child protection proceedings or reunified with their families and communities. While this would typically be done by a team member reading the physical files, this will be quite challenging in the Covid-19 context. Instead, the team engaged with key social workers to do a 'walk through' the case files, through zoom. A prompt was used to pull out key information. This data aimed to give evaluators a sense of the types of cases which are being brought to or picked up by the case management system, and the response that is being implemented. It will also allow the team to examine the implementation of case management systems in a concrete way and to assess any changes in practice on the ground, as a result of UNICEF's programme interventions.

7.3.4 Survey of service providers

A survey was disseminated to LGU Social Welfare Officers (SWOs) / Social Workers / Para-Social Workers in UNICEF intervention LGUs / provinces. The aim of the survey was to enable researchers to collect basic data on the types of child protection cases referred to LGU SWOs, the capacity of service providers to address child protection issues, and any remaining challenges or gaps in the delivery of child protection services in these LGUs. The purpose was to identify how UNICEF interventions on child protection systems strengthening and in particular, strengthening of service delivery, have filtered through to service delivery at the local level.

7.3.5 Collation and secondary analysis of existing statistical data

The team analysed existing data sources containing data on indicators relevant to child protection in the Philippines. These data sources included the Demographic and Health Survey, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, and other key survey data (see the bibliography for a full list of sources).

In addition, service user monitoring data, reports and other data records for tracking cases were examined, along with any other monitoring data generated as part of the Child Protection Programme.

Request forms were developed for the purpose of collecting administrative data in UNICEF programming / research sites from (1) Social Welfare Officers; and (2) Police, Prosecutors and Courts. However, completed forms were only received from Northern Samar (LGU Social Welfare) and Angeles City Police, WCPD). Incomplete data was received from Zamboanga WCPD on children in conflict with the law.

7.3.6 Collation and secondary analysis of existing statistical data

The team also accessed media, including social media platforms, in order to assess UNICEF published outputs, including social media posts / messages, articles, video content etc. Sources were accessed through UNICEF's C4D and Communications team staff.

7.4 Sampling

7.4.1 Selection of sites

As per the ToR, the evaluation was carried out at the national and sub-national levels. The sub-national geographical areas covered by the evaluation included the following UNICEF programming LGUs: Valenzuela City, Angeles City, Zambonga City, Cagayan de Oro City, the provinces of Northern Samar, Western Samar, as well as BARMM. The research was focused at the LGU level; however, key provincial and regional stakeholders were also included in data collection. For Northern and Western Samar, data collection was carried out at the regional and provincial level, but also in one LGU in each province in order to examine UNICEF programming at the provincial and local levels. Likewise, in BARMM, two diverse LGUs were identified – one each from two separate provinces within the region, along with regional stakeholders. A full and detailed table of research sites and participants is included at Annex D.

Figure 2: Summary of data collection



7.4.2 Qualitative data collection

The sampling strategy for the qualitative data collection was purposive and non-random: all sample members were selected based on their satisfaction of criteria relevant to the evaluation questions, and whose information was likely to be of use for developing and testing emerging analytical ideas. Purposive sampling prioritised diversity so that respondents of diverse backgrounds and with diverse perspectives were included in the evaluation.

Key informant interviews: The national, provincial and local stakeholders who play a role in the implementation of UNICEF's child protection programme and child protection system more broadly will be identified for interview. At the national level, this included key UNICEF staff, relevant government agencies, other UN agencies and NGOs / CSOs as key implementing partners. The technical leads in each team / agency / department were selected for the interviews, unless they were not available, in which case a deputy was selected.

In total, 51 key informant interviews were carried out at the national level:

Figure 3: Key Informant Interviews at national level

Government	NGOs / CSOs	UNICEF Donors	Other UN Agencies	UNICEF Staff	Academia
9	12	1	4	24	1

Within each province/LGU key informant interviews were carried out with stakeholders in relevant government agencies at regional, provincial and city / municipality levels, as well as NGO and CBO partners, social welfare and community development officers, police officers, prosecutors and members of the judiciary. The purpose of this selection was to obtain particular knowledge, expertise and accurate information in relation to indicators in the evaluation framework, from stakeholders with in-depth knowledge of child protection, including stakeholders.

In selecting particular professionals to be included in the research at the sub-national level, researchers aimed to select the professional who is specially designated as the professional to work with child or families, and if more than one, we aimed to include the professional who has been with the relevant institution for the longest period of time (and is more likely to have a stronger / more accurate understanding of how child protection cases are handled, along with any changes over the period of implementation of UNICEF's child protection programme).

A range of challenges occurred in recruiting participants at the sub-national level, along with operational challenges in conducting remote interviews (see below, Section 6.6). This limited the number of participants that the team aimed to recruit; however, in total, 41 key stakeholder interviews were carried out at the sub-national level, across a range of locations and institutions, as set out in Figure 3, below.

Figure 4: Key stakeholder interviews completed at sub-national level to date

Location	Number of key stakeholders interviewed	Institutions
Valenzuela City	3	DSWD SWO; Family Court Personnel; Police (WCPD)

Cagayan de Oro City	6	Family Court; Child Protection NGO; Police (WCPD); DSWD; LGU SWO
Zamboanga City	6	LGU SWO; DSWD
Angeles City	7	Police (WCPD); child protection NGOs
Samar (province level)[135]	5	Provincial SWO; Police (WCPD); Prosecutors
Northern Samar (province level)	4	Provincial SWOs; Police (WCPD); NGO
Maguindanao, BARMM	8	Provincial SWO; LGU Official; Police (WCPD); NGO
Basilan, BARMM	2	Provincial SWO; Police (WCPD)

Case studies / in-depth life history interviews: For case studies, a 'typical case sampling' approach was primarily used, by which cases will be selected from monitoring data held by implementing partners to represent typical child protection cases (e.g., where children have received prevention and response services through UNICEF's programme). Implementing partners were asked to consider what criteria they associated with a 'typical' child protection case, for example in terms of how the case was referred, the type of child protection case, and the type of service or intervention received and what the outcomes of the case were. The aim was to select cases meeting these criteria will be selected with a view to achieving diversity in terms of demographic characteristics, such as gender and age, as well as the type of child protection case and the type of service or intervention received. In addition, interviews with implementing partners or local government institutions sought to identify any particularly important or revealing case studies. These included cases which were handled exceptionally well, or where there was a particularly positive outcome for the child, as well as cases that were handled poorly or resulted in a negative outcome for the child. This allowed us to reflect on the factors that are critical in determining the effectiveness (and ineffectiveness) of particular child protection interventions and approaches. However, owing to several challenges in accessing and recruiting research participants at the time of the study (see section 6.6 for more details), only three case studies were able to be completed:

Figure 5: Case studies completed

Location	Type of case studies	Interviews completed
Valenzuela City	Child, Social Worker and parent/carer	3 interviews, 1 case study
Zamboanga City	Child, Social Worker and parent/carer	6 interviews, 2 case studies

[135] Please note in this province was formerly known as Western Samar.

A detailed list of research participants by research location is included in the evaluation is attached at Annex B.

7.4.3 Quantitative data collection (service provider survey)

The service provider surveys were disseminated to Heads or Focal Points in each intervention LGU / province. Researchers used a purposive sampling technique, requesting that the surveys be completed by all SWOs / Para-Social Workers who are designated, assigned or otherwise work on child protection cases. In total, 21 surveys were received from five out of six research locations from SWOs and Para-Social Workers who work on cases involving children. The response rate in BARMM was quite low, with only one survey returned from Maguindanao. No surveys were received from Cagayan de Oro, despite follow up attempts (the reasons for the limited responses from some locations is set out in section 6.6). The following surveys were received from other locations:

Figure 6: Surveys completed

Location	Number of surveys
Valenzuela City	2
Zamboanga City	2
Angeles City	6
Samar (province level)[136]	3
Northern Samar (province level)	7
Maguindanao, BARMM	1

The vast majority of respondents (17 out of 21) were female; their ages ranged from 23 to 57 years; and the number of years of experience in their role ranged from under 12 months to 35 years.

7.5 Data analysis

7.5.1 Analysis methods

The evaluation team carried out a systematic review and analysis of all data, identifying key themes, patterns, discourses, relationships and explanations relevant to the research questions and indicators set out in the evaluation matrix. The evaluation matrix was used as a framework to organise data and guide analysis.

Analysis of qualitative data

All raw qualitative data was uploaded into NVivo software and coded to identify key themes, patterns and relationships relevant to the research questions.

The evaluation team used a thematic analysis, with a focus on understanding how the child protection system functions to prevent and respond to violence and child protection violations, and the role of UNICEF's programme within that. Researchers sought to identify both anticipated and unanticipated results of programming, good practices, challenges, levels of capacity and areas where improvements

[136] Please note in this province was formerly known as Western Samar.

can be made. Findings were also considered findings in light of whether they validated or challenged the assumptions and relationships included in the Theory of Change.

Analysis of quantitative data

Quantitative data from the stakeholder survey was entered into an excel spreadsheet, and a descriptive analysis was carried out.

A secondary analysis was carried out of available child protection and child justice administrative case data. The purpose of this analysis was to gain comprehensive, descriptive and objective information regarding the numbers of cases progressing through the system in different locations; the demographic characteristics of children receiving support including gender, age and disability; the types of cases referred; referral sources; and case outcomes. However, as noted above, the team were only able to access administrative data from a small number of locations.

Human rights-based and gender sensitive focus

As previously mentioned, the evaluation applied a human rights lens to data analysis, considering all evaluation findings from a conceptual framework which is normatively based on human rights standards and laws. This entailed the consideration of inequalities and structural forms of discrimination and the power dynamics that drive these, within the analysis of people's ideas and experiences of the child protection and child justice systems. All data generated was disaggregated, including by sex, ethnicity, age and disability (where this data is available) and a gender and equity sensitive analytical lens was applied to all evidence. The evaluation team will refer to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation and UN System Wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) Evaluation Performance Indicator Criteria.

7.5.2 Verification of findings

Findings were tested and verified through triangulation during the data analysis phase and through a review and validation process with stakeholders.

Data triangulation

Different types of data and different data sources were triangulated with one another in order to identify any inconsistencies in information. Through triangulation, the researchers have aimed to ensure the accuracy of findings, analysis and interpretation: drawing on different methods and theories assisted evaluators in overcoming any biases or weaknesses associated with a particular method.

Validation workshop

Three members of the evaluation team and two national consultants presented evaluation findings to the evaluation management team, the evaluation reference group, and key stakeholders in a virtual workshop (using Zoom). This provided an opportunity for the team to engage with stakeholders on the evaluation findings and refine and revise the recommendations through a participatory workshop about their applicability and practicality in the Philippines context.

Two rounds of revisions of draft report

The report was subject to three rounds of written review from UNICEF and other key stakeholders in order to test the findings and ensure all data have been accurately interpreted and that the explanatory analysis on which the findings are based is sound.

7.6 Limitations and constraints

The evaluation took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, with unprecedented heavy restrictions in place in the Philippines. This necessitated some adjustments to the evaluation's methods and processes; however, even with these adjustments, the impacts of the pandemic caused several challenges and limitations. Constraints and mitigation strategies are discussed in Figure 7, below, followed by a discussion of additional challenges faced by the team as a result of the impacts of COVID-19.

Figure 7: Constraints, limitations and mitigating strategies

Constraints/ Limitations	Mitigating Strategies
COVID-19 outbreak	The COVID-19 outbreak put significant constraints on data collection and travel within the Philippines. This has caused not only an inability to collect data face to face, but it has also impacted on the availability of participants, particularly at the sub-national levels. In some locations, participants struggled with unstable internet and phone line connections, frustrating opportunities to carry out interviews remotely. The impacts of COVID-19 have also been felt in more limited engagement of participants, again, particularly at the local level (but also in terms of extended time taken to organise permissions for interviews to take place at the local level). Other pressing priorities due to the COVID-19 pandemic and movement restrictions during the data collection phase have impacted in more limited availability of participants. In order to mitigate these impacts, the team has: • Monitored the situation on a continuous basis, paying particular attention to public health advice issued by the UK Government, the Government of the Philippines, UNICEF, and the World Health Organisation, in order to inform decisions regarding travel and any necessary amendments to data collection procedures; • Carried out all data collection, through Zoom, MS Teams, WhatsApp and Skype (this has been less of a limitation that initially anticipated as participants had become so familiar and comfortable with zoom and remote ways of working and engaging); • Put in place robust training, mentoring and supervision of national consultants (through the use of regular Zoom meetings, creation of a WhatsApp group etc.); • Ensured special ethical procedures are in place in order to minimise harm to children and parents during remote interviews (the ethical protocol includes information on this); and • Closely communicate with the UNICEF team on any potential slippages in terms of access to stakeholders / research participants, who may be experiencing heavier than usual workloads in light of Covid-19.
Access to respondents	This evaluation relied on the participation of a number of stakeholders and programme beneficiaries. As noted above, the impacts of COVID-19 and limitations on movement resulted in less engagement of sub-

	national participants than initially planned. In order to secure engagement by participants, the team: • Worked with UNICEF and the ERG members to ensure that the necessary permissions are granted at the national and regional levels to enable access to key stakeholders. Where one method of securing permissions did not result in engagement of key participants, the team used other methods (e.g., directly approaching the national team's existing contacts in key government departments); • Communicated with participants well in advance of the data collection in order to secure their availability; and • Ensured that evaluators are available to interview children and community members outside of school and working hours.
Accessing the 'right' participants / implementation of the sampling plan	Another challenge – particularly at the sub-national level – was that some participants initially put forward by a relevant institution did not appear to have the knowledge or ability to provide insights on UNICEF's programming (e.g., due to high staff turnover and not being in the post for a sufficient amount of time). Where this occurred, participants were asked to nominate a colleague who had been in the post longer / was more likely to be able to provide relevant insights, and a 'follow up' interview was carried out with these colleagues.
Determining causality and isolating effects	Whilst this evaluation was not designed to measure the (long-term) impact of UNICEF's Child Protection Programme, evaluators considered baseline data in order to gain a stronger understanding of how the Child Protection Programme contributed to outcomes for children, as well as the effectiveness of different interventions. The TOC was used as a guide for testing contribution along the results chain.
Reporting bias	The evaluation dealt with sensitive issues and involved evaluating professionals' work. Given these sensitivities, it is likely that the evidence gathered may be affected by a degree of reporting bias. Respondents may have been reluctant or unwilling to share sensitive and personal information either about traumatic events in their lives (children and adults) or about aspects of their professional experience which they may have feared might reflect badly either on them or on UNICEF (programme and case management implementing staff). To mitigate against reporting bias, evaluators carefully explained to all respondents that this is a learning-based exercise; and explain that their anonymity will be protected, and no negative personal or professional consequences will result from the information they share.
Recall bias	Given that the evaluation involved speaking with respondents about past experiences, it is likely that the evidence may also be affected by recall bias. This may lead to some inaccuracies where respondents have forgotten or misremembered events that happened previously; and respondents' ideas about when, where, how and why such events took place may have been coloured by subsequent events. Evaluators were careful to consider the impact of recall bias in the analysis and

	interpretation of research data. Wherever possible, evaluators sought to triangulate objective information through the assistance of other sources of information and documentation (e.g., files, reports, etc.).

Even with these strategies in place, the context in which the evaluation took place – with COVID-19 restrictions and during the course and aftermath of a Typhoon caused a number of limitations, particularly in terms of data collection at the sub-national level (though these factors did not limit data collection at the national level):

- The team utilised a list of contacts provided by UNICEF, which required considerable efforts to follow up (including through the DSWD Field / Regional Offices) after a period of non-response from many stakeholders. COVID-19 was a significant challenge to data gathering. Some participants were not able to confirm dates for KIIs due to other priorities at work. They were either in lockdown or engaged in the distribution of COVID-19 support to the LGUs' constituents and therefore had very limited availability;
- Following up on email invitations was challenging as at times, the mobile numbers of stakeholders was not functioning – the team at times used social media platforms, such as Facebook Messenger, to follow up but did not always receive a response;
- There were challenges with internet connection, especially for those working from home. To mitigate this, the team relied at times on using mobile phones to connect with the participant so she/he could be linked to Zoom. The team at times were required to do "continuation" calls to those with KIIs due to cuts in internet connectivity, particularly in BARMM, Mindanao and Samar; and
- At times, sub-national institutions put forward a stakeholder who was not appropriate (e.g., they took up their post recently and had no knowledge of UNICEF's Child Protection Programme). The team therefore at times adopted a "snow-balling" strategy to collect contact details of persons within the institution who had familiarity with UNICEF's CP Programme in the target years.

In relation to the collection of administrative data, only a small number of local institutions were able to provide data on children in conflict with the law and children at risk. It was found that most of the institutions (LGUs, DSWD and Police/Prosecutors) did not have or did not have access to the requested data: data were not available for every year of the Programme and / or data were not available in digital form and, due to COVID-19 restrictions and work from home mandates, stakeholders were unable to access their offices to retrieve data from hard copy records. The team utilised contacts at the national level in order to attempt to retrieve data, though nation institutions (e.g., DSWD; JJWC) were also experiencing challenges accessing data from local offices. However, the team were able to secure relating to children in conflict with the law from the JJWC Chair.

The challenges in accessing administrative data on children in conflict with the law and children at risk, along with data related to the functioning of the child justice and child protection systems were noted as an area in which there is a significant gap in both systems.

7.7 Ethical considerations

The evaluation was carried out in line with the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and the Ethical Principles of Research Involving Children,[137] along with Coram International's own ethical guidelines. A tailored and detailed ethical protocol was developed, and tools, including information sheet, consent forms and checklists and child protection referral protocols were also developed. The ethical protocol and tools are attached at Annex H. The following principles were applied:

Integrity, independence and impartiality: The absence of conflict of interest was duly checked prior to the start of the evaluation. Reasons for evaluative judgments and acceptance or rejection of comments on evaluation products were provided in written comment trails for each version of evaluation deliverables. All findings were triangulated.

Privacy and respect of rights: Stakeholders consulted were duly informed about the purpose of the evaluation, the criteria applied and the intended use of findings. The evaluation was conducted in full respect of the stakeholders' right to provide information in confidence. All information was used and represented only to the extent agreed to by its contributor.

Fair representation and avoidance of harm: The evaluation team ensured that participatory processes and evaluation questions were responsive to the needs and sensitivities of participants. Facilitators set a tone of informality and openness while building rapport in all meetings, interviews, and FGDs as appropriate to the individuals participating.

Accuracy, completeness and reliability: The evaluation ensured that all evidence was tracked from its source to its use and interpretation. All evaluation questions were answered through triangulation of data from multiple sources and processed using multiple analytical tools. All findings and conclusions are explicitly justified and substantiated, and the recommendations are based on findings and not bias.

Data collection with children: Individual interviews were conducted with children (12 – 18 years) who were connected to the child protection and child justice system. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, these interviews were conducted remotely. During these interviews, the UNICEF Procedure for Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation, Data Collection and Analysis (2015) involving children was followed. The children were asked to participate on a voluntary basis and their participation was strictly confidential.

The evaluation underwent **two ethical review processes.** The first was a review by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (a Philippines government review), which comprehensively assessed the methodology, data collection methods and plan and ethical protocol and tools, along with the data collection tools. This review focused in particular on the aspects of data collection involving the DSWD. Permission was granted, and a notice of this permission is attached at Annex G.

A second ethical review process was carried out by Coram International's independent expert ethical review board. This board considered the methodology, data collection methods and plan and ethical protocol and tools and a favourable communication was given as attached at Annex G. This review process applied to the entire evaluation, not just those aspects relating to data collected through the DSWD.

137 UNICEF Office of Research. 2013. Ethical Research Involving Children. https://childethics.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/ERIC-compendium-approved-digital-web.pdf

8. Evaluation Findings

8.1 Relevance of the Child Protection Program

Evaluation question

To what extent are the objectives, pre-conditions, pathways, change strategies/approaches and implementation modalities of the Child Protection Programme (still) valid and respond to the current needs, priorities and policies of the relevant national and sub-national stakeholders, and rights holders?

7.1.1 Summary of findings on relevance

Overall, the objectives, pre-conditions, pathways, change strategies/approaches and implementation modalities of the Child Protection Programme were found to be largely relevant to the programming context. The programmes were designed and grounded within a system strengthening approach and priorities were selected on the basis of a robust evidence base. The current Programme is mostly still valid and responsive to the current needs, priorities and policies of the relevant national and sub-national stakeholders. However, it is suggested that the programme's Theory of Change (TOC) be slightly revised in light of a number of external changes within which the programme operates and internal repositioning of programming on parenting since the current TOC was drafted. This process is already underway as part of a CP Programme review process. Consideration should also be given to the impacts of the Mandanas judgement and the further devolution of child protection budgets, governance and service delivery to the local levels, which will take place from 2022. As part of the TOC review, the Team could carry out an assessment of whether and the extent to which the assumptions still hold and whether the results chain needs to be modified. This is particularly important due to the need to assess and link upstream programming with downstream results – this will be important going forward, in light of the implications of the Mandanas judgement, noted above.

The analysis also indicated that, while various ad hoc initiatives were carried out enabling some engagement of children and adolescents in several programme components, no systematic process was in place to enable meaningful engagement of children and adolescents in the development and assessment of programme priorities. A systematic engagement process could help demonstrate the programme's relevance to its core beneficiaries. In addition, while gender dynamics and equity issues have been somewhat integrated into the programme's design, some work could be done to strengthen implementation and make more explicit the gender and equity focus of the programme.

7.1.2 Relevance of Programme structure, pre-conditions and pathways

The structure and focus of UNICEF's Child Protection Programmes (2012-2016+2017-2018 and 2019 – 2023) are rights-based and grounded in the systems strengthening framework, which aligns well with international and national laws and development targets and with UNICEF's global VAC and child protection strategies.

Focus on VAC

The focus of both programmes – preventing and responding to violence against children (VAC) in development and humanitarian contexts – is grounded in a solid evidence base, as articulated in key Programme documents.[138] The current Programme is informed by comprehensive studies of VAC and

[138] E.g., UNICEF Philippines, *Protective environment Programme strategy note*, 2019 – 2023, 21 December 2018.

a literature review of the drivers of VAC commissioned by UNICEF and carried out in 2015, which indicated that children in the Philippines experience high rates of violence and have limited access to support and services.[139] The focus on violence against children also aligns with UNICEF's Global Strategic Plans 2014-2017 and 2018-2021, both of which identify VAC prevention and response as priority areas, and in particular, Goal Area 3 of the Global Strategic Plan 2018-2021: *"Every child is protected from violence and exploitation."*

A comprehensive situation analysis (SitAn) was also carried out in 2017, which informed the design and priorities of the current Child Protection Programme. The SitAn, which was developed through a consultative process with key government, UN and NGO stakeholders, included an analysis of the key barriers, bottlenecks and enablers in relation to VAC and child protection. According to research participants from UNICEF, the country programme, including the Child Protection Programme 2019 - 2023, was very much a response to the findings of the SitAn, which provided a good evidence base for the programme.

The inclusion of a focus on child online sexual exploitation in the 2018 – 2023 Child Protection Programme through the SaferKidsPH Consortium (a six-year programme that aims to reduce the prevalence of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children) is a response to the high rates of cases reported to the DOJ's Office of Cybercrimes relating to the online sexual exploitation of children. The Philippines is ranked amongst the top 10 countries for online sexual exploitation of children.[140] This focus was also found to be highly relevant to the priorities of Government and NGO stakeholders.

However, while the focus on preventing and responding to VAC is highly relevant to the programming context, the underlying assumption on which the programme is structured is that VAC is the sole driver of child protection risks in the Philippines. This assumption encompasses not only the more explicit VAC initiatives, but also several initiatives that contribute to VAC prevention (for instance, including parenting and integrated family well-being programmes within the 4Ps programme is aimed at preventing VAC by improving parenting skills and practices). While a focus on VAC does indeed encompass a number of different CP Programme priorities, other priorities do not neatly or obviously fit within the focus on VAC. For instance, while a key issue of concern for children in conflict with the law is their exposure to VAC, the work on child justice is broader than this and includes improving access to child-friendly justice and addressing the harms caused by processing children through the criminal justice system. These issues may not be neatly accommodated by this underlying assumption, which may have caused some fragmentation in the programme design. A possible danger of this assumption or an unintended consequence, is that child protection is reduced to VAC, and a specific child protection systems response to child protection is replaced by a broader undefined systems response to VAC – albeit a complex and central child protection concern. Consideration should be given to articulating a pathway between how child protection systems strengthening is an important investment for all priority child protection risks in the Philippines. Consideration could also be given to more explicit positioning of justice for children within the overall systems strengthening framework.

Systems strengthening framework

Both programmes take a systems-strengthening approach, with lines and actions and inputs aiming to support three pillars of work, as expressed in the current Programme's preconditions. Firstly, the enabling environment formed by the legal and regulatory framework must be more conducive for child protection, in both development and humanitarian settings. Secondly, the supply of effective

[139] The Government of the Philippines supported by UNICEF and CSO partners conducted the National Baseline Study on Violence against Children (NBS-VAC).
https://www.unicef.org/philippines/PHL_NBSVAC_Results_ES.pdf
[140] UNICEF Philippines. (2018) Programme Strategy Note for UNICEF Philippines 2019-2023. p69.

and efficient child protection services, including in both development and humanitarian settings, and including specialised VAC services, must be better able to prevent and respond to child protection concerns in a timely and appropriate way. Thirdly, the demand for VAC prevention and response interventions must be strengthened through social and behavioural change, particularly with regard to gender-related norms and behaviours.

Globally, UNICEF articulated its move toward to child protection systems strengthening approach in 2008, recognizing that this approach avoids the fragmentation and inefficiency of an 'issue-based' approach and instead aims at achieving sustainable coverage of child protection at scale, leading to a more effective and comprehensive approach for children exposed to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation (see information box, below).[141]

Information box: UNICEF's shift to a child protection systems building approach

Historically, UNICEF focused on protecting at-risk and vulnerable child populations, such as displaced children, children in street situations or children in the worst forms of child labour. From 2000, UNICEF accepted that focusing on particular issues rather than building a holistic child protection system led to fragmentation, the development of parallel systems for protecting children and failed to address the needs of all children suffering violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. This acceptance led to a change of approach, reflected in UNICEF's 2008 Child Protection Strategy (the 2008 Strategy), which has remained the overarching strategic framework driving UNICEF's child protection programming globally. Rather than focussing on issue-based programming (e.g., programmes to address child labour, child trafficking, etc.), the strategy promoted child protection system strengthening.

At the global level, UNICEF has published a new strategy and guidance on child protection; however, based on the global child protection strategy (2008) that was in place at the time both Child Protection Programmes were developed, it can be seen that the outputs of both Child Protection Programmes align well with the core components of the child protection systems strengthening approach, as set out below.

Figure 8: UNICEF child protection systems strengthening framework and UNICEF Philippines programme outputs

Child protection system components	2017 – 2018 extended programme	2019 – 2023 programme
Enabling environment: A robust legal and regulatory framework, as well as specific policies related to national child protection systems strengthening; and Effective governance structures, including coordination across government departments, between levels of decentralization and between formal and informal actors.	**Output 1:** Strengthened institutional frameworks to prevent and respond to violence, abuse and exploitation of children.	**Output 1:** The legislative and institutional framework is strengthened to better protect boys and girls vulnerable and exposed to violence, abuse, exploitation, and harmful gender norms.
Services: A continuum of services (spanning prevention	**Output 2**: The social welfare system has strengthened	**Output 2:** The child welfare system has strengthened

[141] Wulczyn, et. al., 'Adapting a systems approach to child protection: Key concepts and considerations, 2010, UNICEF New York.

and response); human resources and infrastructure	approaches and evidence to improve services for children and families at risk.	capacity to deliver local, multisectoral, gender-sensitive services that prevent and respond to violence against children. **Output 4**: The Government have strengthened coordination mechanisms and approaches to enhance the capacities of parents and caregivers to practice behaviours and demonstrate attitudes which help children and adolescents to learn, thrive and be protected from violence. **Output 6:** Strengthened capacities of the child protection system (services, families and communities) to protect at-risk children and adolescents in BARMM.
Social norms: Social beliefs, behaviours and norms that support child protection		**Output 3**: The general public in the Philippines, adolescents in particular, are better informed and act to eliminate all forms of violence.
Child protection in emergencies: System and services to respond to needs of children in emergencies	**Output 3**: Strengthened national, local and individual capacities and responses for child protection in humanitarian situations.	**Output 5:** Children and adolescents affected by disasters and in Mindanao affected by armed conflict are increasingly able to access critical social services.

National and sub-national stakeholders who participated in the KIIs agreed that focusing both Programmes on strengthening the child protection system to prevent and better respond to VAC was highly relevant and aligned well with the priorities of their Ministries, Departments and agencies.

Moving forward, it is suggested that GPH and UNICEF further expand and elaborate a working definition of 'child protection system' in line with UNICEF's new global Child Protection Strategy (2021 – 2030). This strategy details eight key components of a 'child protection system' (legal, regulatory and policy; governance; services; standards and oversight; resources; participation; and data). It also places increased emphasis on prevention, including social and behaviour change.

Upstream focus

UNICEF's current CP Programme focuses on 'upstream work' – providing support to national laws, policies, capacity and partnerships to develop and sustain scaled-up programme delivery, rather than

providing direct service delivery (with the exception of emergency programming). This focus arose out of a 2017 evaluation of the Country Programme 2012-2018, which found that UNICEF was well positioned to provide national leadership on the prevention and response to violence against children. It recommended that UNICEF expand its upstream work by harnessing its comparative advantage from its global presence and ability to convene and facilitate collaboration and coordination between sectors and departments. The evaluation highlighted the importance of continued strategic high-level capacity development, including for the implementation of policies. It also identified the importance of working at regional and provincial level to strengthen the coordination of programmes and scaling up of successful implementation models.

The focus on 'upstream work' is well aligned to the programming context and generally suited to programming in a middle-income country. It also harnesses UNICEF's positioning and its partnerships with national government and key NGOs and other development partners well, allowing it to influence the law and policy agenda, and provide support to the development and implementation of laws and policies. This upstream focus is valued by national government stakeholders who participated in the KIIs.

While the bulk of UNICEF's investments are at the national level, another important focus on the programme is the provision of support at the sub-national level, through working with 10 focus LGUs to strengthen systems and service delivery. Government and NGO stakeholders at the national and LGU levels highlighted the importance of this focus on programming and capacity building at the LGU level, noting that the legal, policy and institutional framework at the national level is quite comprehensive; what is needed is a focus on capacity building at the local level.

While strengthening national government institutions is important, it is crucial that support and investments provided at the national government (and LGU) level contribute to improved systems and services 'on the ground.' While stakeholders tended to express agreement with the upstream approach and valued UNICEF's interventions, NGO stakeholders, along with a number of Government stakeholders noted that there appears to be an assumption in UNICEF's programming that national level inputs will 'automatically' flow down to service delivery, for instance: *"Although there is a system, national systems don't always translate into the local services or programmes, so I think it's a big piece of work that all groups should be working on together...you have the laws and services, but when you go on the ground in the communities, people still cannot feel it."*[142] This view was also noted among a number of UNICEF staff members: *"you assume that the upstream work will eventually affect or influence your downstream work but in the Philippines, it might take a while and it may take some time, especially if you don't have that support for downstream activities."*[143]

Although the Philippines is already heavily decentralised, the ruling of the Supreme Court in Mandanas in relation to budget decentralisation, is likely to result in many social welfare programmes being devolved to the LGUs (see information box below). This in turn, will change the political landscape for child protection, devolving a greater level of responsibility on local government. National stakeholders expressed concern at the limited capacity of many LGUs to implement social welfare, and particularly, child protection programmes effectively, and suggested that UNICEF Philippines and other development partners focus on supporting the national governments to prepare for the devolution by strengthening LGUs through capacity building. One stakeholder commented:

> *"My fear is that, come 2022, there will be a reduced workforce in the national government, because there will be no more programmes and projects to be implemented by us. We will need to revisit the programming priorities. Probably, in the next year, at national level, we will*

[142] KII with representative of Save the Children Philippines (virtual), date.
[143] KII with representative of Social Policy Team, UNICEF Philippines (virtual), 8 July 2021.

be involved in more capacity building, increasing the competencies of the personnel in the LGUs. The local government units will need to be assisted in terms of providing efficient, effective and fast delivery of social welfare services."[144]

INFORMATION BOX: The Mandanas Ruling

In 2018 the Philippine Supreme Court decreed that Local Government Units (LGUs) were to receive more funding from the national budget. The 'Mandanas ruling' mandates Government to compute LGUs' internal revenue allotment share based on 40 per cent of all national taxes. In effect the ruling, and the subsequent Executive Orders signed by President Duterte will mean that from 2022 onwards the LGUs' share on the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) will include all national taxes such as tariffs and customs duties and will not be limited to national internal revenue taxes. The landmark ruling will decentralize key services to the LGU level across the Philippines and kickstart a new model of localised service delivery.[145]

Impact of the Mandanas ruling on governance in the Philippines

In practice, the Mandanas Ruling will empower LGUs and reduce the responsibilities and powers of the national government in providing services to the Filipino people. It is expected that LGUs who are more familiar with people's needs will be better equipped to provide efficient and targeted service delivery that meet the needs of local communities.[146] Under the new model of governance LGUs will be empowered to provide healthcare, agricultural support and the delivery of key services whilst the national government will retain oversight, coordinating various LGUs and providing technical support to LGU officials.

Impact of the ruling on the delivery of child protection services

It is expected that with the introduction of the Mandanas ruling, most of the national work of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will fall to the LGUs for the first time. How exactly this model of child protection service delivery is expected to operate on a day-to-day basis has yet to be decided and negotiated by all the duty bearers involved in delivering child protection services. What is known at this stage is that, as a direct result of this ruling, the DSWD will have to scale back its role in the provision of direct services, while LGUs will need to scale up their capacity to deliver child protection services.

The World Bank anticipates that the ruling is a much-needed opportunity for decentralisation in a country where bureaucracy often acts as an impediment to efficient services delivery.[147] The Government of the Philippines is also hopeful that the Mandanas Ruling would bring a lasting positive change to the Filipino people.

Under the new model the DSWD would continue to be responsible for policy development, however it would fall to the LGUs to enact the policies in their communities. This could potentially create a gap between policymaking and the implementation of direct services.

Additionally, it is anticipated that the huge change in service delivery will inevitably be accompanied by challenges. There is a worry that LGUs will be unable to support local needs adequately, due to a

[144] KII with Representative of DSWD (virtual), 21 June 2021.
[145] The World Bank, Philippines: Mandanas Ruling provides opportunities for improving service delivery through enhanced decentralization, June 10, 2021. Available at Philippines World Bank
[146] Rappler, Duterte orders national government, LGUs: Prepare for full devolution of basic services, June 3, 2021; Devolution of Basic Services
[147] The World Bank, Philippines: Mandanas Ruling provides opportunities for improving service delivery through enhanced decentralization, June 10, 2021. Available at Philippines World Bank

lack of human and financial resources. Many LGUs also do not have the technical knowledge, skills or systems to deliver direct services. Whilst some work is being undertaken nationally to prepare for the impact of decentralisation, the majority of LGUs remain underprepared. In particular, the devolution of child protection services without adequate support and resources is a major concern, as many LGUs currently do not even employ a qualified Social Worker or have the skills and resources to deal with the complex nature of child protection service delivery.

The current Child Protection Programme does not clearly conceptualise or articulate how national level inputs will flow down to the strengthening of systems and service provision at the LGU level. The preconditions and pathways to change could better articulate the need to ensure implementation of child protection laws and policies at all levels of government, and it could better conceptualise how interventions at the national level will filter down to the level of service delivery. Without this, the assumption remains that changes initiated at the national level will 'automatically' filter down to the level at which services are delivered.

This is particularly important in light of the Mandanas Supreme Court Ruling, in order to remain relevant. UNICEF Philippines is in a good position, with strong relationships and partnerships with key Government representatives and NGOs at the national and LGU level, to take a central role in supporting the Mandanas devolution process. It could support national government along with supporting service delivery, perhaps through modelling and capacity building, with LGUs.

Adaptation of CP Programme to external changes and challenges

UNICEF's current Child Protection Programme has shown strong resilience to major external threats and risks and has demonstrated adaptability to COVID-19 and the changing political landscape. This has allowed the programme to remain relevant to the changing context. The COVID-19 pandemic has substantially altered the programming landscape, particularly in the Philippines, where lockdowns and restrictions on movement have been long-lasting and substantial. This is likely to have resulted in increased exposure to VAC in the home and has cut children off from systems and services (e.g., schools, child development centres, community groups, healthcare facilities etc.) that can support them. COVID-19 has also led to an increase in online sexual exploitation and abuse. Against this backdrop, UNICEF country offices are adapting their programme interventions to address the impact of COVID-19 on children.[148]

Several stakeholders – at the national and sub-national level – noted how the Child Protection Programme had successfully adapted its programmes to the context of COVID-19 and supported partners to transition using online platforms (see section 7.1.4, below).

8.1.3 Relevance of objectives / outputs

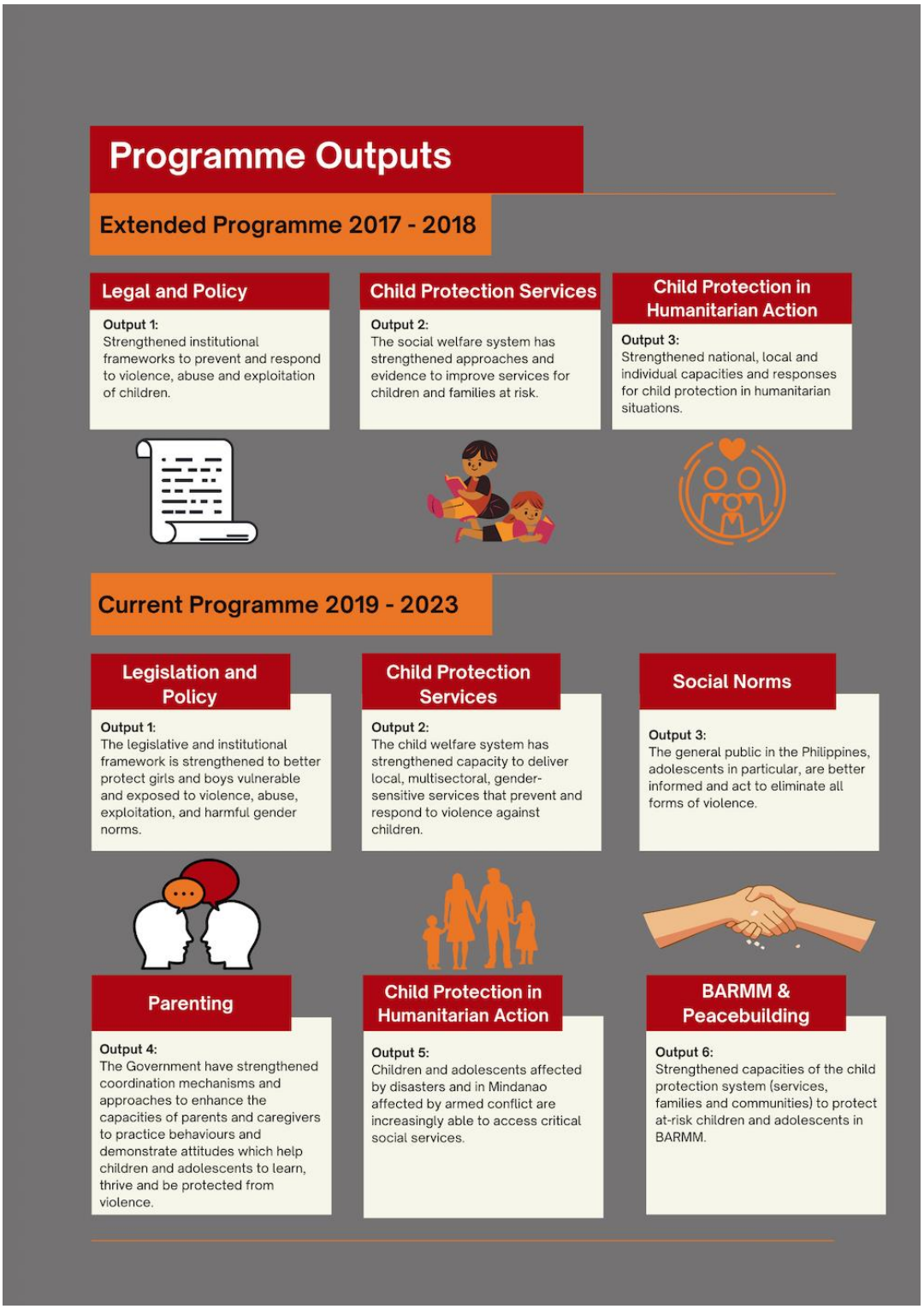
Overall, the objectives / outputs for both programmes were found to be relevant to the programming context, though it is suggested that outputs could be consolidated and restructured somewhat in order to bring both a sharper systems focus and to align with the new global Child Protection Strategy. The overall objective of the 2012 – 16 (+2017-18) CP Programme was to improve national and local public sector institutional frameworks, based on the assumption that this approach would increase access to well-coordinated child protection services for the most vulnerable children in at least five disadvantaged LGUs (this was extended to 10 LGUs during the two-year extension). The specific focus of the programme was to provide policy advice, technical assistance and targeted advocacy to address

[148] UNICEF Child Protection's adaptive programming was used as a case study on programme pivot in response to COVID 19 See: https://www.unicef.org/eap/not-going-back?fbclid=IwAR3g2q9fz4vEHxVL3taYF1YTQZfjLNY1BTdJiVx30XOWnedOiwAX3S9aXvw

violence against children, including increasing evidence to address online sexual exploitation and expanding support for parenting support interventions. For children affected by armed conflict, the priorities were to prevent child recruitment and support disengaged children.

For the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme, six outputs were developed, the relevance of which are discussed below.

Figure 9: Programme Outputs for 2017-18 and 2019-23 Programmes



(1) The legislative and institutional framework is strengthened to better protect boys and girls vulnerable and exposed to violence, abuse, exploitation, and harmful gender norms

Advocacy for an improved legislative and policy enabling environment for children vulnerable to harm is central to UNICEF's work in child protection globally and in the Philippines. However, as noted in the Situation Analysis that informed the development of the current CP Programme, and also as identified by Government and NGO KII participants, the legal and policy framework in the Philippines is comprehensive, protective and largely consistent with international standards (see Annex J for a documentation of key laws and policies). The overriding issue or challenge is that key laws and policies are not being implemented effectively. More effort should be paid to supporting implementation of existing laws and policies, rather than on further developing the legal framework.

The exception, however, is BARMM. The focus on child protection legal and policy development is highly relevant to the BARMM context, in which new regional laws are currently being developed and UNICEF is placed in an excellent position to support the development of rights-based child protection (and other child-related) laws.

It was also noted that advocating for the maintenance of a protective framework was a relevant objective and intervention, as demonstrated by UNICEF's advocacy opposing attempts to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility (see section 12.3, on effectiveness, below); NGO and Government stakeholders mentioned this as a highly relevant and successful intervention. UNICEF is well positioned within key multi-sector statutory bodies to monitor legislative and policy developments and help ensure that the protective legal and policy framework is maintained.

One component of the Programme that has re-focused on the implementation of laws and policies is the Justice for Children component, and this was found to be highly relevant. Access to justice is a fundamental human right and an essential prerequisite for the protection and promotion of all human rights. Children's access to justice is therefore central to UNICEF's global mandate to advocate for the protection of children's rights, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international human rights norms and standards.[149] The focus of the 2012-2018 Child Protection Programme was primarily on data collection and monitoring the situation of children, as part of a larger effort to support partners to design and operate a Child Protection Information Management System. Broader support for the implementation of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act 2006 was limited, which appears to have hampered achievements in relation to the information management system – according to several UNICEF staff members, the focus on information management systems was premature, given the insufficiency of institutional capacity and infrastructure and the limited efforts on wider systems building.

However, the focus of the programme shifted under the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme, following the findings of an evaluation on the implementation of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act 2006. This confirmed that implementation of the Law was weak and inconsistent, with very limited use of diversion and rehabilitation.[150] The justice for children component of the programme therefore shifted to supporting the implementation of the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act and wider systems reform, which is relevant to the programming context, given the results of the evaluation which demonstrated the need to build institutional and service delivery frameworks. It allowed UNICEF to

[149] UNICEF, 'Goal Area 3: Every child is protected from violence and exploitation: Global Annual Results Report 2019', 2020. P61. https://www.unicef.org/media/76921/file/Global-annual-results-report-2019-goal-area-3.pdf

[150] Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act, 2006, p9.

work together with the national government coordination body – the Juvenile Justice Welfare Council – to identify a systems-based work plan. As illustrated by one UNICEF staff member:

> *"In 2015, the baseline survey on violence against children was pivotal, and almost concurrently the evaluation on the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act concluded. We tried to influence the front office to not just focus on information management systems but on the wider issues. It was clear we needed to optimise the evidence that we had… Now the approach for justice for children is to help the Government fulfil its mandate under the UNCRC and work on advocacy to encourage Government to fill the gaps in the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act. The requirement to complete an evaluation response plan gave an impetus to escalate targeted conversations with the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council [JJWC] to identify results aligned to the evaluation, and we tried to influence planning and programming in those areas. For the first time we had a rolling workplan with the JJWC. We also conducted an intentional search for donors interested in juvenile justice programming."*[151]

The focus on supporting key institutions to implement the JJWC was considered highly relevant by sub-national stakeholders across the different UNICEF programming LGUs / research locations. Support provided by UNICEF, particularly in terms of training and capacity building and strengthening multi-disciplinary coordination, was seen as crucial in ensuring the implementation of the JJWC.

(2) The child welfare system has strengthened capacity to deliver local, multisectoral, gender-sensitive services that prevent and respond to violence against children

Output 2 is embedded within a system strengthening framework which, as set out above, is highly relevant to the Philippines context and well aligned with UNICEFs global strategies. This framework was also found to be highly relevant to the priorities of Government and NGO stakeholders. However, a greater focus on local service delivery was found to be needed.

At the LGU level, UNICEF's support for the protection of children in conflict with the law has been found to be highly relevant, especially in enabling and strengthening their capacities in the operations and maintenance of Bahay Pag-asa. UNICEF's support for the training of its staff, especially on case management, referral pathways and coordination with the stakeholders were highly recognized to be one of the most significant interventions provided. In one LGU, UNICEF's support enabled them to adopt the prescribed worker-cases ratio, security of tenure among critically needed personnel, fiduciary support thereby enhancing their capacities for child protection and providing support for children in conflict with the law.

The focus on capacity building at the local level appears to have been relevant to developing a greater understanding among institutions of their mandates and responsibilities, along with how they should work together in a more coordinated way. For example, as reported by a research participant in Zamboanga: *"each sector understands their responsibilities and the need to prioritise children's needs and the people handling these cases have a better understanding."*[152] Improving coordination and supporting multi-disciplinary response to children in conflict with the law and children at risk were highly valued as relevant at the sub-national level.

The support provided by UNICEF has been recognized by a family court judge to be very relevant to the performance of their duties, especially those children who need protection and managing the court cases. It was also highlighted that UNICEF support enabled the Philippine Judicial Academy to be updated with current Supreme Court procedures and new laws. The support of UNICEF even

[151] KII with UNICEF Child Protection Team member, 17 February 2021 (virtual).
[152] NGO Zamboanga

inspired them to be involved, sometimes to extent that they talk with the children themselves and their parents to understand the family and child circumstances.

(3) The general public in the Philippines, adolescents in particular, are better informed and act to eliminate all forms of violence

For the 2019-2023 Child Protection Programme, social behaviour change received an increased focus, and a separate output was created to drive this agenda. The focus on social behaviour change in the context of child protection is highly relevant and evidence based (the National Study on VAC carried out in 2015 found very low levels of reporting and help-seeking among victims of VAC and high levels of corporal punishment in the home). The focus on social behaviour change also aligns very well with UNICEF's new global Child Protection Strategy 2021 – 2030, which prioritises primary prevention initiatives, including social behaviour change and parenting (see output 5, below).

Among stakeholders (particularly those within UNICEF and from NGOs), a focus on social behaviour change was seen as highly relevant and necessitated a separate output to ensure sufficient focus on this: *"I think that the biggest challenges are happening on the ground and being able to change the behaviour of parents who facilitate abuse towards their children – this is a social and behavioural norms issue. A lot more investment should be made here;"*[153] *"We prioritized programming on social norms. It was good to have a specific output on this, because in the Country Programme development, we were able to find a space for it, and recognize that social norms are a driver of VAC."*[154]

The involvement of a C4D specialist within UNICEF in driving this output aligns well with the re-focusing of C4D specialist away from more generalized communications toward social behaviour change that recently occurred at the global level within UNICEF.

(4) The Government have strengthened coordination mechanisms and approaches to enhance the capacities of parents and caregivers to practice behaviours and demonstrate attitudes which help children and adolescents to learn, thrive and be protected from violence

The output on strengthening capacities of parents and carers was placed into the CP Programme sometime after the development of the TOC and, as a result, it is not clearly integrated into the TOC. According to research participants from within UNICEF, the parenting output was initially placed within the Education Programme, but it was moved into the CP Programme mainly due to the linkages of the Child Protection team with the Department of Social Welfare and Development where it was felt it would be a better fit. However, the intention was to situate parenting as a cross-sectoral intervention. The decision to move parenting into the CP Programme was described as a 'top down' decision, with no clear (documented) articulation as to how it relates to the broader CP Programme. While it was intended to be a cross-sectoral output, it appears that insufficient guidance was developed on how to operationalize it in a cross-sectoral way. The movement of parenting into the CP Programme also took place at a time in which there was no CP Section Chief in place, which hampered the ability of the programme to integrate parenting horizontally in an effective way.[155] Initially, as a result, parenting lacked direction within the CP Programme and remains underfunded.

However, while the programme continues to have limited funding, a clear approach to parenting has now been articulated. UNICEF's parenting programme (Masayang Pamilya: MaPa) is a suite of parenting resources adapted from the evidence-based programme, Parenting Lifelong Health.[156] Its placement within the Philippines' flagship conditional cash transfer programme (the 4Ps), underscores

[153] KII with cross-sector focal point, UNICEF Philippines (virtual), date.
[154] KII with member of Child Protection Team, UNICEF Philippines, date.
[155] KII with former member of management team, UNICEF Philippines (virtual), 1 June 2021.
[156] World Health Organisation, Parenting for Lifelong Health: A suite of parenting programmes to prevent violence. https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/parenting-for-lifelong-health.

the relevance of the parenting programme and avoids the creation of parallel programmes that are not well integrated into existing systems and services.

In addition, the relevance of the parenting output to the CP Programme is empirically quite clear. As noted above, the Philippines VAC Study found high rates of violence, including corporal punishment, in the home.

Therefore, parenting is highly relevant to the CP Programme, as a key primary and secondary prevention initiative. However, the CP Programme's TOC should be updated to incorporate the parenting component in a meaningful manner. It is also suggested that consideration be given to merging outputs 3 (social norm change) and 4 (parenting) into one output focused on prevention. This would ensure greater alignment with the UNICEF's new global Child Protection Strategy 2021 – 2030.

(5) Children and adolescents affected by disasters and armed conflict are increasingly able to access critical social services

Given the multiple protection deprivations faced by children and families affected by armed conflict, including weak capacities of local systems, as well as the increased risks and threats posed by natural hazards, children living in BARMM are a priority group for the CP Programme, therefore the focus of the Programme on emergency response and systems building in BARMM (see output 6 below) is highly relevant. This also aligns well with UNICEF's overarching goal of reaching the most vulnerable children with its programming.

While, in other UNICEF sectors / Teams, emergency -related work was integrated into other outputs, the decision was made to retain a separate output related to emergencies in the CP Programme. UNICEF's key role as co-lead of the humanitarian Child Protection Working Group, and its role in implementing the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) was considered to require the CP Programme to have a separate output relating to emergency response. This was key to elevating it as a priority within the CP Programme, which, given the severe impacts of natural emergencies and conflict in the Philippines-, is appropriate.

(6) Strengthened capacities of the child protection system (services, families and communities) to protect at-risk children and adolescents in BARMM

The 2019 – 2023 CP Programme includes a stand-alone output focusing on child protection system strengthening in BARMM. While it could be argued that this output should be integrated into the broader national service delivery strengthening output above (output 2), having a stand-alone system strengthening output focused on BARMM appears to be relevant and well justified, and allows UNICEF to harness and capitalise on its strong partnership with the new Regional Government, and support it to achieve a 'peace dividend' with the aim of building stronger systems for service delivery. As noted by one former and one current member of UNICEF Philippines' Management Team, in relation to BARMM: *"In our country programme, we had deliberately written in a design for the Mindanao field offices, where the greatest disparities were. It's where you have the ongoing conflict and natural disasters. It was thus critically important that we should see this as our priority in our programming…it's critical when you've got such high levels of security and conflict and disparities; you have to invest;"*[157] *"BARMM is a conflict setting with many non-state armed groups, three of which are allied to ISIS. Every day, children are released from armed groups, so that monitoring and reporting part of our programme is not optional."*[158]

The 2019 – 2023 Country Programme was designed to capitalise on UNICEF's work in ARMM and its partnership with the new regional government as the region transitioned into BARMM. It was seen as

[157] KII with former member of management team, UNICEF Philippines (virtual), 1 June 2021.
[158] KII with member of management team, UNICEF Philippines (virtual), date.

crucial to support the Government to build systems and services to maintain stability in the region, and this required an integrated approach in which accountabilities and reporting were not only to the national office but to the Head of the Field Office in Mindanao – this helped to implement integrated programming focused on building up systems for service delivery. This is illustrated by a former and current UNICEF staff member:

> *"We could see the political situation, the security threats, with ISIS recruiting from schools. We'd done this huge disengagement of all these children from armed groups. It was critical that we took a community wide approach and re-engaged them with services. Because of that, we felt that, yes, it's important to respond to issues, but we needed to be investing in the long-term security of BARMM. We needed to be helping them with systems, nobody else was actually helping them. You had a government who was brand new, who had come from the military, but then were suddenly leading the Ministry of Finance. So, we did that, because it was based on the situation analysis that we did for BARMM and because it was based on relationships. We felt like we were in this unique position because we had worked with them on the disengagement, and we did it because they were asking us to do that. We felt that at the time, other agencies didn't have a big team on the ground."*[159]

> *"We have a relationship with MILF – UNICEF really has a comparative advantage. The former leadership of MILF is the government. We were able to advocate for a very holistic provision on child rights in the Bangsamoro Organic Law. They are really trying to achieve child protection and we are building on our already harmonious partnership with them."*[160]

Also, as BARMM is at a very different stage in terms of the presence of a functioning child protection system, situating systems building in BARMM as a separate output is relevant. The programme in BARMM is focused on systems building rather than systems strengthening, and it is appropriate for the Programme in BARMM to work on areas that should not necessarily be a focus at the national level (e.g., development of law and policy framework, institutions etc.). Social workers are limited in number and the capacity of social workers is also limited (in terms of their knowledge and skills in working in the area of child protection). Very little funds have been available to support the development of child protection and social welfare programmes. However, budget allocations for social welfare services have increased substantially in BARMM, due to the national Government Block Grant. This highlights the relevance of this separate work stream for BARMM – UNICEF are very well positioned to support the Government in building and strengthening the child protection system.

Consolidation and integration of CP Programme outputs

While recognising that the CP Programme is substantial in size and scope, the rationale for having six outputs is not clearly documented. The Child Protection Team may want to consider revising the number of outputs as part of the process for updating of the Programme Strategy Note and TOC. This is also timely, given the new global Child Protection Strategy 2021 – 2030 and the impending devolution that will follow the Mandanas judgement.

8.1.4 Relevance of change strategies and implementation modalities

Nine office wide change strategies have been developed in the 2019 – 2023 Country Programme to guide programming. These include: (1) High-level policy advocacy to influence decision makers; (2) Scaling up tested interventions and innovations for children; (3) Coordination across multiple agencies and levels of government; (4) Evidence generation, analysis, and utilization; (5) Expanding private

[159] KII with former member of management team, UNICEF Philippines (virtual), 1 June 2021.
[160] KII with two members of Child Protection Team, UNICEF Philippines, date.

sector fundraising; (6) Harnessing corporate social responsibility and 'Children's rights and business principles'; (7) Planning and working together more with other UN agencies; (8) Gender-responsive programming; and (9) Risk-informed programming (please refer to Annex L for more detail on the alignment of these change strategies to specific outputs).

These strategies were generally found to be relevant to the programming context and to achieving the Programme's results (for a more detailed analysis, please see section 9.3 on effectiveness). Stakeholders mentioned the following strategies that they perceived to be particularly relevant and effective in driving change.

Evidence generation and utilization and its link to high level policy advocacy was highly valued by NGO and Government stakeholders. According to these stakeholders, this strategy helped to address gaps in knowledge and influence evidence-based and rights-based policy development and decision making. UNICEF are well positioned to support NGOs and NGO coalitions to collect and present evidence to support advocacy goals. One example of this was the support UNICEF provided for advocacy efforts to oppose moves to lower the minimum age of criminal responsibility to nine years.

The development of partnerships, particularly with Government and NGO stakeholders was mentioned as highly relevant by Government and NGO stakeholders, along with research participants from within UNICEF. This is illustrated by an NGO research participant: *"The strength really is their connection with government. Their main work really is to support and influence the government I think they have a very strong relationship with the government agencies at the national level, which I think is really good because influencing at that level is important to ensure the sustainability of the interventions that we would like to do for child protection."*[161] A donor also noted UNICEF's strong relationships with Government partners as a relevant and key strategy for change: *"One of the key factors to their success, I think, is their long-standing relationship with government agencies, civil society and I think the credibility of pursuing evidence-based policy advocacy has put them in a good space that other people look to them for that and respect them for that and it comes out well."*[162]

Coordination at the national level, and at the regional level in BARMM, was found to be particularly relevant to stakeholders. This was seen to provide a 'rationalisation' of different Government programmes and inputs and to support moves toward a system-wide approach to addressing VAC. UNICEF has worked well to embed itself in key multi-sector coordinating bodies at the national level and is able to shape the agenda in relation to child protection. This was noted particularly by NGO stakeholders. For example: *"there's an impression that they're everywhere. Even in government platforms or councils that are open for CSOs and international organizations. They really sit there, and thus I feel that they are able to contribute to ensuring that the programs and activities that we have in the Philippines are safe for children, are able to in terms of process, integrate policies to ensure that children are safe and protected at all times. So I think that's really where they shine, and also with regard to the reputation of UNICEF, with regard to child safeguarding and child protection, they're one of the organizations that Filipinos look up to as experts and as advocates."*[163] Sub-national stakeholders also highly valued UNICEF's focus on improving coordination among institutions and the promotion of multi-disciplinary responses to children in conflict with the law and children at risk. Support in strengthening coordination was seen as particularly relevant to the development and implementation of referral processes.

[161] KII with representative of national child-focused NGO (virtual), 3 June 2021.
[162] KII with funding body (virtual), date.
[163] KII with representative of NGO coalition focused on child rights (virtual), 5 May 2021.

Private sector engagement was also noted as being a relevant strategy, particularly in the context of OSAEC. The CP Team is engaged with a range of private sector providers as part of this initiative, including internet service providers, social media providers and other business partners. A private sector engagement strategy was developed and is currently being implemented for OSAEC work. This has helped ensure the engagement of the private sector in advocacy efforts. However, according to several research participants (including from civil society and a donor), private sector engagement should become more of a focus, particularly in the OSAEC programme, and UNICEF should utilize this strategy more in order to bring private sector partners, including multilateral banks like ADB, into this space.

Government research participants noted **capacity building**, through training and technical support at the national and LGU level as being a particularly relevant strategy. Capacity building of institutions was also found to be a highly relevant strategy at the LGU level. Training was found to be a key strategy to ensuring that key laws and child-friendly processes were able to be implemented, and this was particularly the case among child justice stakeholders who participated in the research, as illustrated by a representative of the Family Court in Valenzuela City: *"The capacity building for the courts enable them to develop skills and tools needed in their work. After they are trained by UNICEF, they feel more prepared and equipped to meet their responsibilities… UNICEF support has focused on the most pressing concerns such as the children in conflict with the law and the pressing needs of the court employees to be trained and be capacitated."*[164] Also, institutional capacity building was found to be relevant in creating child friendly justice systems – e.g. support in the creation of child friendly spaces and video link technology for children giving testimony in court.

Capacity building, particularly multi-disciplinary training, was considered by sub-national stakeholders to be important in increasing coordination for children in conflict with the law and child victims.

Scaling up tested interventions was another change strategy that appears to be relevant to the Philippines context, particularly in light of the need to build capacity at the LGU level in systems strengthening and programme implementation. However, a greater focus on the scale up process, including how to scale up in an extremely diverse context as the Philippines, should be given. As illustrated by a key stakeholder from DSWD:

> *"One of the results that we have observed is there are some programs that are really effective in several areas… So, the need for us is to really scale up, and to modify the program to suit the different cultures of the Filipino people. Because we are composed of several islands and geographically and culturally, there are some differences. So, what you can see is the basic standards or the basic framing of the program are okay but sometimes we need to adjust it based on culture and the geographic location. So those are some of the assessments, but scale up is really needed in the Philippines right now."*[165]

Modelling interventions and scaling up is likely to become even more relevant with the devolution of social welfare programmes to LGUs following the Mandanas judgement.

Key stakeholders noted the ability for the Child Protection Programme to **adapt to the changing landscape** brought about by Covid-19, particularly the support given in revising implementation modalities to fit the context. The support provided to partners to adapt to COVID-19 has reportedly increased confidence in the use of technology in the delivery of programmes among Government and NGO partners. One example that was mentioned at the regional office level was the development of telephone and online platforms to deliver services through the hospital-based Child Protection Units. Support in adapting to COVID-19 to enable the provision of services was highly valued at the sub-

[164] Valenzuela Family Court
[165] KII with representative of Department of Social Welfare and Development (virtual), 21 June 2021.

national level. The shift in focus to mental health services and the support in developing online counselling to children was considered crucial in the context of COVID-19 and its impact on the mental health of children. Support to adapt justice processes, including court processes and implementation of diversion measures, to online platforms, tele conferencing and through email communications was considered very relevant in ensuring access to justice for children in the COVID-19 context.

Even outside of COVID-19, these new implementation modalities could be seen as an opportunity to reach more remote populations across the Philippines, increasing the reach of services and contributing to UNICEF's equity goals. It is suggested that consideration be given to how COVID-adapted modalities could be utilised more generally by the CP Team (and office-wide).

8.1.5 Relevance of the child protection programme to the needs of rights holders

The primary beneficiaries of both Child Protection Programmes are rights holders, including boys and girls and male and female adolescents who are at risk of or have experienced any form of violence: either online or offline; children in conflict with the law; children and adolescents affected by armed conflict and disasters in Mindanao and adolescents advocating for legislative changes, and their parents / caregivers.

As noted above, the CP Programme is grounded in a solid evidence base and robust understanding of the key deprivations and needs of programme beneficiaries. The Programme has also responded to emerging and growing issues (e.g. OSAEC, Covid-19-related risks); however, though various initiatives have been developed to engage adolescents with some aspects of the Programme, there has been no systematic, meaningful engagement of children, adolescents or parents / caregivers at key points of planning, limiting the extent to which the Programmes can demonstrate relevance and responsiveness to the needs of beneficiaries. This was noted particularly by NGO research participants. For instance, according to one representative of an NGO coalition which had established a children's advisory group, *"UNICEF wasn't able to influence [us] to systematise child participation…we experienced many times that children are consulted or included as an afterthought."*[166]

It is noted, though, that work to improve child / beneficiary engagement in the development of the Programme has been carried out under various components of the current Programme. For example, a youth engagement strategy was developed for the SaferKidsPH Programme. Also, in 2020, consultations were conducted with children in UNICEF focus areas about their needs and situation during the Covid-19 pandemic and this resulted in: (1) a workbook for children addressing their mental health and on health safety protocols; and (2) the results were shared with LGUs to help them develop activities/programs for children during COVID.

8.1.6 Relevance of the programme design for addressing gender dynamics and equity issues

The 2012-2018 Child Protection Programme outcomes were focused on the *most vulnerable children* in the *most deprived regions*. Similarly, the overall outcome of the 2019-2023 Programme is focussed on ensuring more children and adolescents, *particularly the most vulnerable* benefit from more effective, quality, gender-sensitive, preventive, and responsive child protection system, and live in communities that better protect children from violence.

The country office wide approach to gender equality[167] consists of a range of core measures. These measures include using sex-disaggregated data to inform programming and promoting gender-

[166] KII with representative of NGO coalition (virtual), 7 June 2021.
[167] UNICEF Philippines, 'CPAP 2019-2023' March 2020, p14.

responsive policies. The country office seeks to generate evidence on how policies impact on girls and boys differently and to ensure that services are adapted to address the different needs of girls and boys. This is part of a larger effort to eliminate gender-discriminatory roles and practices and engage men and boys, mothers and fathers, and girls in addressing the root causes of gender-based discrimination and violence. For example, the Team has been involved in a regional initiative to examine and develop recommendations for addressing the intersections between VAW and VAC.[168]

At the CP Programme level, the gender sensitive focus of the programme's design is more explicitly stated in the 2019-2023 programme, which disaggregates children by gender across all outputs as well as the programme's overall outcome. In addition, one of the CP Programme change strategies is designed to strengthen gender-sensitive, emergency-resilient, multisectoral child protection systems. Further, the SaferKidsPH Consortium has a specific strategy on gender, disability and social inclusion.

Gender appears to have been quite successfully mainstreamed through UNICEF's programming teams, including the Child Protection Team. This has been driven by dedicating a member of staff as a gender focal point, with responsibility to sensitise staff to gender-based programming and ensure that they have the capacities to mainstream gender. Office-wide systems, in particular reporting processes (e.g. annual reporting systems), programme design checks / accountability systems, partner agreement requirements etc. also operate as safeguards to ensure a gender focus in programming.[169] However, as gender is mainstreamed, there are no resources explicitly dedicated to gender and gender-based outcomes; instead, the expectation is that all resourced inputs / outputs will incorporate gender.[170] It was also noted by several UNICEF staff members that gender has not been represented in the indicators and results framework for the CP Programme (and office wide) as effectively as it could have been.

According to research participants, particularly among Government stakeholders, the CP Programme is sensitive to gender and the Child Protection Team work well in driving a gender focus in its programmes and within institutions. For example:

> *"The program interventions really addressed gender and the gender dynamics in child protection issues, and in the child protection system by utilizing what we call 'gender responsive case management,' so several trainings have been conducted in different parts of the country, which provides an integrated framework, using gender as a practice framework and the empowerment of the survivors as a practice intervention. It also inspires and challenges our social workers to analyse and intervene in the interrelated and interacting subsystems of the survival of their families, community and society."*[171]

However, it was noted by several stakeholders that the gender and equity dimensions of the CP Programme could be more explicit and nuanced. The programme structure does not fully capture and reflect the gender and equity dimensions of child protection and the intersecting vulnerabilities of children; the way that these vulnerabilities compound child protection risks could be better conceptualized to ensure that the Programme is relevant to the needs of different groups of children.

For instance, according to a former member of the UNICEF Management Team, while there is an understanding of gender in reporting and assessing outcomes etc., gender is not as 'seen' in

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[168] UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, UNFPA Asia and Pacific Regional Office and UN Women Asia and Pacific Regional Office, *Ending violence against women and children in the Philippines: Opportunities and challenges for collaborative and integrative approaches*, 2020: https://www.unicef.org/eap/reports/ending-violence-against-women-and-children-philippines

[169] KII with member of Child Protection Team, UNICEF Philippines, date.

[170] KII with member of Child Protection Team, UNICEF Philippines, date.

[171] KII with representative of DSWD (virtual), 21 June 2021.

programme implementation, for instance, in how VAC affects different children, especially how it impacts on boys. In BARMM, there was limited capture of the gender dimension in UNICEF's work with child soldiers: around 25 per cent of 'liberated' child soldiers were girls, but there was insufficient attention paid to the gendered dynamics of involvement with armed groups and therefore insufficient focus on how to respond to the needs and particular interests of girls.[172] However, it was noted that the merging of the child protection and gender based violence cluster in BARMM provides a good opportunity to integrate gender dimensions of children and armed conflict into programme implementation.[173]

According to another stakeholder (a donor), there is a need for more concrete deliverables that bring out gender and equity: *"it tends to be very siloed. I think you need to approach it from layers of vulnerability components. So not only does your child need protection, the child is also disabled, in a minor ethnic minority, an ethnic group already in different environments. So, the complexity of those layers of vulnerabilities is not featured quite strongly yet. And I think this is an area where UNICEF with its sophistication of approach to programming can start to unpick some of that and can be a leader in that field for others to go on to it."*[174]

8.2 Coherence of the Child Protection Program

Evaluation questions

To what extent is the Child Protection Programme aligned with the Philippine Development Plan, and the SDGs?

To what extent is the CP Programme consistent with other actors' interventions in the same context? (Including complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort)

8.2.1 Summary of findings on coherence

Overall, it was found that the CP Programmes are well aligned to global (SDGs) and national (PDP) development priorities, though the alignment to the Philippines Development Plan (PDP) could be better explored and articulated. The evaluation findings also demonstrate a strong consensus amongst key stakeholders on the relevance of the Child Protection Programme's aims and design, which reflect the priorities of development partners and are in line with UNICEF's current strategic approach. In particular, taking a system-strengthening approach to child protection was highly consistent with the key international and national development goals, and with UNICEF's Global Strategic Plan 2014-2017 (with its specific focus on system-strengthening in Outcome 6) and remains highly relevant under the new Global Strategic Plan 2018-2021, which identifies system-strengthening amongst its eight change strategies.

UNICEF's priorities are well aligned with those of Government partners and development partners, and this has been achieved through strong partnerships and UNICEF's involvement in coordination efforts among Government and civil society. However, given the size and complexity of the current CP Programme and the number of other actors involved in the child protection space, a stakeholder analysis could help ensure harmonisation and complementarity among different actors and avoid duplication.

[172] KII with former member of Management Team, UNICEF Philippines (virtual), date.
[173] KII with two members of Child Protection Team, UNICEF Philippines (virtual), date.
[174] KII with two representatives of a development partner, 2 June 2021.

8.2.2 Alignment of the Child Protection Programme with national, regional and global development priorities

Overall, the Child Protection Programme is aligned with the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In particular, the focus of the programme on VAC is well aligned with SDG 16.1 (significantly reduce all forms of violence and related deaths rates everywhere), 16.2 (end abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children), 5.1 (end all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere) and 5.2 (eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation). However, the results framework for the current Programme (2019 – 2023) relies on the assumption that improving the enabling environment and responses to VAC, along with community support for minimizing VAC (demonstrated by public declarations of support) will lead to a reduction in rates of VAC. This link could be better documented, for instance, through the formulation of more robust indicators and targets relating to the prevention of VAC, and the development of a roadmap for achieving SDG goals.

The Philippines Development Plan (PDP) 2017 – 2022 - the first medium-term plan anchored on the Government's national long-term vision (AmBisyon Natin 2040) – aims at laying a strong foundation for more inclusive growth, a high-trust and resilient society, and a globally competitive knowledge economy. Broadly, the focus of the CP Programme on building systems to respond to children (particularly the most vulnerable children) who have experienced violence sits within these goals. However, the Programme documentation could establish a clearer link between the Programme's goals and the PDP. For instance, according to the Protective Environment Strategy Note 2019 – 2023, the results framework aligns with Chapters 12 (building safe and secure communities) and 17 (attaining just and lasting peace) of the PDP. However, chapter 12 of the PDP focuses exclusively on the provision of safe housing and is not directly related to child protection. Chapter 17, in its focus on peacebuilding, is well aligned to the outputs of the CP Programme focused on emergency and BARMM. For instance, Sub-sector Outcome 2 in Chapter 17 aims to achieve the protection and development of communities in conflict-affected and conflict-vulnerable areas.

However, Chapter 11 (Reducing vulnerabilities of individuals and families) is well aligned to the CP Programme. While the primary focus of Chapter 11 is on addressing poverty and disparity through social protection, it also includes goals relating to violence. For instance, it includes the mitigation of risks faced by vulnerable groups in its strategic framework and sets out the following activity: *"Implement a multi-sectoral roadmap for children. This will build an enabling environment that respects, protects, and fulfils the rights of all children in the country. The government also recognizes the importance to protect children's right to survival, development, protection, and participation, as well as their right to attain their full potentials as enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)."* The CP Programme could more explicitly articulate the alignment and linkages between its goals and outputs with Chapter 11 of the PDP. This will underscore the relevance of the Programme and its coherence to national priorities; according to a representative of the DSWD, this is important as the development of priorities and programmes within the Department of Social Welfare are very much guided by and need to be seen to align with the PDP: *"We have many frameworks to align with, but the DSWD is basing all of its programmes and projects to help carry out the objectives of the Philippines Development Plan [2017 – 2022]."*[175]

[175] KII with Representative of DSWD (virtual), 21 June 2021.

7.2.3 Consistency of the CP Programme with interventions of other actors

United Nations agencies, NGOs and donors all noted how the Child Protection Programme was aligned to their respective child protection priorities. Likewise, at the national and sub-national levels, stakeholders expressed their relationship with UNICEF as a 'partnership,' within which they were able to help shape priorities and have a meaningful dialogue about institutional needs, which has helped ensure alignment between UNICEF's CP Programme and the priorities and needs of Government stakeholders.

However, one UNICEF partner raised a concern that UNICEF was expanding its work on social services workforce strengthening, without paying due diligence to the leadership roles being played by other agencies also working in this space. The partner acknowledged the value added that UNICEF brings to this work and highlighted the *Social Service Workforce in the East Asia and Pacific Region: Multi-Country Review*,[176] as a good example. The partner also welcomed UNICEF's contribution but was concerned about the process of engagement and the process of balancing cooperation between government and civil society organizations.

This broader theme about how UNICEF Child Protection engages with partners was also raised by several NGO and UN agencies. Overall, UNICEF Child Protection is highly respected and valued for its contribution to coordinating the activities of different development partners, and it was noted, among Government partners in particular, for its collaborative approach to agenda setting and programming. Several NGOs recommended that UNICEF take a more leading role in coordination activities to ensure alignment across civil society, for example: "*I think UNICEF could be very helpful if it was able to bring all the different organizations, different CSOs in the Philippines that work on the issue of child protection together. Because you know there are a lot of CSOs who work on child protection, if you look at the landscape. We are all doing different kinds of things. Just on trafficking there's so many of us. Sometimes you do not know what the other organizations really do. And if you're duplicating what they're doing, duplicating what they're saying or maybe going against what you're saying*."[177]

However, a common concern was about how UNICEF could at times dominate an agenda simply because of its status as an UN entity, or its status as a core partner to government. As one partner noted, 'UNICEF's agenda becomes the agenda of civil society' simply because UNICEF is seen as the largest and most influential child protection agency in the country. This can risk stifling innovation, genuine collaboration and new ideas. When pressed, partners noted that the issue was not about substance of engagement but about the process of engagement. The need for better coordination and communication was also expressed by partners at the sub-national level: "*As protocol, coordination with the provincial PNP (WCPD) by UNICEF should be done before going to the municipalities to talk about the programme on child justice and child protection especially in the province in Maguindanao – so that the province also can assist in implementing and monitoring."* Specifically: *"orientation with the province about the project is required before going to municipal level so the province can help in assisting the program (protocol is Regional-Province-Municipalities)*. [178]

Consistent among the local government officers and social workers interviewed is their concern about the preference of UNICEF to direct its support/interventions with the NGOs, sometimes leaving them to wonder what their roles are or how the programmes will be continued beyond the timeframe of UNICEF support, as the LGUs were not involved from the start. A balanced approach to working with stakeholders surfaced as a concern which UNICEF must work out with partners to ensure that their

[176] UNICEF East Asia and the Pacific Regional Office and the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance, The Social Service Workforce in the East Asia and Pacific Region: Multi-Country Review, UNICEF, Bangkok, 2019
[177] KII with representative of NGO coalition (virtual), 1 June 2021.
[178] Individual stakeholder interview (virtual), Maguindanao, 29 July 2021.

support is coherent and streamlined with the law or national and local priorities. While it is understood that reporting and fiduciary accountabilities within the LGUs may not have been complied with, as required within the prescribed timeframe, the concern should be on supporting the leadership of local government to provide the proper and timely intervention for the children.

The UNICEF Philippines Child Protection Programme is making progress in creating positive change for children; however, it is operating in a complex programming environment with a large and diverse number of child protection issues and many stakeholders. The CP section should consider undertaking a detailed stakeholder analysis to articulate the needs and expectations of its partners, both within the Philippines and internationally. This work could then inform the development of a communications plan to guide a more strategic approach to partner engagement.

8.3 Effectiveness of the Child Protection Programme

Evaluation questions

To what extent were the desired results of the Child Protection Programme achieved on the protection of girls and boys (covering six programme areas/outputs) as per the country programme documents and subsequent annual work plans?

To what extent and how can the results be attributed to the Child Protection Programme (i.e., UNICEF's contribution)?

What were the major factors influencing these results?

To what extent have equity results been achieved?

Has sufficient attention been given to measuring, monitoring and reporting results including results, including those related to gender and equity? How effectively has evidence been used to inform programmatic changes and adjustments?

This section of the report is an analysis of the extent to which the desired results of the Child Protection Programme have been achieved on the protection of girls and boys, covering the six programme outputs. Given that the evaluation covers the last two years (2017-2018) of the earlier country programme (2012-2018) and the first two years (2019-2020) of the current programme, and is substantial in both size and scope, the analysis is presented under each output of the current country programme (2019-2023). It is hoped that by presenting the findings in this way, they will be user-friendly and relevant to the current work of the Child Protection team.

8.3.1 Summary of main findings on effectiveness

The Child Protection Programme has made a significant contribution and has been effective in the **reform of child protection policy and legislation**, as demonstrated by the number and breath of the results achieved between 2017-2020.

The Philippines was an early adopter of a **systems approach to child protection**, stretching back at least to 1999; yet more than twenty-years later in 2021, there are considerable gaps in the functioning of the child protection system. This continues to be the biggest bottleneck to the realisation of children's right to protection in the Philippines. While notable progress has been achieved in putting in place components of a system, such as legislation and services, a greater investment is required in strengthening the overall child protection structure to ensure coordination of the national child protection response. To move the child protection systems agenda forward, it is recommended that the GPH and UNICEF develop a child protection systems strengthening strategy, based on a clear vision

and an agreed definition of what constitutes a child protection system and the core components of the system, including governance arrangements.

The Child Protection Programme has engaged effectively with several regional and global efforts (WePROTECT, INSPIRE, End Violence, etc.) in the global quest to achieve the child protection targets of the SDGs. As one partner noted: "'We Protect', 'INSPIRE' and 'End Violence Against Children' have had an impact in the country. However, in the pre COVID-19 period, there was a need for wider reach [of these initiatives] in the remotest and isolated areas that still rely on printed materials and broadcast means for information dissemination." Engagement with global partners and initiatives should be elevated further for the rest of this county programme and be included as a principal part of next country programme. This would help ensure that the Philippines continues to get access to timely and quality advise, and learning, about interventions that work while at the same time having the opportunity to share its own experiences and learnings. This would also help push the Philippines towards the 'front of queue,' for funding and technical support as the agenda to achieve the SDGs recovers from the negative consequences of Covid-19 and progress accelerates.

8.3.2 Child protection policy and legislation

For output 3.1, the Child Protection Programme has been effective in its advocacy and in its provision of technical support for legislative and policy reform. These efforts have made a meaningful contribution to the strengthening of legislative and institutional frameworks for the protection of girls and boys vulnerable and exposed to violence, abuse, exploitation, and harmful gender norms.

The use of evidence-based advocacy has been particularly effective. This included the law on raising of the age for consensual sex, the campaign to convince law makers not to lower the age of criminal responsibility for alleged juvenile offenders, and the new draft law on protecting child online exploitation, which is currently before the Congress of the Philippines. Several stakeholders spoke highly of the effectiveness of UNICEF's evidence-based advocacy to drive the reform agenda. They noted that UNICEF's ability to generate robust research was important for ensuring an evidence base for law reform and policy developments.

UNICEF's work on children in conflict with the law was also highly effective and was raised by several stakeholders as being one of the key reasons why the move to lower the age of criminal responsibility for alleged juvenile offenders, failed. Stakeholders highlighted that member of the Congress noted UNICEF's credible voice on the issue of children and justice.

UNICEF supported capacity building efforts of the justice sector on children in conflict with the law was extensive and based on observations from stakeholder interviews, was effective. In one six-month period, a total of 190 justice professionals from 29 courts nationwide were trained which resulted in a total of 304 children benefiting from court diversion programmes and disposition measures from January to October 2020. [179] An Associate Justice of the Court of Appeals noted the value of UNICEF's work in this area. This included support to transition diversion hearings from face-to-face to online. With UNICEF support, the courts were able to adapt to Covid-19 by using online, mobile, email communication to conduct the hearings. In relation to broader capacity building on issues related to children in conflict with the law, the Associate Justice noted: "*The UNICEF supported training encouraged the family court judges to do diversion programmes rather than considering the children as criminals based on the old approach to handling cases of children in conflict with the law, which was*

[179] Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council, Enhanced Progress Report, April 2020 – July 2021, JJWC-UNICEF Rolling Workplan, undated, pp.3

more punitive. As a result, the family courts are now in the stage of eradicating the concept of children as criminals but focuses on having them as children rather than as criminals.[180]

At the sub-national level, several stakeholders from the Philippine National Police, Family Courts, Bahay Pag-asa and the Councils for the Protection of Children reported that the capacity building activities, including training and seminars, provided by UNICEF were effective and resulted in them being better placed to implement the national laws and policies for child protection and justice for children. This included case management for children in conflict with the law. It also appears to have improved coordination among institutions and professionals, particularly within the child justice system. The case studies on diversion that were carried out by the team (while limited in number) indicated that capacity building at the local level had improved coordination among child justice institutions in its delivery of diversion services to children in conflict with the law.

In all these respects, the Child Protection Programme has been very effective. However, it has been less effective in efforts to **ensure the full implementation of the legislative and policy** reforms it has been so effective in bringing about, which is also a core inefficiency. This issue is discussed in detail under the section of programme efficiency. It was noted among stakeholders that few programmes are cascaded from the national to the subnational level despite the sub-nation partners often being invited to comments on proposed draft laws and programmes. As illustrated by one sub-national stakeholder: "*…we are invited by the government to give comments and suggestions on different laws and policies related to children, which need to be amended and updated at the national level like the OSAEC Bill – but adoption and implementation at the local level rarely materialises.*" [181]

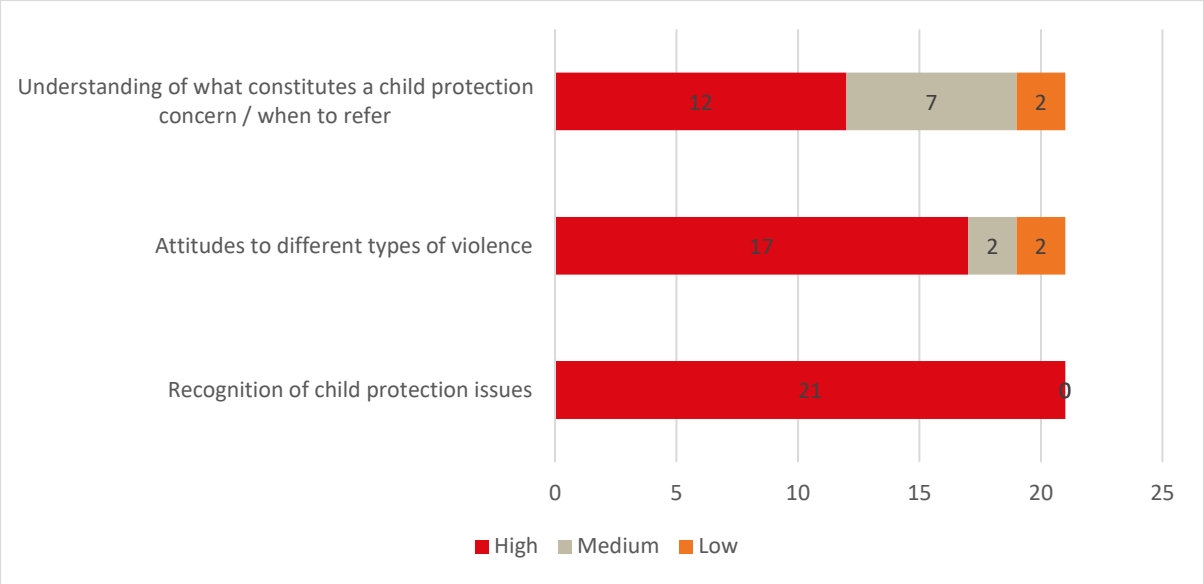
The administrative and survey data collected for the evaluation found mixed results as to the capacity of SWOs to implement child protection and child justice laws, systems and services at the LGU and provincial level. In terms of child justice, it appears that the Programme has been effective in several LGUs in supporting the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Welfare Act, most notably through supporting the use of diversion (at least in terms of Court-ordered diversion) for children in conflict with the law. Administrative data on children in conflict with the law was received from three of the research locations – from the Family Court in Valenzuela City and from the WCPDs (Police) in Angeles City and in Zamboanga City (though note that full data sets were not accessible for the years 2019 and 2020 from Zamboanga City). The data indicate that many cases involving children in conflict with the law in 2017 – 2020 in these locations were resolved through police or Court ordered diversion, or through rehabilitative measures. According to Family Court administrative data from Valenzuela City, all cases of children in conflict with the law in 2017 – 2020 (66 cases in total) were resolved through Court-ordered diversion measures (44 cases) or through a suspended sentence with rehabilitative measures (22 in total). Administrative data from Angeles City WCPD indicate that all 51 cases involving children in conflict with the law were resolved through pre-trial diversion in 2017 – 2020.

The survey data demonstrated a high level of awareness and agreement among SWOs and Para-Social Workers as to what – in general terms – constitutes child protection risks and issues in their communities. Respondents were asked to identify the extent to which known child protection risks are an issue for children in their areas; responses were indexed and accorded a rank – low, medium and high. All respondents were ranked as having a high level of recognition of child protection issues. However, in terms of whether they would refer children for an assessment / service in a range of scenarios involving child protection risks, respondents were not ranked quite as high – while 17 out of 21 respondents were ranked as having a high level of recognition of specific child protection risks, two were ranked as 'medium' and two as having a low level of recognition. Also, while the majority of respondents demonstrated views or attitudes that recognised all forms of VAC, a minority were

[180] Individual stakeholder interview, 2 August 2021.
[181] Individual stakeholder interview, Marawi, July 23, 2021

ranked as 'medium' (seven out of 21) or low (two out of 21). This largely involved not recognising corporal punishment and verbal abuse as child protection risks.

Figure 10: Results from service provider survey – knowledge and recognition of child protection issues and risks (N = 21)



When asked to identify issues that hamper their work, for those that responded, the most frequent answers were human resources and weak cooperation with other agencies.

Figure 11: Results from service provider survey – issues that hamper work (N = 21)

Issue	Number of responses
Human resources of my agency	8
Weak cooperation with other agencies	7
Financial resources of my agency	5
IT systems	5
Lack of knowledge / training	5
Weak of unclear national laws	4
Weak or unclear local laws / policies	3

However, notably, the majority of respondents (14 out of 16 who responded to the question) answered that they would be able to respond immediately to a child protection issue always or very often. Though only 9 out of 16 responded that they are able to get support and advice they need when dealing with a difficult case and 10 out of 14 respondents answered that they receive supervision and / or mentoring, suggesting some gaps in terms of monitoring, supervision and quality control.

This indicates that, among surveyed SWOs in UNICEF's focus LGUs / provinces, service providers have developed a good understanding and knowledge of child protection issues and the majority have attitudes supportive of child protection. The majority of respondents reported that they are able to respond immediately to a child protection cases always or frequently. However, according to survey respondents, gaps remain in the system that continue to hamper the function of the system and services on the ground.

8.3.3 Child protection system strengthening for service delivery to prevent and respond to VAC

For output 3.2, the Child Protection Programme has been partially effective in its advocacy and in its provision of technical support for the strengthening of the Child Protection System for service delivery to prevent and respond to VAC. While UNICEF's main contributions to supporting GPH to prevent and respond to VAC is primarily delivered through output 3.1, it cuts across all outputs. This output seeks to ensure that the child protection system has strengthened capacity to deliver local, multi-sectoral, gender/conflict/culturally-sensitive and child focused programs that prevent and respond to violence against children.

This section of the reports unpacks the broad intent of the output into two parts. The first part is an analysis of the Child Protection Programme's effectiveness in the strengthening of the national child protection system. The second part then looks at the Child Protection Programme's effectiveness at strengthening the system for service delivery for the prevention and response to VAC.

Child protection system strengthening

The Child Protection Programme (2019-2023) has adopted a systems-strengthening approach with the aim of effecting legislative and policy reform, improving information management systems and supporting behaviour and social change. It includes strengthening service delivery systems for the most vulnerable, including children affected by violence and armed conflict.

Conceptually, and as set out in more detail above (see section 9.1.2), a systems approach recognises that programming toward building and strengthening the child protection system as a whole is crucial to the protection of children and adolescents from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation, rather than shorter-term projects or narrow policy changes that do not contribute to strengthening the child protection system itself.

Information box: UNICEF's new global Child Protection Strategy 2021 – 2030

At the global level, UNICEF is currently reviewing its approach to child protection systems strengthening; however, it has largely agreed that child protection systems strengthening should include the following elements or components:

Functions: A robust legal and regulatory framework, as well as specific action plans, strategies and policies related to the protection of children and adolescents from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect;

Structure and Coordination: Effective governance structures, including coordination across government departments, between levels of decentralization, between and across development and humanitarian contexts; and between formal and informal actors;

A continuum of protection care (services) and the processes of care (for individual cases): This includes primary (for all), secondary (for those at risk) at the tertiary (for those harmed), prevention and response services. The 'continuum of protection care' generally refers to services. The process of care generally refers to how individual cases are managed with a service. This often includes case management, referral and early identification/detection of children vulnerable to harm.

Resources/Capacity: This refers to the human resources, financial resources and can include infrastructure resources. For example, the child protection system should have sufficient human resources such as specialised counsellors to provide a range of services, such as sexual assault services, in fit-for-purpose physical spaces.

Accountability: This includes minimum standards and oversight (monitoring and accountability mechanisms); mechanisms for child participation and community engagement; and robust data collection and monitoring systems. [182]

Importantly, these system components are not discrete activities but are mutually reinforcing: the functioning of one part of the system is heavily dependent on other system components, meaning that the child protection system will not be fully functional until all of these elements are in place and working together.

The Philippines was an early adopter of a systems approach to child protection, stretching back at least to 1999; yet more than twenty-years later in 2021, there are still significant gaps in the functioning of the child protection system. The absence of a fully functioning child protection system continues to be the biggest bottleneck to the realisation of children's right to protection in the Philippines. While aspects of a system are in place such as legislation and services, there are substantial challenges related to the overall structure and coordination of the national child protection response. This situation is compounded by a number of factors, in particular the structure to ensure coordination of the national child protection response is not clearly delineated. Further, the high number of committees/councils established in virtue of different legislations might also duplicate efforts and hamper efforts for a more synergetic, integrated child protection system strengthening approach. As one study noted:[183] "*Coordination bottlenecks, duplication of functions, fragmented responses have long hounded the various structures that operate across different levels of governance in child protection*." The study went on to note that: "*Within the Child Protection System framework, the most pronounced gaps are in 'Structures and Functions' and 'Capacities and Resources*.'[184] A greater investment is required in strengthening the overall child protection structure to ensure coordination of the national child protection response.

Further complicating the situation is that the lead coordinating mechanism for child protection is also the lead mechanism for other issues related to children. The Council for the Welfare of Children is an interagency Board mandated under PD 603 for being the main coordinating agency for all policies, frameworks, and programmes relating to the promotion of children's rights and welfare. However, although it is under the DSWD, it sits outside of the formal government structure. There are also other committees/councils mandated by law to coordinate specific child protection issues. This includes the Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography; the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking; the Inter-Agency Council for Children in Situations of Armed Conflict; the Juvenile Council for the Welfare of Children; and the Council for the Welfare of Children. This has led to a fragmentation of the agenda for child protection into "committees" and "issues" resulting in a duplication of efforts and a dilution of accountabilities, which in turn has impeded the development of a more synergetic, coherent, efficient approach to the strengthening of Child Protection Systems. A report on the implementation of child protection laws, recommended that the Council for the Welfare of Children's mandate and

[182] UNICEF HQ, Technical note: UNICEF's programmatic approach to child protection systems strengthening (2021), Unpublished draft.
[183] Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development, Qualitative Study on the Implementation of Child Protection Laws in Four Select Local Government Units in the Philippines, July 2016, pp.3.
[184] Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development, Qualitative Study on the Implementation of Child Protection Laws in Four Select Local Government Units in the Philippines, July 2016, pp.72

functions should be fully reviewed and: "… restructured into a more independent body with dedicated capital resources – such as a Department, Commission, or a Bureau. [185]

The evaluation[186] of the UNICEF Country Programmes from 1999 – 2011[187] provides a snapshot of the Child Protection Programme's work in child protection systems building or strengthening over a 13-year period. Child Protection Programme

Figure 12: Mapping intentions: Examples of UNICEF Child Protection commitments to put in place a comprehensive child protection system in the Philippines over a 22-year period, 1999-2020

Core components of a child protection system	1999-2004 (includes one year extension from 2003 to 2004)	2005-2011 (includes two year extension from 2009 to 2011)	2012-2018 (includes two year extension from 2016 to 2018)	Status at the end of 2020
Coordination and Structure	Building networks and systems for child protection		Existence of National Government body accountable for leading and coordinating child protection.	Several sustainable and effective networks established and currently operational No national body to coordinate Child Protection System
Functions	Establishing a comprehensive system of justice for children	Promoting legal protection and justice systems for children		New JJ law enacted in 2006 but only partially implemented
Resources/ capacities			Strengthening national and local level institutional capacity to legislate, measure, monitor, advocate and plan for equitable access to child protection services	Child protection sector has insufficient financial and human resources to implement the various functions of the child protection system.
Continuum of protection care and process of care			Programme Component Result 3: By 2016, improved national and local level public sector institutional gender sensitive framework in place enabling improved access to well-coordinated child protection services for the most vulnerable in at least 5 disadvantaged LGUs.	Some progress in some LGUs but not at scale.

[185] Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development, Qualitative Study on the Implementation of Child Protection Laws in Four Select Local Government Units in the Philippines, July 2016, pp.74

[186] UNIVERSALIA, UNICEF Philippines Country Program Evaluation, Final Report, August 2010.

[187] The 1999 -2003 Country Programme was extended for a year to 2004. The 2005 to 2009 Country Programme was extended for two years to 2011.

Accountability			Intermediate Result 3.1: By 2014, a comprehensive and integrated Child Protection Information Management System is established by the government to promote convergence of efforts to prevent and respond to abuse, exploitation and violence.	Comprehensive IMS not operational

Programme effectiveness is constrained at a systems level as it appears that the core components of the Child Protection System are being treated as discrete components whereas in practice the functioning of one part of a system is heavily dependent on other system components, meaning that the Philippines child protection system will not be fully functional and effective until all of the components are in place and working together. For example, UNICEF Child Protection has made impressive progress in supporting the Government to put in place the required laws, policies and action plans to create a solid foundation for the child protection system. Together these guiding documents form the functions of the system. Yet many of these laws are only partially implemented. There are several reasons for partial implementation, some of which include: A plethora of laws rather than a consolidated law on child protection means that more mechanisms are required for implementation. A further reason is that, with respect to some of the laws, the government has yet to designate or place responsibility for implementation on a specific government body or agency. A further reason is the lack of resources where an implementation body is designated. For instance, the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council has been established and has clear functions, as specified in the Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act (2006). However, despite the existence of a responsible and accountable body, the law remains only partially implemented, a full 15 years after coming into force in 2006, due to a lack resources and the infrastructure required to fulfil its mandate. This situation is further complicated by a range of other bottlenecks, including the lack of a national consensus about how to best address the issue of juvenile offending.

These factors have conspired to reduce the effectiveness of UNICEF's achievements and continue to be a significant bottleneck to the realisation of children's right to protection in the Philippines.

Child protection system strengthening for service delivery

For 2020, the Child Protection Programme reported that implementation of this output was constrained primarily due to COVID-19 and the need to adapt approaches to ensure continuity of service delivery for children and families who could not access face-to-face services. Several partners spoke highly of how UNICEF was able to adapt its programming focus in response to Covid-19 and welcomed the increased focus on strengthening of service delivery mechanisms. For example, to ensure continuation of service delivery for children and families who could not access face-to-face services, the Child Protection Programme supported the nationwide helplines of Philippine Red Cross. Within the first six month of the onset of the pandemic in 2020, approximately 10,000 helpline callers were provided with lifesaving information on mental health and case management concerns, among others (5624 Male, and 4166 Female callers).

In the area of VAC, the 2017 evaluation of the country office programme 2012-2018 found that UNICEF was well positioned to provide national leadership on the prevention and response to violence against children. It noted that the Child Protection Programmes' support for the design and implementation

of the national baseline study on violence against children, which included and an extensive literature review on VAC were critical and reflected effective upstream work. It further noted that UNICEF's technical expertise in child protection in the 'digital age will likely be increasingly valued in the Philippines.' [188] Accordingly, the Child Protection Programme has been investing in building national leadership for VAC and this has proven to be an effective approach.

The Child Protection Programme has made a significant and effective contribution to strengthening child protection for service delivery, as demonstrated by progress made in strengthening the various components or elements of these systems. These components include the functions (legislative and policy reform) as discussed above and the continuum of protection care (services) and the process of care (case management) achieved between 2017-2020.

The Child Protection Programme has used effectively two primary change strategies to achieve these results.

The first was, **development of strategies that strengthens national commitments to a multisectoral responses to VAC**. This change strategy was deployed successfully in three ways. The first was by building on existing gains in creating a multisectoral coordinated response to VAC across the WASH, health, education and social welfare sectors. The second was, by leveraging the Philippine's expertise as a Pathfinder country[189] by ensuring that VAC programmes were aligned with the *'INSPIRE: Seven strategies to end violence against children.*[190] Of particular note, the Philippines has been identified as a global leader in promoting and supporting a multisectoral response to VAC and is one of five pilot countries selected to participate in the INSPIRE Adaption and Scale-Up initiative.[191] This initiative is designed to enable the development of the *INSPIRE Global Adaptation and Scale-Up Framework (Framework)* to assist Pathfinding countries develop action-ready plans for national scale-up. Despite these efforts, the PPAEVAC 2017-2023 has been largely constrained by challenges related to coordination, budgeting, monitoring and reporting.

UNICEF's advocacy with the Government and its support for the Government's engagement with the regional and global movement striving to meet the child protection commitments of the SDGs has been highly effective and should be further elevated for the rest of this county programme and be included as a principal part of next country programme. This would help ensure that the Philippines gets access to timely, and quality advice and learning about interventions that work, while at the same time having the opportunity to share its own experiences and learnings. This would also help push the Philippines towards the 'front of queue,' for funding and technical support as the agenda to achieve the SDGs recovers from the negative consequences of Covid-19 and progress accelerates.

The second change strategy was ***research and evidence generation***. This change strategy has been effectively deployed to inform and guide upstream policy development work to protect children from

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[188] Goss Gilrory Inc, 'Formative Evaluation of the UNICEF 7th Country Programme 2012-2018 in the Philippines', 2017. p34.

[189] The Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children promotes the concept of Pathfinding which aims to raise awareness, stimulate leadership commitment, galvanize action, and establish a standard of national violence prevention throughout the world. Currently, 30 countries have joined the partnership as Pathfinders. https://www.end-violence.org/pathfinding-countries

[190] Inspire identifies a select group of strategies that have shown success in reducing violence against children. They are: Implementation and enforcement of laws; Norms and values; Safe environments; Parent and caregiver support; Income and economic strengthening; Response and support services; and Education and life skills. World Health Organisation, Inspire: Seven Strategies for Ending Violence Against Children. https://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/inspire-package/en/

[191] World Health Organization, INSPIRE Adaptation and Scale-Up Working Group, 2020

violence. As mentioned above, the two flagship reports produced were the *National Study on Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines* and the *Philippines Kids Online*.

8.3.4 Social change to end violence against children

For output 3.3, the Child Protection Programme has made a significant contribution to the intended results on **community attitudes and behaviours**. The Child Protection Programme used three primary change strategies to achieve these results. The first was ***promote public discussion and advocacy on the risk and threat of violence against children***. This change strategy has been effectively used to increase the wider community's knowledge and skills for the care and protection of children. The second was ***engage the participation of children*** on behaviour change strategies for the protection and empowerment of their peers in the use of the Internet. The third change used was ***training on social norms and VAC*** and social mobilization towards desired behaviour change and positive social and gender norms.

The work on promoting social norms to end violence against children, including on-line, was raised as being particularly effective in the context of the Philippines. The SaferKidsPH programme, was cited by several stakeholders as being an important child protection initiative. At the sub-national level, several stakeholders cited UNICEF's support in raising public awareness on the need to protect the children and eliminate all forms of abuse as being effective. They mentioned that UNICEF had provided them with leaflets, flyers and posters and had organized media campaigns (radio and television. These activities were designed to help the government raise awareness on child protection and child justice and the need for multi-sectoral support in eradicating all forms of violence against children.

Government stakeholders noted the importance of addressing social norms and emphasised the importance of 'promoting public consultation, discussion and advocacy on the risk and threat of violence against children, providing training on social norms and engaging the participation of children'. Within UNICEF, staff members highlighted the value of cross sectoral collaboration for social change. This included the joint work between the Child Rights and Business Programme and the Child Protection Section on the SaferKidsPH initiative. As one stakeholder noted, a positive yet unintended consequence of this joint work, has been that the child protection team has become more effective in leveraging resources from the private sector. The second cross sectoral collaboration is the partnership between the Education Section and the Child Protection Section on social norms and behaviour change for VAC. The two sections co-fund a C4D specialist whose primary function is the C4D related priorities of the PPAeVAC. A view was expressed that there was a need for this post to be used more strategically. This would entail increasing the focus on programming for social and behaviour change rather than on the production of communication materials.

8.3.5 Parenting

For output 3.4, the Child Protection Programme has made significant progress in supporting the design of an evidence-based parenting programme. This includes the contextualization and rollout of the Masayang Pamilya (MaPa) parenting resources, which was adapted from the global Parenting Lifelong Health.[192] The decision of the PCO to locate the parenting output within the Child Protection Programme makes strategic sense given that the Philippines VAC Study found high rates of violence, including corporal punishment, in the home. This also aligns with the global focus on parenting as a key child protection intervention for achieving the VAC dimensions of the SDGs.

[192] World Health Organisation, Parenting for Lifelong Health: A suite of parenting programmes to prevent violence. https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/parenting-for-lifelong-health.

The Child Protection Programme has made a contribution to **the intended results on strengthened coordination mechanisms and approaches to enhance parenting**. To achieve these results the main change strategy used, was ***build evidence on the effectiveness of existing Parenting Support Interventions***: This change strategy was primarily designed to enable the scale-up of testing of a proven parenting support initiatives. It also entails using regional learning and sharing of information and experience on parenting, particularly among ASEAN countries. The Child Protection Programme has made an important strategic shift in how it supports making households safer for children. Under the previous country programme, parenting was primarily an information giving exercise where parents in the 4Ps programme were provided with information on parenting. For the current country programme, the emphasis has shifted to localising and contextualising a global parenting programme that is designed to change behaviours.

An indication of the potential effectiveness of this new parenting initiative, was a UNICEF supported randomized controlled trial (2017-2019), and related feasibility studies, (2016 and 2019) in communities in two LGUs in Taguig and Quezon City. The trials revealed significant benefits of MaPa in improving parent-child relationships. In the randomized controlled trial, the risk for child maltreatment decreased by 39 per cent one month after the programme and continued to be lower by 23 per cent one year after the program, compared to families who did not undergo MaPa.[193]

At the sub-national level, none of the stakeholders interviewed had any direct involvement in UNICEF supported parenting interventions. A few participants mentioned the DSWD's Parent Effectiveness Sessions (PES) and the Parenting Module used in the once-a-month Family Development Sessions of the 4Ps programme. A couple of participants were aware of the work being done on the MaPa parenting programme, but none had participated in parenting training. This finding is not surprising given the focus of the current programme is on developing the architecture for the parenting programme as opposed to a large scale roll out of the programme. At the same time, government stakeholders recommended that the MaPa programme be extended to residential care facilities to build the capacity of staff (house-parents and social workers) in positive parenting.

Despite the effectiveness of this work, the ambition for this output is relatively modest when compared to the ambition of the outputs on legal and policy reform and child protection systems strengthening for service delivery for VAC. Unless there is an intention to rapidly scale up the ambition, funding and reach of the programme, it may make more strategic sense to fold this output into the output on VAC but doing so without diminishing the importance of positive parenting as a prevention measure for reducing violence against children.

8.3.6 Children and adolescents affected by disasters and armed conflict

For output 3.5, the Child Protection Programme has been particularly effective in leveraging its convening role to ensure that children and adolescents affected by disasters and those affected by armed conflict, particularly in Mindanao are increasingly able to access critical multi-sectoral, gender/ conflict/ culturally sensitive and child focused programmes.

Several partners pointed to UNICEF's contribution to the various inter agency mechanisms as being highly effective. This included UNICEF's role as the lead agency for Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Force and secretariat support for the UN country taskforce on Monitoring and

[193] Ateneo de Manila University, University of Oxford, Child Protection Network, Masayang Pamilya (MaPa) Sa Panahon ng COVID-19, Promoting Positive Parenting and Preventing Violence Against Children During the Global Pandemic, undated, pp.1

Reporting grave violations. UNICEF has also taken on the lead for MHPSS which saw more than 25,000 individuals reached with mental health and case management support.

For this output, the Child Protection Programme has made a significant contribution to **the intended results for children and adolescents affected by armed conflict** between 2017-2020. The Child Protection Programme has effectively used three primary change strategies to achieve these results. The first was ***strengthen gender-sensitive, emergency-resilient, multisectoral child protection systems*** *with emphasis on regional mechanisms* to better support LGUs, LCPCs and their social welfare and child protection services and linking with health, education and WASH sectors for an integrated approach. The second was **implementation of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism** on grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict. The third was **normalization and prevention efforts regarding the recruitment of children as part of broader peace building efforts**.

Several participants noted that UNICEF, in partnership with other humanitarian organizations, had provided family packages containing health and hygiene materials to families affected by disasters especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, stakeholders from government noted the need for 'a greater emphasis on regional and provincial mechanisms so that they can better support the LGUs during a disaster, including in the early procurement and provision of IEC materials and other supplies needed in evacuation centres.'

The Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on grave violations committed against children in times of armed conflict was cited by UN agencies and NGOs as contributing to a sustainable child protection response. The MRM documents grave violations against children in different conflict contexts in the Philippines including in BARMM. Through the MRM, UNICEF and the UN more broadly was able to build alliances for children affected by armed conflict. One such alliance was with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which was party to the conflict in Mindanao and is now part of the governing authority for BARMM. UNICEF worked effectively with the MILF in 2016 to 2019 to demobilise and reintegrate child soldiers. UNICEF is now working with many of these same actors in developing laws, policies and programmes for children in BARMM. Several stakeholders highlighted the need for ongoing capacity building of MRM partners particularly in monitoring and verification processes and linking affected children and families with essential services. As one stakeholder noted: "MRM is about facilitating response into action. This includes supporting victims and also promoting prevention."[194]

8.3.7 Child protection systems strengthening in BARMM

For output 3.6, the Child Protection Programme has sought to strengthen the humanitarian-development-peace nexus of its work by investing in child protection system building to protect at-risk children and adolescents in BARMM. The programming context for child protection systems strengthening in BARMM is a population and political system heavily impacted by conflict and natural disasters, which have devastated families and communities, fuelled poverty and deprivation and impaired the ability for government bodies and other service providers to meet the needs of children and families.[195]

The Child Protection Programme has been effective in generating evidence to inform child protection system strengthening. This evidence is the findings of a rapid assessment of key social services

[194] Individual key informant interview, 17 May 2021.

[195] The six categories are set out in Adriano F., and Parks T., The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance, the Case of Mindanao, Philippines, The Asia Foundation 2013. The categories remain relevant to the present day.

programmes, [196] which is being used to inform the next phase of this work (which commenced in early 2021) which is the development of a roadmap for the creation of child protection system.

UNICEF's work to protect children and adolescents affected by disasters and armed conflict, was cited by several UN agencies and NGOs as being critically effective given that children and adolescents, particularly in BARMM suffer from perennial displacements due to natural disasters and armed conflict. While the Government has an established system in responding to disasters, UNICEF complemented this work by enabling children and their families to access much needed social services. Psychosocial support training had been provided by UNICEF to BARMM Ministry of Social Services and Development personnel as well as local governments to strengthen capacities of the duty-bearers and LGUs respond to the needs of the children with main purpose of protecting them and providing the needed humanitarian assistance. For example, with technical guidance from UNICEF, the United Nations has been documenting [197] lessons learned from this process, especially the release of 1,869 children, (1249 boys and 620 girls), the reintegration programmes benefitting disengaged children and their families, and the manner in which the action plan and its result have boosted peace dialogues between the armed group and the Government. These children were disengaged in 2017 and their welfare and status were monitored over 2018-2019. UNICEF had also provided effective humanitarian support during the Marawi siege in 2017 through the provision of MHPSS for children relocated to the evacuation camps.

Of particular note, several stakeholders in BARMM commended UNICEF for its work with religious leaders to strengthen positive social norms. In 2020, child protection and broader child rights messages were included in sermons/Khutba reaching over 98,478 people. Religious leaders were trained on how to include core child protection principles in their sermons and teachings. At the same time, UNICEF is working with the government authorities in BARMM to adopt a new Children's Code which includes the same child protection principles.

As highlighted in the section on programme relevance, the work of the Child Protection Programme in system strengthening in BARMM is critically important, strategic and timely. However, given that this output is constrained, it is not possible to evaluate the effectiveness of this output.

8.3.8 Conclusion

The Child Protection Programme has been effective and has achieved noteworthy results in several programme areas covering child protection legislation and policy; child protection systems strengthening for services for VAC; social change to end violence against children; and children affected by conflict in BARMM. The Child Protection Programme has achieved limited results in parenting support and child protection systems strengthening in BARMM.

As one stakeholder observed: *"The Philippines Child Protection Programme is known for having a solid programme. This is not to say that nothing could be strengthened or reviewed, but it is one of the most dynamic and innovative programmes in the region: "Let's not stifle their creativity, lets encourage it definitely."*[198]

[196] Coram International, Rapid Assessment of Key Social Services Programmes in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Phase 1), August 2019

[197] United Nations and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Children in Armed conflict: Philippines Action Plan on the Recruitment and Use of Children in Armed Conflict Processes and Lessons Learned, 2009-2017, pp. ix

[198] Individual key informant interview, 17 May 2021.

8.4 Efficiency of the Child Protection Program

This section of the report is an analysis of the efficiency of the Child Protection Programme.

Evaluation questions

To what extent is the Child Protection Programming approach efficient in achieving desired results in terms of resource utilisation and timely delivery?

Do more cost-effective ways of achieving the same child protection results exist?

8.4.1 Summary of key findings on efficiency

The Child Protection programming approach is efficient in the achievement of the desired results in terms of resource **utilization and timely delivery**. The main evidence for this finding in the range of results achieved and the relatively modest financial base of the programme.

A central issue related to inefficiency is that although the Child Protection Programme has made a significant contribution to the **reform of child protection policy and legislation**, it has had less success in efforts to ensure the full implementation of these legislative and policy reforms.

Based on the overall results achieved, the Child Protection Programme staff are **highly competent and efficient** in terms of their technical capacity to effect positive change for children and adolescents vulnerable to harm.

Although child protection issues are becoming better understood and were more visible, critical gaps remained. Several implementing partners noted that there was still limited capacity (human, technical and financial) amongst partners in Government and NGOs for child protection.

8.4.2 Resource utilisation and timely delivery

The Child Protection programming approach is efficient in achieving results for children. It has been able to use the limited human and financial resources available to it, to achieve a substantial range of results for children. A central inefficiency is that many of the UNICEF supported **reforms of child protection policy and legislation** have not been implemented.

Figure 13: The central challenge for the UNICEF Philippines Child Protection Programme



Several stakeholders highlighted how UNICEF invested what appeared to be a sufficient level of resources to achieve these reforms but was not efficient, in that it then failed to invest the level of resources required to ensure the reforms were implemented. A case in point is the Juvenile Justice Law of 2006, which is still not fully implemented in 2021, nor is there a costed plan to guide implementation.

8.4.3 Cost effectiveness

Resource sufficiency

A critical inefficiency is that the Child Protection Programme has historically had limited success in mobilising financial resources to achieve its planned results, although it is important to note that the current programme is approximately 70 percent funded. There are several reasons for this. This would appear to be a challenge affecting the whole PCO, stemming back to a key assumption underpinning the design of the 2012-2016 country programme. The assumption was that as the Philippines had in 2010 transitioned from a low-income country to a lower-middle income country,[199] there would be little need for the PCO to mobilise funds for programme implementation as the Government could and should do this. This challenge was compounded by a second assumption which was that greater integration between the child protection and the social protection agenda would achieve results for children vulnerable to harm. This assumption proved incorrect and provided less visibility to child protection issues which meant the Child Protection Programme was unable to mobilise the resources needed.

Given the large range of results achieved with a relatively modest budget, UNICEF has been efficient in its use of available funding with no obvious evidence of more cost-effective ways of achieving the same child protection results.

The Child Protection Programme has invested in having a range of technical human resources to drive the Child Protection agenda forward. This would appear to an efficient strategy in achieving desired results. Based on the overall results achieved, the Child Protection Programme team has been highly efficient in terms of effecting positive change for children and adolescents vulnerable to harm. However, the organogram for the child protection section, would suggest that the team members are focussed only on their **specific child protection issues,** such as VAC, parenting, social norms and so on and not the overall Child Protection System. Greater efficiencies could be achieved if the Child Protection staff were given responsibility for strengthening the various components of the system and working as a team to ensure the overall system was functioning efficiently. Maintaining highly specialist staff is critically important. What is also important is to upskill staff with core competencies in systems analysis.

Technical support to national partners

A core aspect of the Child Protection programme is the provision of technical assistance and support to national and local government partners to develop strategies that mobilize communities to identify and report cases of violence and provide appropriate, quality and inclusive child welfare services. This entails building the capacity of multiple partners. A consistent theme to emerge from the key informant interviews was that although child protection issues were becoming better understood and were more visible, critical gaps remained. Several implementing partners noted that there was still limited capacity (human, technical and financial) amongst partners in Government and NGOs for child protection. This included a conceptual gap in understanding the breadth of child protection issues and a gap in understanding of the various components or elements of a Child Protection System. This finding may suggest that the Child Protection Programme needs to secure additional technical and human resources to address this gap. One stakeholder said: "*UNICEF support is focused and helpful. However, UNICEF should provide support to the province for the conduct of a study focused on the factors leading to or causing the prevalence/high incidence of rape cases in the province and what can be done to prevent them, and the strategies needed to address the issues and gaps through an*

[199] Asia Development Bank, ADB Economics, Working Paper Series, Tracking the Middle-Income Trap: What is It, Who is in It, and Why?, Part 1, March 2012 pp.22

evidence-based approach."[200] Another stakeholder called for: *"More training for the other court personnel, which should not be limited to Judges and Clerk of Courts. More and continuous training is needed to level up the learning."* [201]

Adding value to the efforts of other development partners

As documented in the section above on programme coherence (section 7.2), the Child Protection Programme has displayed efficiency in that it has been informed by, and is consistent with, the interventions of other child protection development actors within NGOs and other UN entities. The research did not find evidence of the Child Protection Programme duplicating or detracted from the efforts of other development partners.

Programme synergies within UNICEF

The PCO has put in place effective coordination mechanisms between UNICEF's Child Protection Programme and other UNICEF programmes such as education, health, nutrition, WASH, social protection, adolescent, and communication for development. These mechanisms have helped to create and sustain linkages across sectors, and between child protection actors, especially related to violence against children. Despite these efforts, within the Philippines County Office (PCO) it is not clear whether VAC is a whole-of-office / office wide priority as it is in several other countries in the region, such as Cambodia.

8.5 Sustainability of the Child Protection Programme

Evaluation questions

To what extent are the activities and results of the Child Protection Programme likely to continue after UNICEF support has ceased? What measures were taken so that the Government of Philippines and targeted communities could take ownership of the child protection programme?

To what extent has the child protection programme contributed to the generation of capacities at national and sub-national levels? How likely are these to be used after the end of the programme? To what degree have these changes been embedded into the national and sub-national child protection systems?

What are the major factors which influence the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?

8.5.1 Summary of main findings on sustainability

UNICEF's systems strengthening approach to child protection is key to sustainability. The legislative reforms carried out within the programmes are sustainable. Building the capacity of the DSWD and other key departments is also likely to support the sustainability of child protection interventions, but may be impacted by the Supreme Court ruling on the Mandanas case.

The MRM helped to build relationships with key actors in the conflict in BARMM which ultimately has helped to demobilise and reintegrate disengaged children. This is a notable and at the time of writing appears to be a sustainable achievement, with the passing of the Bangsamoro Organic Law.

There have been some clear examples of real success in partnership working and sustainable upskilling of LGUs. However, overall, more work needs to be done to build relationships, financial and human resources and technical skills at the LGU level in order for child protection work to be sustainable in

[200] Individual stakeholder interview, Western Samar, 2 August 2021.
[201] Individual stakeholder interview, Valenzuela City, 4 August 2021

the long-term, particularly given the increased role of LGUs in delivering child protection services when the Mandanas ruling comes into effect.

A key factor influencing the achievement of sustainability is that the Child Protection Programme has invested in strengthening the institutional capacity of government and civil society rather than focusing on service delivery at the project level.

Encouraging and building partnerships between LGUs and NGOs and FBOs is essential for long term sustainability of the child protection programme, as it ensures communities are invested in driving forward the programme and meeting the needs of its beneficiaries.

The programme has been incredibly resilient to natural disasters and public health crises (i.e., COVID-19) that have severely impacted on UNICEF's work in general, indicating the programme is adaptable and able to respond well to meet children's immediate needs. This is important, given the propensity for natural disasters in the country and work should be done to reflect on how learning from COVID-19 response can be used to ensure sustainability of the programme in the future.

8.5.2 Sustainability of the programme outcomes

To what extent are the activities and results of the Child Protection Programme likely to continue after UNICEF support has ceased? What measures were taken so that the Government of Philippines and targeted communities could take ownership of the child protection programme?

One of the most important advantages of a system strengthening approach to child protection programming is its potential for sustainability. In order, however, to achieve this potential, it is necessary to embed child protection within national policy, legislation and practice, both at national and sub-national level. Many of the outcomes of UNICEF's Child Protection Programme have been institutionalised and have been enshrined in law and policy, making them, on the face of it, sustainable. Several respondents emphasised the value of UNICEF's partnership work, its achievement in working with government to achieve such institutionalisation, and the fact that the government has increasingly taken ownership for programme activities.

As with all legislative advancements, in order to ensure sustainability of the 'wins,' is important that UNICEF's advocacy continues long after the enactment of legislation. Legislation on controversial issues can, it should be remembered, be reversed or repealed.

The MRM was cited by UN agencies and NGOs as contributing to a sustainable child protection response in BARMM. Through the MRM, UNICEF and the UN more broadly, were able to build alliances to protect children affected by armed conflict. One such alliance was with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which was part to the conflict in Mindanao and is now the governing authority for BARMM. UNICEF worked with the MILF in 2016 – 2019 to disengaged children from the armed group. UNICEF's work in this area and the trust built up with the new BARMM government has led to new work with many of these same actors in developing laws, policies and programmes for children in BARMM. UNICEF's approach has contributed to the likelihood of sustainability as, in particular, the BARMM government is currently developing a Children's Code with technical support from UNICEF.

UNICEF has taken several measures to ensure Government and community ownership of interventions, which will help to ensure the sustainability of the Programme beyond 2023. The inputs in building the capacity of Government stakeholders and service providers (discussed in section 7.5.3) will help to increase a sense of ownership over the child protection system and services by instilling key responsibilities (and the skills to meet these responsibilities) among service providers. In addition, the use of strategic partnerships with Government service providers and the building on existing programmes with local government and UN partner agencies has helped to ensure ownership over interventions and services. One clear example of this was the delivery of the Joint UNICEF-UNHCR

Strategy to Address Childhood Statelessness and Birth Registration in which UNICEF provided technical support to the local government of Zamboanga City in registering children in rural indigenous communities.[202] In the first year of the project alone, UNICEF and UNHCR were able to register 412 Sama Bajau children, including their unregistered parents.[203] Supporting local officials to take leadership of the project has been key to ensuring UNICEF and UNHCR's efforts are sustainable in the long term, as one UNHCR representative highlighted:

> *"In fact, since we started the birth registration initiative in 2019 we have already established linkages with a local government and now we are leading towards having the local government as the lead agency who's doing the birth registration and UNICEF and UNHCR is just providing technical support. For both UNICEF and UNHCR, we see that as progress, because we see sustainability in the initiative, noting that the local government is owning the initiative now. So we hope that this will be sustained, regardless of UNHCR, or UNICEF's presence in the future."*[204]

Yet despite these positive measures, as is discussed elsewhere, UNICEF's achievements at a policy level have yet to translate fully into sustainable results at the community level. The transition from policy level to local level results has been undermined in large part by the Government's failure to commit sufficient resources to the delivery of services, particularly at the local level. This challenge was raised repeatedly by respondents who repeatedly pointed out how donor dependence and a lack of a long-term investment in programmes is likely to constrain sustainability:

> *"Interviewer: How sustainable is the project you are doing with UNICEF. Do you think its sustainable or not sustainable?*
>
> *P2: I think the design of the program or the project matters a lot. If we are talking about sustainability of course the support and assistance of UNICEF and other funding agencies are time bound and are limited. So, the designs must be geared towards sustainability and it should be the community who should have the ownership at the end of any partnership. Like the project that we had with UNICEF last year, in some schools they are continuing with sustaining the initiative; improving their child protection mechanism and being involved in different child protection activities. However, there's the other Barangay, I'm not sure if they are still active or if they are still pursuing what they have envisioned to do after the project. So, it depends on the capacity, as well as the level of empowerment that they were able to achieve during the project. Depends both on the partners at local level and the design of the project.*
>
> *P1: I agree; I think our project last year, if I were to rate it in terms of sustainability in the way it is designed I'd say maybe it's not really that sustainable. Maybe I'd give it a seven or six. Because really, it went very fast. Coming up with policies is something that is supposed to help services become sustainable, but I agree with P2. I think in terms of the project last year the extent to which it will be sustainable, is going to depend on the people implementing, and sustainability was not really built into the design of the project. It was implemented very fast, of course, as there was the COVID pandemic. But I think it's lacking in sustainability."*[205]

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[202] UNICEF Staff, Key Informant Interview, 23 February 2021.
[203] UNICEF Philippines., 2019 Year end RAM Updates and Outcome and Output Results Reporting – Outcome 3, 2019. p13.
[204] UN Partner Agency, Key Informant Interview, 19 May 2021.
[205] National NGO, Key Informant Interview, 1 June 2021.

This highlights the importance of continuing to advocate for budget commitments from Government, alongside private donors and development partners, in upcoming programming cycles. Focus needs to remain on how, building on the success of joint working with NGO, INGO and Government partners, joint working can aid in the long-term sustainability of UNICEF's child protection programme objective.

8.5.3 Sustainability of capacity generation

To what extent has the child protection programme contributed to the generation of capacities at national and sub-national levels? How likely are these to be used after the end of the programme? To what degree have these changes been embedded into the national and sub-national child protection systems?

UNICEF's Child Protection Programme has made considerable contributions to building the capacity of Filipino government counterparts, particularly at the national level, but also to at the local government level in the areas covered by the programme. These contributions were recognised and valued by stakeholders across the Philippines. As one UNICEF respondent expressed; "*there's a lot of capacity building, which has been provided to the local governments, done by each of the sectors. For the planning, we are also doing coaching and mentoring with them, and also providing for them. There's a pilot on the development of a budget tagging poll, which will be done in all those seven focus areas. The hope is that the budget tagging tool will help the LGUs track expenditures and also strengthen their budget analysis for child protection programming*."[206]

UNICEF's programme design has been conducive to sustaining capacities in the longer term. In addition to supporting the delivery of training, UNICEF developed materials, manuals and tools, which can continue to be used by relevant agencies going forward. Indeed, several stakeholders emphasised the importance of ensuring that training is ongoing and continuous in order to ensure its sustainability.

Additionally, where possible, UNICEF supported the integration of programming into national policies to ensure their continued use. A notable success has been the incorporation of the parenting programme into the Governments 4Ps Conditional Cash Transfer Programme. By incorporating the training into the requirements for access to the social protection programme UNICEF has been able to mainstream their work into broader public initiatives, ensuring its continued uptake and sustainability across the Philippines. Evaluation findings clearly indicate that they have the potential to continue after the Programme's conclusion.

UNICEF has mainly focussed their programme until now on the delivery of upstream and nationally driven work; advocating for legislative developments, delivering programmes with national partners and investing in strengthening the child protection system at the provincial and district level. The real test for the sustainability of the CP Programme is whether LGUs can continue to use the skills they learnt and maintain their increased capacity as they start to take on a greater degree of child protection responsibility. At present the *"complex range of national laws, their translation into local policies and plans, and the delivery of devolved social services, overall, present much challenge to the human resource capacities of LGUs for them to deliver cohesively and effectively."*[207]

Moving forward, and in the light of the anticipated impact of the Manadanas ruling, which will further localise the delivery of child protection services across the Philippines by 2022, UNICEF's child protection programming may need to refocus its efforts in the remaining period of the current child

[206] UNICEF Staff, Key Informant Interview, 8 July 2021.
[207] Arce, C., Improving national and local systems and capacities towards better child protection in the Philippines, People Count PLCPD Policy Brief, p6.

protection programme and in its new programme on building the human resource capacity of LGUs as emerging duty bearers to deliver child protection services. This will be crucial if the sustainability of the advances made in child protection over the course of the two programme cycles is to be maintained.

As one UNICEF staff member with detailed knowledge of the challenges faced at the LGU level explained:

> *"I think, given the anticipated changes in the political landscape, there's a need for us to review the strategy of working with local governments as well as the results. Because some of the results wouldn't be delivered without really working with the LGUs. I think there's going to be a transition period before the full devolutions of all the functions with the local governments and for 2021 to 2023, I would actually encourage UNICEF and my colleagues within UNICEF, to take into consideration how we support this transition period: to develop pilots, demonstrating how LGUs can achieve results at the local level."*[208]

Sustainability of the child protection system strengthening will require continued investment in the upskilling of local government partners as they become increasingly responsible as key duty bearers for child protection service delivery.

8.5.4 Factors influencing the sustainability of the child protection programme

What are the major factors which influence the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability?

There are a number of key factors influencing the achievement of sustainability. First, there is a continuing need for the Child Protection Programme to invest in strengthening the institutional capacity of duty bearers, including civil society and government at local level to deliver the various components of the child protection and welfare systems. This needs to be done on a long-term basis if such strengthening is to be sustainable. One example of a long-term partnership can be seen in BARMM where UNICEF are working in partnership with NGOs and religious leaders:

> *"Interviewer: In terms of sustainability, what would happen if UNICEF withdrew its support?*
>
> *P1: The provision of the books as part of our program can be sustained and the advocacy in terms of promoting and upholding the children's rights, as well. Our Muslim religious groups, the Bangsamoro Darul Ifta,' the Committee of Muslim Affairs in the Philippines will adopt this sermon and will promote and introduce it. It will be adopted by the members at the local level. Without our interventions, the advocacy of child's rights in the BARMM provinces will not be sustained. Also, the drafting of Bangsamoro Children's Code, in which some of our children's rights sermons are considered as reference, will contribute to the sustainability of our programs."*[209]

As this example demonstrates, partnering with NGOs, community leaders and faith-based organisations, who are the key stakeholders and oftentimes beneficiaries, is also critical to sustainability, as it ensures continuity, promotes local ownership of decision making and ensures that work done to strengthen the child protection system is more reflective of local needs. This is particularly true for rights holders. Youth participation is a key facilitator in achieving sustainable and

[208] UNICEF Staff, Key Informant Interview, 8 July 2021.
[209] National NGO (BARMM), Key Informant Interview, 26 May 2021.

replicable projects and has the dual benefit of ensuring that children and young people's voices are at the centre of decisions taken about them.

Multiple stakeholders highlighted the need for participation as the key to sustainable and responsive child protection service design and delivery.[210] One example of this is the work being done in the Mindanao Field Office to create a youth participation and empowerment structure to aid the peacebuilding process. Involving children and young people in peacebuilding is known to result in "tangible contributions to peacebuilding outcomes" including a "strong capacity to analyse, prevent, resolve, and transform conflict, critical violence towards the achievement of sustainable outcomes".[211] Moving forward, the child protection team should focus on how to better mainstream children and young people's opinions and perspectives into their work, not only in terms of the development of the Child Protection Programme itself, as noted above (section 7.1), but in the implementation of programmes to ensure sustainability.

The legislative environment is a key factor influencing the sustainability of any child protection programme. In the Philippines, the legislative environment for child protection is strong with a preponderance of legislation dedicated to children's rights issues, as discussed in Section 8.3.1. This ensures, at least in theory, that children have sustainable legislative protections needed to help them thrive. One key example of this is the work of UNICEF Philippines to integrate its parenting programme, MaPa, into the Filipino Governments 4Ps Conditional Cash Transfer Programme for low income and vulnerable families:

> *"…there are some programs that are being institutionalized, or being passed into law. We're fiscal sustainability has been ensured by the department and even with the change of the administration, with the passing of the law…one is the 4Ps program… so before, it was project based for example but when the grant has been maximized and there are no financial infusions coming from our development partners then we have to end the program. But now since it was codified into a la, the Philippine Government is really mandated d to continue said programs with the same conditionalities and the same benefits."*[212]

One major enabling factor on the child protection programmes sustainability is the programmes resilience to disasters and emergencies. UNICEF has been incredibly resilient to natural disasters and public health crises that have severely impacted on the child protection programme, indicating the programme is adaptable and able to respond well to immediate needs. This is important, given the propensity for natural disasters in the country and work should be done to reflect on how learning from the Covid-19 response and response to recent Typhoons can be used in planning for responses to future challenges.

10. FINAL CONCLUSIONS

UNICEF's Child Protection Programmes – including the two-year extension of the previous programme and the first two years of the current programme (2017 – 2020) – are ambitious, with multiple components and work streams. The context in which both Programmes operated was challenging and included a number of natural disasters, situations of armed conflict and displacement of children. Most significantly – at least in last year under review – the Programme was heavily impacted by the

[210] International NGO, Key Informant Interview, 19 May 2021.
[211] UNICEF., Formative Evaluation: UNICEF's Engagement with Young People and Peacebuilding', January 2019.
[212] Government Representative, Key Informant Interview, 21 June 2021.

emergence of the global public health crisis caused by the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This impacted on the Programme's workplan and outputs and it also had an impact on the data collection phase of this evaluation, limiting the availability of key stakeholders to engage in the process (particularly at the sub-national level).

Nonetheless, the evaluation was able to rely on a substantial number of key informant interviews at the national level and across all eight of UNICEF's programming sites, along with a large number of documents and (albeit limited) administrative data from key institutions. According to the data, the Programme has achieved some significant positive results and has shown strong resilience to external challenges.

Relevance

Overall, the objectives, pre-conditions, pathways, change strategies/approaches and implementation modalities of the Child Protection Programme were found to be largely relevant to the programming context. The programmes were designed and grounded within a child protection system strengthening approach and priorities were selected on the basis of a robust evidence base. The Programme was generally found to be relevant to the priorities and needs of national and sub-national stakeholders. The 'upstream' focus on the Programme is well aligned to the programming context and generally suited to programming in a middle-income country. In addition, programming at the sub-national level, with 10 focus LGUs is crucial to support the strengthening of systems and service delivery on the ground. In the Philippines, the legal, policy and institutional framework at the national level is quite comprehensive; what is needed is a focus on capacity building at the local level. The exception of the programme outputs on BARMM, in which a focus on legal and policy development is highly relevant and timely.

This is particularly important in light of the impacts of the Mandanas judgement, which will lead to the further devolution of child protection budgets, governance and service delivery to the local levels from 2022. Also, there appears to be an assumption that UNICEF's 'upstream' work will automatically flow down to create changes 'on the ground;' however, this has not been clearly articulated in the Programme logic and more consideration could be given to how upstream work can lead to changes in child protection systems and services at the local level. Another challenge is that the parenting workstream, while highly relevant to the overall objective of the Child Protection Programme and the context, is not sufficiently integrated into the TOC.

It was found that, while the Programme was responsive to the evidence in terms of the needs of children and families, no systematic process was in place to enable meaningful engagement of children and adolescents in the development and assessment of programme priorities. A systematic engagement process could help demonstrate the programme's relevance to its core beneficiaries. In addition, while gender dynamics and equity issues have been mainstreamed into the Programme – particularly through office-wide gender mainstreaming initiatives – some work could be done to strengthen implementation and make more explicit the gender and equity focus of the programme.

The evaluation also found that the CP Programme was successful in retaining relevance in the context of outside challenges, particularly in its ability to adapt change strategies and implementation modalities to COVID-19.

Coherence

Overall, it was found that the CP Programmes are well aligned to global (SDGs) and national (PDP) development priorities, though the alignment to the Philippines Development Plan (PDP) could be better explored and articulated. For the Philippines to achieve the child protection targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, it will need to develop a roadmap with the required level of ambition including for resource mobilisation. The evaluation findings also demonstrate a strong consensus

amongst key stakeholders on the relevance of the Child Protection Programme's aims and design, which reflect the priorities of development partners and are in line with UNICEF's current strategic approach. This has been achieved through strong partnerships and UNICEF's involvement in coordination efforts among Government and civil society. However, UNICEF's ability to dominate the child protection agenda could be better balanced through a better understanding the needs and interests of stakeholders and development partners.

Effectiveness

The Child Protection Programme has made a significant contribution and has been effective in the reform of child protection policy and legislation, as demonstrated by the number and breath of the results achieved between 2017-2020.

The Philippines was an early adopter of a **systems approach to child protection**, stretching back at least to 1999; yet more than twenty-years later in 2021, there are considerable gaps in the functioning of the system, particularly in terms of governance arrangements, capacity and information management. The absence of a fully functioning child protection system continues to be the biggest bottleneck to the realisation of children's right to protection in the Philippines. While notable progress has been achieved in putting in place the various components of a system (such as legislation and services), the structure to ensure coordination of the national child protection response is not clearly delineated. The high number of committees/councils established in virtue of different legislations might also duplicate efforts and hamper efforts for a more synergetic, integrated child protection system strengthening approach. A greater investment is required in strengthening the overall child protection structure to ensure coordination of the national child protection response.

The Child Protection Programme has engaged effectively with several regional and global efforts (WePROTECT, INSPIRE, End Violence, etc.) in the global quest to achieve the child protection targets of the SDGs. Although labour intensive, this work is helping to ensure that the Philippines gets access to timely and quality advice and learning about interventions that work while at the same time having the opportunity to share its own experiences and learnings. This engagement is also strategically important for pushing the Philippines towards the 'front of queue for funding and technical support as the agenda to achieve the SDGs recovers from the negative consequences of Covid-19 and progress accelerates.

The work on promoting social norms to end violence against children, including on-line, was cited as being particularly effective in the context of the Philippines. The SaferKidsPH programme, was cited by several stakeholders as being an important child protection initiative.

The Child Protection Programme has made a contribution to the intended results on strengthened coordination mechanisms and approaches to enhance parenting. Despite the effectiveness of this work, the ambition for this output is relatively modest when compared to the ambition of the outputs on legal and policy reform and child protection systems strengthening for service delivery for VAC. Unless there is an intention to rapidly scale up the ambition, funding and reach of the programme, it may make more strategic sense to fold this output into the output on VAC but doing so without diminishing the importance of positive parenting as a prevention measure for reducing violence against children.

The Child Protection Programme has been particularly effective in leveraging its convening role to ensure that children and adolescents affected by disasters and those affected by armed conflict, have increased access to child focused programmes. Several partners pointed to UNICEF's contribution to the various inter agency mechanisms as being highly effective. This included UNICEF's role as the lead agency for Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Task Force and secretariat support for the UN country taskforce on Monitoring and Reporting grave violations as well as its new leadership role

for MHPSS. The MRM was cited by UN agencies and NGOs as contributing to a sustainable child protection response.

In BARMM, the Child Protection Programme has been effective in generating evidence to inform child protection system strengthening. This evidence is the findings of a rapid assessment of key social services programmes, [213] which is being used to inform the next phase of this work (which commenced in early 2021) which is the development of a roadmap for the creation of child protection system.

Efficiency

The Child Protection programming approach is efficient in the achievement of the desired results in terms of resource utilization and timely delivery. The main evidence for this finding in the range of results achieved and the relatively modest financial base of the programme.

A central inefficiency is that although the Child Protection Programme has made a significant contribution to the reform of child protection policy and legislation, it has been less effective in efforts to ensure the full implementation of these legislative and policy reforms.

The Child Protection Programme has been efficient in programme adaptation to address the impact of COVID-19 on children. This included upstream adaption through the provision of technical support to the JJWC in Business Continuity Planning to enable continued service delivery in the context of lockdowns. Another noteworthy adaption was in the delivery of the parenting programme (Ma-Pa) through digital platforms such as Viber and integration of Ma-Pa in the Electronic Family Development Sessions of the 4Ps Programme. A component included the dissemination of information on child protection, parenting and MHPSS through digital and other platforms reaching over 700,000 individuals. Child helplines to facilitate child-sensitive reporting, including through chat-box;

Based on the overall results achieved, the Child Protection Programme staff are highly competent and efficient in terms of their technical capacity to effect positive change for children and adolescents vulnerable to harm.

The PCO has put in place effective coordination mechanisms between UNICEF's Child Protection Programme and other UNICEF programmes such as education, health, nutrition, WASH, social protection, adolescent, and communication for development. These mechanisms have helped to create and sustain linkages across sectors, and between child protection actors, especially related to violence against children. Despite these efforts, within the Philippines County Office (PCO) it is not clear whether VAC is a whole-of-office / office wide priority as it is in several other countries in the region, such as Cambodia.

Sustainability

UNICEF's systems strengthening approach to child protection is key to sustainability. The legislative reforms carried out within the programmes are sustainable. Building the capacity of the DSWD and other key departments is also likely to be sustainable. However, overall, more work needs to be done to build relationships, financial and human resources and technical skills at the LGU level in order for child protection work to be sustainable in the long-term, particularly given the increased role of LGUs in delivering child protection services when the Mandanas ruling comes into effect.

A key factor influencing the achievement of sustainability is that the Child Protection Programme has invested in strengthening the institutional capacity of government and civil society rather than focusing on service delivery at the project level.

[213] Coram International, Rapid Assessment of Key Social Services Programmes in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (Phase 1), August 2019

The programme has been incredibly resilient to natural disasters and public health crises (i.e., COVID-19) that have severely impacted on UNICEF's work in general, indicating the programme is adaptable and able to respond well to meet children's immediate needs. This is important, given the propensity for natural disasters in the country and work should be done to reflect on how learning from COVID-19 response can be used to ensure sustainability of the programme in the future.

11. LESSONS LEARNED

The evaluation generated several 'lessons learned' that may be more broadly relevant to child protection programmes outside this specific context.

6. Advocating for and supporting the development of rights-based and evidence-based laws and policies is crucial in the building and strengthening of child protection systems and is an area of comparative advantage for UNICEF. However, it is crucial that efforts aimed at law and policy development and reform are accompanied by support in developing implementation plans and, particularly in heavily decentralised contexts with limited capacity at local levels. Thus, it must be ensured that support to implementation of laws and policies at local levels must exist that cover financial, technical, staffing, managerial and other needs so child protection results for children at local level can be achieved.

7. In heavily decentralised contexts, it is important that UNICEF's Programme logic clearly understands and articulates how 'upstream' work at the national level will flow down to changes in systems and service delivery at local levels.

8. Systems strengthening approaches to child protection are crucial in ensuring that all children facing violence and protection risks receive support and services. Where a fully functioning system is not in place, results in addressing violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of children will be hampered. In the Philippines, programme effectiveness is constrained at a systems level as it appears that the core components of the Child Protection System are being treated as discrete components whereas in practice the functioning of one part of a system is heavily dependent on other system components, meaning that the Philippines child protection system will not be fully functional and effective until all of the components are in place and working synergistically together. The situation is unlikely to improve without there being an agreed national child protection system strengthening strategy, with a commonly agreed vision and definition of what constitutes a child protection system and the core components of the system, including governance arrangement.

9. Multi-disciplinary training of key service providers at the local level has the potential not only to build the capacity of different institutions and professionals (e.g., Social Welfare Officers, police, prosecutors, Court personnel), it can also help to foster a more coordinated and multi-sector response to child protection and child justice systems and services.

10. The use of evidence-based advocacy can be an effective strategy to ensure that laws and policies are and remain rights-based, gender sensitive and child-friendly. UNICEF's efforts in generating an evidence case and informing the advocacy efforts of its partners has had some noteworthy results, for example in convincing law makers not to lower the age of criminal responsibility for alleged juvenile offenders, and the development of a new draft law on protecting child online exploitation, which is currently before the Congress of the Philippines.

11. UNICEF's work to protect children and adolescents affected by disasters and armed conflict was cited by several UN agencies and NGOs as being critically effective given that children and adolescents, particularly in BARMM suffer from perennial displacements due to natural disasters and armed conflict. While the Government has an established system in responding to disasters, UNICEF complemented this work by enabling children and their families to access much needed social services. Psychosocial support training provided to the BARMM Ministry of Social Services and Development personnel as well as local governments helped to strengthen capacities of the duty-bearers and LGUs to respond to the needs of the children.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings, the following concrete recommendations have been made:

Programme focus and design

It is recommended that GPH and UNICEF revise the CP Programme design, through carrying out a diagnostic of the Theory of Change and Strategy Note and adjusting it accordingly. In particular, the following should be considered:

- It is recommended that GPH and the Child Protection Programme develop and implement a Child Protection Systems Strengthening Strategy, with clear indicators and targets for achieving the child protection targets of the SDGs. The strategy should include a commonly agreed vision and definition of what constitutes a child protection system, and the core components of the system, including governance arrangements. It should describe the actions and steps required to ensure that the child protection system is fully functional with the core components of the system working together, rather than as discrete components. UNICEF's new global Child Protection Strategy (2021 – 2030) identifies Child Protection systems as being delivered primarily through the Social Welfare and Justice sectors, and their corresponding line ministries, institutions and functions (e.g., social work, law enforcement), but with strong linkages across all sectors such as health and education. This strategy details seven key components of a 'child protection system' and places increased emphasis on prevention, including social and behaviour change. The components are: 1 legal regulatory and policy; 2 governance; 3 services; 4 standards and oversight; 5 resources; 6 participation; and 7 data.

- The Programme could consolidate its outputs and workstreams to align with this:

    - Output 1 could focus on prevention (incorporating current outputs 3 and 4);
    - Output 2 could focus on systems building. It is recommended that current outputs 1 and 2 be incorporated into a broader output focusing on the required aspects of child protection system strengthening. This could follow a systems diagnostic and stakeholder mapping exercise to reflect on the positioning of UNICEF and where resources are best placed in terms of the seven components of the system (though it is noted that this would form a large, multi-component output);
    - Output 3 could focus on humanitarian programming (incorporating current output 5); and
    - Output 4 could focus on child protection systems building in BARMM. In light of UNICEF's excellent positioning in BARMM, along with its ability to mobilise resources around systems building and the fact that BARMM is at a different stage in the systems building process (e.g. making a focus on law and policy development highly

relevant, where this is not a relevant focus at the national level), it is recommended that a separate output be maintained for BARMM child protection systems building.

- The preconditions and pathways to change should articulate the need to ensure implementation of child protection laws and policies at all levels of government, and to conceptualise how interventions at the national level will filter down to the level of service delivery. Without this, the assumption remains that changes initiated at the national level will 'automatically' filter down to the level at which services are delivered.

- Consideration should be given to how the CP Programme can support the Government in the further devolution of social welfare services that will occur following the Mandanas Supreme Court Ruling. In particular, the Programme could consider how to support the Government at the national level in devolving services effectively and how to support LGUs to build capacity to ensure it has strong systems and frameworks for the effective delivery of child protection services.

- The TOC and Programme design could incorporate the Covid-19 context and how adapted elements of the Programme could be harnessed outside the Covid-19 context (e.g., the use of online modalities for delivery of programme elements).

Responsiveness to beneficiary needs

- GPH and UNICEF should devise a system to ensure that diverse groups of beneficiaries (children, adolescents, parents from different cultures, geographical areas, genders, disability, LGBTI+ children, care-experienced children and so on) are meaningfully engaged in setting priorities for the Programme and in the design of implementation modalities and supported to engage in child protection policy and programme development more generally. This will help to ensure that the Programme – and programming relating to the child protection system in the Philippines – remains relevant to the needs of beneficiaries and that responsive and effective modalities are utilized.

Harnessing new implementation modalities

- The CP Programme has been effective in developing new implementation modalities and building capacity among stakeholders in using new methods (e.g., online training; delivery of services to beneficiaries digitally etc.). Even outside of COVID-19, these new implementation modalities could be seen as an opportunity to reach more remote populations across the Philippines, increasing the reach of services and contributing to UNICEF's equity goals. It is suggested that consideration be given to how COVID-adapted modalities could be utilised more generally by the CP Team (and office-wide). In particular, it is recommended that the GPH and UNICEF increase in the use of information and communications technology, including online platforms, cell phones and telephones, to deliver child protection services in LGUs.

Coordination with development partners

- Given the size and complexity of the current CP Programme and the number of other actors involved in the child protection space, a stakeholder analysis should be carried out by UNICEF to help ensure harmonisation and complementarity among various initiatives and different actors and avoid duplication.

- Encouraging and building partnerships between LGUs and NGOs and FBOs is essential for long term sustainability of the child protection programme, with the aim to ensures communities are invested in driving forward the programme and meeting the needs of rights holders.

  The Programme could focus increased attention on working with the private sector, particularly in its OSAEC initiatives. It is recommended that UNICEF develop a plan of action for effectively engaging with the private sector throughout its CP Programme.

Programme effectiveness

- To ensure that the promise of protection that is contained in new legislation and policies is translated into action, investment should be targeted to supporting the implementation of previous and current legislative and policy reforms, starting with those reforms that will bring maximum benefit to the protection of children. In particular, it is recommended that UNICEF support the GPH in developing costed implementation plans for each piece of legislation or policy and ensuring that capacity gaps are addressed, and coordination mechanisms are strengthened.

- To help move the Philippine towards the front of the global queue for financial resources and technical support for child protection, GPH and UNICEF should elevate engagement with global and regional partners for the rest of the country programme and the next country programme.

9. APPENDICES

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Annex J: Legal Framework

Annex K: Programme objectives

Annex L: Child protection change strategies

Annex M: Visual representation for UNICEF Philippines Child Protection Programme 2019-2023

Annex N: Audience of the evaluation and intended use of the evaluation