

CASE STUDY REPORT

**EVALUATION OF UNICEF
CONTRIBUTION TO TEACHING AND
LEARNING**

Case Study: Bangladesh

May 2023

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Evaluation of UNICEF contribution to teaching and learning Case Study: Bangladesh

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The case study, as part of the global evaluation exercise, was conducted by a team of external consultants from Cambridge Education – Mott MacDonald Group comprising Stuart John, Jake Ross, Ira Sangar, Kaylie Miller, Anne Njogu, Kate Martin, Sevilay Bicici and Robina Shaheen. The full exercise was managed by Tami Aritomi of the UNICEF Evaluation Office, who provided continuous support to help improve the quality and utility of this case study, as part of the global evaluation. Overall supervision was provided by Denis Jobin, chief of portfolio in the Evaluation Office. Special acknowledgement is given to Kathleen Letshabo, who contributed to the quality review, and Dalma Rivero, Geeta Dey and Celeste Lebowitz for their continued administrative support.

Acronyms

A2I	Aspire to Innovate
DPE	Department of Primary Education
DPHE	Department of Public Health Engineering
EiE	Education in emergencies
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
RCCE	Risk Communication and Community Engagement
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

Executive summary

Introduction

This case study is one of seven case studies conducted within the global evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to improved teaching and learning. The overall objective of the global evaluation was to determine to what extent and how successfully UNICEF activities and outputs at the global, regional and country levels contributed to the following outcomes: (1) strong evidence and resource base provided for the education sector's response to COVID-19; (2) education solutions are evidence-based, cross-sectoral and partnership-based; (3) children continue to learn while schools are closed; (4) marginalized children are reached, and their needs are addressed; (5) children are safe and protected during school reopening; and (6) in-school learning is reinstated. The global evaluation was carried out between February 2022 and March 2023, covering UNICEF activities and documents generated between March 2020 and December 2021.

The main purpose of the case study was to produce in-depth analysis to further inform the global evaluation, as well as to derive lessons learned to advise the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office about possible activities and to better position UNICEF to improve its performance in support of teaching and learning efforts.

The Bangladesh case study was guided by the questions from the global evaluation, based on three specific objectives: Objective 1: to examine the role of UNICEF in building the knowledge, research and global public goods required to mount an effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic; Objective 2: to examine the extent to which UNICEF-supported strategies were deployed effectively to enhance government initiatives for continuity of learning during school closures and to reinstate safe and equitable in-school learning opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic; and Objective 3: to examine the extent to which UNICEF Education teams used the existing frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to mount an effective education response to COVID-19, and whether adjustments are being made to enhance preparedness for future disruptions of a similar scale. Conducted over the same time period, the case study follows the same utilization-focused evaluation approach and methodology as the one used in the global evaluation and a similar in-depth data collection method to assess the evidence.

Over 60 internal documents were reviewed, complemented by 8 interviews conducted with key country informants. Evidence was triangulated using information from a global online survey administered between September and October 2022 to contextualize the analysis. Active participation of reference group members and UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office staff gave the triangulation process an additional layer of validity. The conclusions and lessons are summarized below.

Conclusions

Objective 1: Building the evidence and resource base for the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Conclusion 1: The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported the government's evidence-generation efforts by generating credible, youth-informed, relevant and timely evidence to inform

strategies, messaging and activities to address the negative effects of COVID-19 on the education and health sectors in Bangladesh. The Country Office was agile and adaptable, revising its communication strategies informed by rapid assessments, youth engagement, and religious and community leadership support.

Conclusion 2: The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office used a whole-of-government, multisectoral approach to evidence generation, technical support and partnership engagement to support the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Existing partnerships and tested initiatives were critical to build on, to design efficient and coherent initiatives, guidance and tools to support government efforts.

Objective 2: Reopening schools and reinstating face-to-face learning

Conclusion 3: The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported government efforts to deliver various high-tech and non-tech home-based learning options and successfully targeted and reached marginalized adolescents, supporting their learning skills and well-being needs during the COVID-19 response period. However, the long school closures, the digital divide limiting students' and teachers' access to digital tools, the short supply of television-based lessons produced that were unable to cover all grades, and the limited number of non-tech printed materials prevented these efforts from reaching all children, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Objective 3: UNICEF preparedness frameworks and readiness to handle similar future crises

Conclusion 4: Although the UNICEF Cox's Bazar field office played a critical role in deploying existing education in emergencies (EiE) resources to support the education response to COVID-19 in Cox's Bazar, there is limited evidence showing that knowledge and capacity were shared with the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office, and limited evidence of planning for crisis preparedness and resilience-building.

Lessons learned

Lesson 1: The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office was successful in supporting the government to generate credible, youth-informed, relevant and timely evidence to inform decision-making to support children's learning continuity. Lessons learned from its well-targeted efforts to reach vulnerable adolescents during the pandemic should be further assessed to inform programming efforts to reach other marginalized populations, including those harder to reach and those affected by the digital divide.

Lesson 2: The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office's ongoing efforts to further strengthen the government's education monitoring systems and provide technical support for future crisis preparedness and resilience-building of the education system should be informed by lessons learned and existing knowledge and capacity from the UNICEF Cox's Bazar field office's EiE work.

1.0 Introduction and background

1.1. Introduction

Even before the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, a global learning crisis was in effect, due to the limited progress made towards achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, caused the largest disruption to education in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries. School closures, which recurred with successive waves of COVID-19, affected 19 in every 20 students.

During the COVID-19 emergency, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) worked to support the priorities of national governments in close coordination with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Global Team and country teams, humanitarian agencies and civil society partners. Its objectives were to protect children, their families and teachers from exposure to COVID-19, to minimize the impacts of public health measures, to address the immediate socioeconomic consequences of the pandemic, and to increase access to and the provision of basic social services.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, had guided UNICEF work on education as a priority, as described in Goal Area 2. Its theory of change was developed assuming that the economic, political and social environment would remain stable. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, this key assumption ceased to hold true. Although a revised theory of change was not developed explicitly for the UNICEF response to COVID-19, the overarching goal of UNICEF, and the goals of its education programme, remained relevant. The three key change strategies of Goal Area 2’s theory of change included in the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025 – namely, global partnerships and public goods, systems-strengthening and service delivery – remained relevant following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This case study presents an in-depth analysis of the work done by the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office during the period from March 2020 to December 2021, assessing the UNICEF education response to COVID-19. This exercise was designed to gather in-depth evidence to inform the global evaluation of the UNICEF contribution to improved teaching and learning. Guided by its mandate to provide inclusive and equitable education and learning opportunities to girls and boys, including the most marginalized, this evaluation aimed to determine to what extent and how successfully UNICEF activities and outputs at the global, regional and country levels contributed to the following outcomes:

- Strong evidence and resource base provided for the education response
- Education solutions are evidence-based, cross-sectoral and partnership-based
- Children continue to learn while schools are closed
- Marginalized children are reached, and their needs are addressed
- Children are safe and protected during school reopening
- In-school learning is reinstated.

1.2. Bangladesh country context

Bangladesh is one of the world's most densely populated countries, and one of the most vulnerable to extreme weather events. It has strong mechanisms in place to manage emergencies, vastly minimizing the effects of disasters that have impacted it over the years. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief leads the planning and implementation of emergency response and resilience-building activities. Its disaster management system acts as an efficient early warning system and has been particularly effective in response to cyclones. As a result of experience and planning, there are thousands of trained people who can be mobilized quickly to respond to any sudden-onset event. At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, it quickly became clear that this was an emergency unlike any that had gone before and would require a unique and tailored response, different from a sudden-onset event.

Bangladesh is a remarkable story of poverty reduction and development. From being one of the poorest nations at birth in 1971, it reached lower-middle-income status in 2015. It is on track to graduate from the Least Developed Countries list in 2026. Its economy continued to grow rapidly in recent years until the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic slowed its progress. The impact of the slowdown was felt in the form of lower business profits, household earnings and employment. Rising prices of everyday consumables and decreasing incomes, especially among already poor households, meant a rise in poverty levels. According to the government's Multisectoral Anticipatory Impact and Needs Analysis in early 2020, 91 per cent of the people surveyed did not have enough money to buy basic food items.¹ The impact of this situation translated into 42 per cent of children (and 33 per cent of adults) being multidimensionally poor in 2020.

Bangladesh faces a humanitarian crisis of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar seeking refuge in the Cox's Bazar district, one of the most impoverished districts in the country. The arrival of Rohingya refugees has placed enormous pressure on the already fragile social, economic and environmental structures of host communities in the district.² In addition, Cox's Bazar is vulnerable to disasters and climate change, affecting the livelihoods and resilience of local communities.

Despite hosting the world's largest refugee camp, Kutupalong camp, Bangladesh lacks any domestic legal instruments on asylum or statelessness. This has restricted the ability of Rohingya refugees with no legal status to access essential services beyond the Cox's Bazar camps. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated their vulnerabilities and those of their host communities. Over 60 per cent of Rohingya households were multidimensionally poor in 2020, increasing from 47 per cent in 2019. Additionally, in 2020, 96 per cent of Rohingya refugees were classified as moderately or severely vulnerable.

1.3 COVID-19 and the education sector in Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh closed all schools and educational institutions on 17 March 2020, due to COVID-19. The pandemic caused a serious education crisis, with Bangladesh

1 For more information, see <<https://reliefweb.int/report/bangladesh/covid-19-bangladesh-multi-sectoral-anticipatory-impact-and-needs-analysis>>, accessed 1 September 2023.

2 United Nations Children's Fund, Bangladesh, 'Country Programme Document 2022–2026: Bangladesh', UNICEF, Dhaka, 2021, <www.unicef.org/executiveboard/media/6941/file/2021-PL26-Bangladesh_CPD-EN-ODS.pdf>, accessed 1 September 2023.

experiencing one of the longest school closures worldwide. This disrupted the education of 36.5 million children enrolled in schools in the country.

School closures in most countries around the world were designed to reduce the spread of COVID-19. In many cases, they were followed by staggered reopening and/or periodic opening and further closures, which disrupted in-school learning for children on a massive scale. Bangladesh implemented the longest full closure of schools in the world. The 18-month period of school closure is predicted to have a very serious negative impact on the learning levels of students in the long term. School closures increased children's vulnerabilities, as the pandemic increased the prevalence of violence and exploitation, with a substantially higher number of reports of child rape, child marriage, and child deaths due to violence.

The magnitude and immediacy of the crisis required swift planning and mobilization by the two education ministries concerned: the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) and the Ministry of Education (MoE). These ministries mobilized working groups consisting of government personnel, United Nations agencies, development partners and non-governmental organizations to design learning provisions through different delivery mechanisms. At the local level, government education officers were also involved in raising awareness regarding COVID-19 safety protocols and distributed face masks among communities.

The disruption caused challenges for the system in ensuring access for already marginalized children facing various barriers to participation in learning. Such challenges included a lack of technology, marginalization of ethnic minorities, and limited information on how to access distance learning due to language barriers. Despite great strides made by Bangladesh's education system over recent years, the World Bank predicted considerable learning losses due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19. It estimated that the proportion of children unable to achieve minimum reading proficiency by grade 5 would increase from 58 per cent to 76 per cent.

The crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic also impacted teachers' ability to conduct their jobs effectively amidst the transition from in-person to distance learning. Many teachers struggled to do their job in a new environment with limited social, emotional or practical support. To support the teachers, the government kept engaging with them. It kept the teacher training regime running virtually – for example, the Diploma in Primary Education was delivered online by the Primary Teachers' Training Institute. Peer-to-peer learning among teachers was also encouraged to continue teachers' professional development in changing circumstances. Teachers were encouraged to record and share lessons online so that their fellow teachers could observe, engage with and learn from each other's work.

1.4. UNICEF response to COVID-19 in the education sector in Bangladesh

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office built on its partnerships with donors such as the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, the European Union, the United States Agency for International Development, Global Affairs Canada and others to mobilize emergency funding. These resources were used to develop frameworks, guides and tools to plan and monitor the education response. Key UNICEF Bangladesh outputs during the pandemic under global partnerships and public goods included:

- Supporting the government to develop the National COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan for the Education Sector, facilitating timely school reopening while mitigating health and safety challenges, as well as the Safe School Reopening Guidelines, informed by the

UNICEF–UNESCO–World Food Programme–World Bank global framework for reopening schools

- Supporting the government to develop the Interim Guidance for Prevention and Control of COVID-19, jointly with the World Health Organization and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)
- Managing US\$4.7 million of the Global Partnership for Education grant to tackle the learning challenge posed by the pandemic. The Government of Bangladesh accepted a grant worth US\$14.8 million from the Global Partnership for Education to carry out the COVID-19 school sector response project. The World Bank acted as the Grant Agent for processing and supervising the proposed grant.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office gathered evidence that informed awareness-raising campaigns on the risks of COVID-19. These campaigns reached over 50 million people with information designed to sensitize them to the harmful health effects of the virus, tackling misinformation, challenging negative opinions of those affected, and promoting health and hygiene practices to keep people safe. UNICEF Bangladesh used all its platforms and digital tools and its decentralized network of partner organizations to raise awareness.

During school closures, the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office's Education team supported the government in developing various home-based learning modalities, delivered through television and radio, mobile phones and online. The Country Office also worked to support the distribution of workbooks, radios and other learning supplies through its in-country partners. The partnerships that UNICEF Bangladesh had with the public and private sectors supported the roll-out of home-based learning opportunities at scale.

In addition, the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office continued its work against child violence, including child marriage and child deaths. Its national child helpline received more calls in the first four months of 2020 than in the whole of 2019. An October 2020 U-Report survey revealed that 18 per cent of young people believed that violence had increased under the lockdown necessitated by the pandemic.³

The collaboration between the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office's Education and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) teams and the government led to increased investment in WASH activities, services and supplies in schools. WASH facilities were constructed in schools that were lacking adequate facilities; hygiene kits were distributed; hygiene and WASH maintenance training was given to school management committees; and community awareness was raised on the importance of good hygiene practices in and out of schools.

³ United Nations Children's Fund, Bangladesh, 'Country Office Annual Report 2020: Bangladesh', UNICEF, Dhaka, 2021.

2.0 Purpose, objectives and scope

2.1. Purpose of the case study

The overall purpose of this case study is to provide in-depth analysis to build a robust evidence base for the global evaluation⁴ and to derive lessons that can inform new programme activities by the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office. The case study also aims to inform necessary adjustments in the education strategic planning process and bring about alignment and coherence with any changes in national priorities and needs. This will help better position UNICEF to improve its performance in support of teaching and learning efforts in Bangladesh.

2.2. Objectives of the case study

This case study follows the same three objectives as the global evaluation, namely:

- Objective 1: To examine the role of UNICEF in building the knowledge, research and global public goods required to mount an effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Objective 2: To examine the extent to which UNICEF-supported strategies were deployed effectively to enhance government initiatives for continuity of learning during school closures and to reinstate safe and equitable in-school learning opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Objective 3: To examine the extent to which UNICEF Education teams used the existing frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to mount an effective education response to COVID-19, and whether adjustments are being made to enhance preparedness for future disruptions of a similar scale.

2.3. Scope of the case study

The case study for the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office covers the period from March 2020 until the end of 2021, while its thematic focus is aligned with the three themes described in the objectives. Stakeholders included individuals and institutions who contributed to, collaborated with or supported UNICEF efforts in the education sector in Bangladesh, including UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office staff, and government and non-government local partners.

⁴ The global evaluation serves two main purposes: to enhance organizational learning and to strengthen organizational accountability. The evaluation is situated in the context of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2018–2021, and Every Child Learns: UNICEF Education Strategy 2019–2030. The implementation period for the education strategy began less than 12 months before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to an immediate and significant change of direction for UNICEF in much of its work to support children’s learning. The three key change strategies (global partnerships and public goods, systems-strengthening and service delivery) included in the theory of change for Goal Area 2 of the strategic plan remained relevant, however.

3.0 Case study approach and methodology

3.1. Case study approach and methods

This case study follows a methodological design consistent with the one used for the global evaluation, using the same evaluation questions and evaluation criteria for the data collection and data analysis processes. As in the associated global evaluation, this case study adopts a utilization-focused and participatory approach, involving key users throughout the evaluation.

Primary stakeholders from the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office were engaged in validating findings and recommendations. This design allowed stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the UNICEF contribution to improved teaching and learning, to increase learning, ownership and the likelihood of using evidence to inform future decisions. This section presents the questions guiding this case study (see *Table 1*) and a summary of the approach and methodology. A detailed description of the evaluation questions, approach and methodology deployed in the global evaluation is presented as Annex A.

Table 1. Questions guiding the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office case study

Objective 1: To examine the role of UNICEF in building the knowledge, research and global public goods required to mount an effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic
1.1 What has been the role and contribution of UNICEF in building the data, knowledge and tools for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector?
1.2 To what extent have UNICEF Education teams worked across sectors coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector?
1.3 To what extent has UNICEF mobilized and worked with external partners coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector?
Objective 2: To examine the extent to which UNICEF-supported strategies were deployed effectively to enhance government initiatives for continuity of learning during school closures and to reinstate safe and equitable in-school learning opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic
2.1 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote home-based learning?
2.2 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance children's safety, well-being and protection during the reopening of schools?
2.3 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to reinstate in-school learning?
2.4 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to introduce reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices?
2.5 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported governments during the COVID-19 pandemic to target and reach different groups of marginalized children and adapt programmes to their learning needs?
2.6 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives to recover learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic?
Objective 3: To examine the extent to which UNICEF Education teams used the existing frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to mount an effective education response to COVID-19, and whether adjustments are being made to enhance preparedness for future disruptions of a similar scale
3.1 In what ways, and how successfully, did UNICEF Education teams deploy the existing education in emergencies (EiE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools in the education sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
3.2 In what ways, and how comprehensively, has UNICEF adapted the education in emergencies (EiE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to prepare UNICEF education programmes in different contexts for future global public health emergencies?

A mixed-methods approach to data collection and analysis was used. Eight remote interviews were conducted with key country informants in September and October 2022, including three UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office staff, four government officials, and one implementing partner representative from a civil society organization. Over 60 internal UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office documents were also reviewed. Evidence was triangulated using information from a global online survey administered between September and October 2022 to contextualize the analysis.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office case study was one of seven case studies used to inform the global evaluation report, to compare which strategies, processes and activities worked well, why, how, for whom and in what type of geographical contexts, to tackle the type of problems that target groups faced. All country case studies were designed to leverage both contextual and institutional knowledge from within each of the countries. These studies produced comparative evidence and in-depth insights into strategies and activities adopted to respond to the COVID-19 crisis in diverse contexts. Although the country sample selection was designed to capture the diversity of countries where UNICEF works, it was not designed to be representative of all UNICEF education programmes, hence the discrete findings are not necessarily generalizable beyond the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office.

4.0 Case study findings and conclusions

4.1 Objective 1: Building the evidence and resource base for the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic

Conclusion 1: The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported the government's evidence-generation efforts by generating credible, youth-informed, relevant and timely evidence to inform strategies, messaging and activities to address the negative effects of COVID-19 in the education and health sectors in Bangladesh. The Country Office was agile and adaptable, revising its communication strategies informed by rapid assessments, youth engagement, and religious and community leadership support.

Conclusion 2: The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office used a whole-of-government, multisectoral approach to evidence generation, technical support and partnership engagement to support the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Existing partnerships and tested initiatives were critical to build on, to design efficient and coherent initiatives, guidance and tools to support government efforts.

Question 1.1: What has been the role and contribution of UNICEF in building the data, knowledge and tools for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector (within the case study country, plus any contributions to regional and global levels)?

Finding 1.1.1 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported the government by producing credible, youth-informed, relevant and timely evidence to inform strategies, messaging and activities to address the negative effects of COVID-19 on the education sector in Bangladesh.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office was the leading partner for the MoE and MoPME's education sector response, as well as the Cox's Bazar education sector co-lead for the Rohingya EiE response. It supported the government in establishing and strengthening data systems to enable faster, evidence-based decision-making to respond to COVID-19. Some of the Country Office's key contributions were as follows:

- Under the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office's coordination, the Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) pillar of the national COVID-19 response conducted over 42 evidence-generation activities, including U-Report mobile-based polling and online and observation surveys. Results of the data collection and analysis were shared with the government to inform RCCE strategies, messaging and activities, and to adjust them continuously in the manner of a learning organization.⁵
- UNICEF Bangladesh launched 15 U-Report surveys and used the results to shape COVID-19 prevention campaigns. Adolescents and youth were engaged and their voices included via mobile technologies in community activities on COVID-19 and development programming.^{6,7}

5 United Nations Children's Fund, Bangladesh, 'Country Office Annual Report 2020: Bangladesh', Dhaka: UNICEF, 2021.

6 Ibid.

7 U-Report is a social messaging tool and data collection system developed by UNICEF globally to improve citizen engagement, inform leaders and foster positive change. The program sends SMS polls and alerts to its participants, collects real-time responses and subsequently publishes the data gathered. See UNICEF Office of Information, 'U-

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office also launched a mini Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) using a two-stage cluster-randomized approach to survey 9,000 households in 450 clusters across the country to allow UNICEF and its partners to measure the impact of COVID-19 on children, using mini-MICS 2019 data as a baseline for the pre-pandemic situation. The MICS study was expected to take place from December 2021 to April 2022 and so falls outside the evaluation period. These results were intended to allow UNICEF to advocate for making further data-informed decisions and plan a call for action to fight the multidimensional impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the lives of children, their access to education and protection, and safe, hygienic services.⁸

Finding 1.1.2 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office worked with various partners on awareness-raising campaigns to build knowledge and combat misinformation regarding health and hygiene practices to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus in Bangladesh.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported the development of and hosted the COVID-19 dashboard, an online surveillance system that provided the latest data on the pandemic in Bangladesh. With up-to-date information on the number of tests, confirmed cases and deaths, and other data on health, child protection, education and WASH collected via UNICEF-commissioned surveys, the online dashboard was the primary reference point for government officials.⁹ This allowed decision makers to refer to a single source of verified information on how the pandemic was spreading through the country.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office coordinated the RCCE pillar of the national COVID-19 response, comprising development agencies, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and private sector entities. In 2020, the RCCE pillar collectively reached 51.2 million people with preventive messages, which were viewed 3 billion times. It also reached about 48 million people with COVID-19 messages through different media in 2021. These mass communication channels were also used to disseminate information regarding distance learning modalities available for all children, and advice on learning continuity when schools were closed.

Updated messages were devised based on data collected from various rapid assessments and opinion polls, which played a vital role in assessing changes in people's perceptions. Partnerships with key social influencers, such as religious leaders, youth and volunteers, helped create trust in and acceptance of COVID-19 preventive practices among the community. The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported religious leaders in denouncing the stigmatization of service providers and infected individuals. UNICEF Bangladesh social media posts countering misinformation recorded 73.6 million views.¹⁰

In host communities and refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office and its partners reached 1.1 million people with COVID-19 prevention and vaccination messages. Eighteen UNICEF-supported information and feedback centres received 14,432

Report: Empowering and connecting young people around the world to engage with and speak out on issues that matter to them', UNICEF, no date, <www.unicef.org/innovation/U-Report#:~:text=U%2DReport%20is%20a%20messaging,to%20discrimination%20and%20child%20marriage>, accessed 16 November 2022.

8 United Nations Children's Fund, Bangladesh, 'Country Office Annual Report 2021: Bangladesh', UNICEF, Dhaka, 2022.

9 United Nations Children's Fund, Bangladesh, 'Country Office Annual Report 2020: Bangladesh', UNICEF, Dhaka, 2021.

10 Ibid.

items of feedback, complaints and queries on COVID-19. Throughout, 62 rumours were tracked and looped back to inform messaging designed to counter them.

Question 1.2: To what extent have UNICEF Education teams worked across sectors coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector?

Finding 1.2.1 Coherent and efficient cross-sectoral work between the Education and WASH teams during the COVID-19 pandemic education response built on an existing collaborative relationship between the two teams prior to the pandemic.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office's Education and WASH teams worked very closely together to plan for and implement safe school reopening activities that supported the availability of WASH facilities in schools and communities. They worked coherently and efficiently together to develop WASH guidelines, assess school facilities and then install WASH facilities in schools across the country, building on their existing collaborations.

Even though limited evidence was available to assess the coherence or efficiency of these collaborations, additional multisectoral collaboration efforts in the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office included:

- Cross-sectoral work between the Education and Child Protection teams to produce tools to guide online safeguarding and protect children from cyber bullying as they engaged in online learning during school closures
- Collaboration between the Education and Nutrition teams to plan adolescent nutrition interventions and reach adolescents with in-school nutrition services when schools reopened, linking with the education curriculum to enhance adolescents' knowledge and practices on healthy diets.

Question 1.3: To what extent has UNICEF mobilized and worked with external partners coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education sector?

Finding 1.3.1 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office worked coherently with the government, taking a multisectoral approach to developing evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of COVID-19 on the education sector.

Early in the pandemic, the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office provided technical assistance to the government to develop the Bangladesh Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19, and coordinated multiple partners as part of the RCCE pillar. It also worked closely with the World Health Organization and other United Nation partners (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, World Food Programme, International Organization for Migration) to support the government in the implementation of the COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan. In line with the plan, UNICEF Bangladesh provided technical and financial support to line ministries and other authorities at the national and local levels to restore access to quality essential services. The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office also partnered with the following government bodies:

- Education sector authorities, including the MoPME and the MoE
- The Department of Primary Education (DPE) on school reopening
- The National Curriculum Textbook Board on national curriculum reform

- The government and Aspire to Innovate (A2I) on expanding remote learning modalities and providing technical support to subcommittees of the National Task Force for Blended Learning Framework
- Other ministries, including the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, the Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE), the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority, and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- Other government authorities, including the Directorate-General of Health Services, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, National Nutrition Services, the Institute of Public Health Nutrition and the Bangladesh National Nutrition Council.

Finding 1.3.2 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office built on an existing technical partnership and worked coherently and efficiently with its partner to design and deliver evidence-based solutions to distance learning via several modalities.

A key partner for the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office and the government in supporting distance learning during school closures was Aspire to Innovate (A2I). Supported by the United Nations Development Programme, A2I is a special programme that supports the government's Digital Bangladesh agenda to digitize all government services. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, A2I worked with UNICEF, the MoPME and the MoE on integrating information and communication technology (ICT) into teaching and learning tools, such as multi-media classrooms, a teachers' portal, Braille Book, Konnect, a skills portal, virtual classes and Champion Teachers.

This prior work and existing partnership with A2I helped the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office respond quickly to support and lead the technical design of distance learning initiatives via television, radio, mobile and e-learning during school closures. Leading the partnership allowed UNICEF Bangladesh to promote the use of the same platform for home-based learning and to avoid duplication of efforts.

After schools reopened in September 2021, the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office and A2I continued to work closely together to develop a blended learning strategy to continue some distance learning initiatives even after schools had reopened. The objectives of this initiative were to provide the government with additional learning resources for children whose learning levels had dropped, and to reach out to hard-to-reach children who were struggling to attend school regularly – for example, because they took on jobs or got married while schools were closed.

4.2 Objective 2: Reopening schools and reinstating face-to-face learning

Conclusion 3: The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported government efforts to deliver various high-tech and non-tech home-based learning options and successfully targeted and reached marginalized adolescents, supporting their learning skills and well-being needs during the COVID-19 response period. However, the long school closures, the digital divide limiting students' and teachers' access to digital learning tools, the short supply of television-based lessons produced that were unable to cover all grades, and the limited number of non-tech printed materials prevented these efforts from reach all children, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Question 2.1: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote home-based learning?

Finding 2.1.1 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported government initiatives for home-based learning by quickly mobilizing technical partners to design remote lessons, working with implementing partners to roll out programmes, and engaging with donor partners for funding support.

Bangladesh schools experienced the longest school closures worldwide, lasting 18 months until 12 September 2021. Initiatives to ensure the continuity of learning away from schools were essential. The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported government efforts to design remote learning options, including a diverse range of modalities using technology-based delivery platforms (television, online, radio, mobile phone) and non-technology-based approaches such as home visits and the distribution of paper-based lessons and assignments. Remote learning was designed for all children, including those in madrasa and technical education, with curricula adapted for distribution by television, radio and mobile phone.

The response was quick, with the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office, government stakeholders and A2I jointly discussing a plan to ensure continuity of learning using existing facilities. UNICEF Bangladesh supported content development through technical and financial support. A2I mobilized the technology and training for teachers, while the government quality-assured all the lessons and agreed to use the Parliament TV channel to broadcast lessons. Within 17 days of the first school closure, recorded classes were being broadcast, starting with lessons for grades 6 and 7. Soon after, lessons were rolled out for all other grades. Approximately 6,000–9,000 lessons were developed – though regarded as insufficient to cover lessons for all grades.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office also coordinated with 36 partner organizations to support government efforts. Organized into four working groups, focused on radio, television, mobile and online platforms, partners developed strategies for their respective medium for home-based learning. Based on this work, UNICEF Bangladesh presented a joint strategy to the MoPME and the MoE that informed the National Education Response Plan to COVID-19. This plan was rolled out with a US\$14.8 million grant from the Global Partnership for Education.

The remote learning initiatives in 2020 and 2021 are estimated to have supported 41.89 million learners (50 per cent female) from pre-primary to secondary education. In Cox's Bazar, while learning centres in the Rohingya camps were closed, caregiver-led home education benefited an estimated 350,000 Rohingya children (48 per cent girls).¹¹

Question 2.2: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance children's safety, well-being and protection during the reopening of schools?

Finding 2.2.1 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office jointly developed guidelines and strategies to support government initiatives to enhance children's safety, well-being and protection during the reopening of schools.

In 2021, the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office worked closely with government ministries and partner organizations to develop evidence-based guidelines for children's health, safety and well-being during the school reopening process, supporting the development and dissemination of Safe School Reopening Guidelines. An Operations and Maintenance Guideline was also

11 United Nations Children's Fund, Bangladesh, 'Country Office Annual Report 2021: Bangladesh', UNICEF, Dhaka, 2022.

developed in partnership with the DPHE for associated planning and monitoring of the reopening process.¹²

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office worked with the DPE and the MoPME to develop a WASH in Schools framework with a clear accountability mechanism for monitoring and data management through an improved education management information system. A new episode of the *Meena* animated film was developed as a tool for conveying messages from child to child for awareness-raising on hygiene and a safe return to schools.¹³ UNICEF Bangladesh and the government jointly developed the Three-Star Approach implementation guideline for primary schools to improve the effectiveness of hygiene behaviour change programmes. It sought to ensure that healthy habits were taught, practised and integrated into daily school routines.¹⁴

Finding 2.2.2 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office used its vast network of implementing partners to support the planning, implementation and scale-up of the government's WASH initiatives at national and subnational levels when schools reopened.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office worked jointly with national and subnational government stakeholders to deploy resources, engaging with its network of partners to successfully deliver WASH services across Bangladesh. Examples of such activities include the following:

- As of December 2021, school hygiene supplies were in the pipeline to reach an estimated 1.3 million children in 7,100 government primary schools.¹⁵
- Eighteen officials from the DPE at national and subnational levels, 802 primary school teachers and 200 school management committee members were sensitized on the WASH Three-Star Approach implementation guidelines jointly developed by UNICEF Bangladesh, the DPE and the DPHE.¹⁶
- Under the WASH Three-Star Approach pilot, 15,300 students, including 10,710 girls, from 34 primary schools were oriented on the importance of hand hygiene and the proper use of toilets. The initiative will be scaled up to 274 primary schools for the sustainable practice of hygienic toilets and group hand washing with running water and soap at the primary school level.¹⁷
- At secondary level, 44,000 adolescents (29,000 girls) in 110 schools were educated on hand hygiene, menstrual hygiene management, safe water handling and safe sanitation practices to achieve a healthy and hygienic institutional environment.¹⁸

Question 2.3: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to reinstate in-school learning?

12 Ibid.

13 Meena is a fictional character who stars in the South Asian children's television show *Meena* created by UNICEF. The show is broadcast in the English, Bengali, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu languages. Meena educates the children of South Asia on issues of gender, health and social inequality through her stories in comic books, animated films and radio series.

14 United Nations Children's Fund, Bangladesh, 'Country Office Annual Report 2021: Bangladesh', UNICEF, Dhaka, 2022.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

Finding 2.3.1 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office generated evidence, produced guidance for safe reopening, and engaged with partners to advocate for the reopening of schools; however, despite the close collaboration with government partners, Bangladesh had one the longest full closures of schools globally.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office advocated for the reopening of schools by participating in government committees (including RCCE, distance learning and safe school reopening), generating evidence and mobilizing stakeholders. Despite these advocacy efforts, all schools were reopened after 18 months (in September 2021) – one of the longest full closures of all schools globally – allowing children to attend in-person classes at least one day per week.¹⁹

In addition, UNICEF Bangladesh built on its existing advocacy work on WASH issues to support hand hygiene in the context of COVID-19 in the Government School Reopening Guidelines. It also provided technical support to the DPE to prepare the Guidelines on WASH in School, and Operation and Maintenance Guidelines regarding reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. In 2021, UNICEF Bangladesh and its academic partners at Oxford University developed the Safe Pani model to explore possibilities for sustainable operation and maintenance modalities for WASH in schools, and health and water facilities in communities, through the private sector.

Question 2.4: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to introduce reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices?

Finding 2.4.1 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported government efforts to address the impact of the pandemic and to rebuild the education sector. However, more could be done to define the government's strategy to reform teaching, learning, and assessment practices to assess learning losses, and the Country Office's possible supporting role.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office supported the government in developing a blended education strategy to improve the coverage and effectiveness of remote learning through low-tech modalities. Looking to the future, the government built initiatives into the 2020 National COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan for the Education Sector to inform the fourth Primary Education Development Programme (2018–2025) and the Secondary Education Development Programme. The Response and Recovery Plan outlines the need to accelerate plans that were already in progress, as well as to use lessons learned during the pandemic response to influence future decision-making.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office provided technical support to a revised National Curriculum Framework (NCF). The revised NCF included detailing the subject-based curriculum and developing teaching/learning strategies, materials and assessment for piloting in 2022, with the main goal of creating momentum for qualitative changes in teaching/learning processes and improving learning outcomes.

UNICEF Bangladesh also supported the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education to design innovative pedagogy and formative assessment. This school- and classroom-based assessment was piloted in 100 primary schools.²⁰ The success of the blended learning strategy,

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ United Nations Children's Fund, Bangladesh, 'Country Office Annual Report 2021: Bangladesh', UNICEF, Dhaka, 2022.

as well as the reformed teaching, learning, and assessment practices to assess learning losses due to COVID-19, is yet to be determined.

Question 2.5: In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported governments during the COVID-19 pandemic to target and reach different groups of marginalized children and adapt programmes to their learning needs?

Finding 2.5.1 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office targeted vulnerable groups of adolescents, and supporting their learning, skills and security needs throughout the pandemic, despite the exceptionally long school closures.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office worked with multiple partners to improve adolescent engagement initiatives, including life-skills education and media participation, and foster empowerment among adolescents and their communities. It re-established a task force for the inclusion of children and adolescents with disabilities in Bangladesh, mapping inclusion work and conducting a situation analysis on this target population. A 2021 workplan was developed, following discussions with young people with disabilities, aiming at ensuring an inclusive approach to its operations, culture, and programming. Additionally, UNICEF Bangladesh supported the development of the National Adolescent Strategy and the Standardized Adolescent Empowerment Package.

The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office's inclusion efforts resulted in the direct provision of an accelerated learning programme for primary education, working with 100 learning centres and reaching 4,300 of the most marginalized out-of-school adolescent children. Under the Skills4Girls initiative, the Country Office continued its efforts to diversify the programme, adding online and blended modalities to connect out-of-school adolescents and young people with wage employment, self-employment and entrepreneurship. A pilot of the informal apprenticeship, digital skills training and entrepreneurship training modalities commenced among 3,100 out-of-school young people.

In addition, UNICEF Bangladesh supported the adaptation of psychosocial first aid for use in schools to address adolescent mental health issues and spread awareness of the negative impacts of COVID-19 in communities. Adolescents were engaged through 1,695 clubs (193 virtual), through which about 4,200 adolescents were trained to disseminate COVID-19 messages via a mobile application, reaching 132,846 adolescents, 27,962 parents and 63,517 other community members.

Finding 2.5.2 There were significant gaps in the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office's COVID-19 education response efforts to reach and address the needs of some marginalized children, particularly those from poor, rural and hard-to-reach backgrounds, through various distance learning modalities during school closures.

Evidence suggests that the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office's efforts to adapt learning solutions during school closures or the reopening process did not target or reach certain marginalized groups of children, with the exception of adolescent girls, adolescents with disabilities, and out-of-school adolescents. The digital divide between urban and rural areas, and rich and poor students, was magnified when schools were closed.

The UNICEF-supported options of adapted lessons delivered through various home-based learning modalities, including television, radio, e-learning and mobile, reached a large number of children. However, evidence suggests that not many students engaged with the materials. Given the disparities in access to various digital solutions, there was a need to scale up access

to alternative, low-tech solutions, such as the distribution of printed materials and SMS. Findings from the Campaign for Popular Education survey indicated that despite the emergency response plan's intentions to reach the most marginalized communities, they remained hard to reach for many non-governmental organizations and government initiatives.²¹

Several external studies corroborated these findings showing the disparity in access to learning between children from diverse backgrounds while schools were closed, with the most disadvantaged children least likely to have the parental support, equipment or supportive environment required to continue their studies away from school.^{22,23,24} This challenge was recognized by the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office and stakeholders in the education system, including the Secretary of the MoPME, who instructed their staff to look for ways to reach these learners. Data on learning losses are also yet to be collected and assessed.

4.3 Objective 3: UNICEF preparedness frameworks and readiness to handle similar future crises

Conclusion 4: Although the UNICEF Cox's Bazar field office played a critical role in deploying existing EiE resources to support the education response to COVID-19 in Cox's Bazar, there is limited evidence showing that knowledge and capacity were shared with the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office, and limited evidence of planning for crisis preparedness and resilience-building.

Question 3.1: In what ways, and how successfully, did UNICEF Education teams deploy the existing EiE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools in the education sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

21 Campaign for Popular Education, 'Education response to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Rapid response survey. Bangladesh' (draft), BRAC and Education OutLoud, Dhaka, 2020, <www.campebd.org/page/Generic/0/38/59>, accessed 1 September 2023.

22 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Office Bangkok and Regional Bureau for Education in Asia and the Pacific and United Nations Children's Fund Regional Office for South Asia and East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, 'Situation analysis of the effects of and responses to COVID-19 on the education sector in Asia: Bangladesh Case Study', UNESCO and UNICEF, Bangkok and Kathmandu, 2021, <<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379506>>, accessed 1 September 2023.

23 The BRAC Institute of Governance and Development's 2020 rapid survey found that, during school closures, the average number of hours that students in rural areas spent studying decreased from 10 hours per day to just 2 hours. Moreover, 14 per cent of students in the sample reported not studying at all, while 56 per cent of students did not take part in online classes. The survey also found that students whose parents had the lowest education levels were studying the least. This rapid survey, conducted in June 2020, gather information from 5,000 students from urban slums and rural areas across Bangladesh. See BRAC, 'A Rapid Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on Education in Bangladesh', BRAC, Dhaka, 2020.

24 In February 2021, an Asian Development Bank survey found that access to digital devices for remote learning and e-learning was inadequate, and that there was a large divide between rural and urban areas in access to television and online content. Fewer than 50 per cent of the students surveyed had access to a television or radio, less than a quarter had access to the internet, and fewer than 3 per cent had access to a computer at home. In addition, the survey found that most students had not received monitoring or guidance from teachers or other educational staff during school closures, and only limited education-related support had been provided by their families and the community. Two thirds of learners surveyed had had no direct contact with teachers during the lockdown, with teachers contacting girls slightly more commonly than boys, and the poorest quintile of children in rural contexts were contacted less frequently than other children. See Asian Development Bank, 'Impact of COVID-19 on primary school students in disadvantaged areas of Bangladesh', ADB Brief No. 200, ADB, Manila, 2021, <www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/752796/adb-brief-200-impact-covid-19-primary-school-students-bangladesh.pdf>, accessed 1 September 2023.

Finding 3.1.1 The UNICEF Cox’s Bazar field office deployed existing EiE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to support the education response to COVID-19 in Cox’s Bazar, continuing its support to the Rohingya refugees and their host communities. However, it is unclear whether these EiE resources were shared with or used by the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office in Dhaka or how these two offices worked together.

In Bangladesh, UNICEF operations are divided into two separate operations: the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office and the UNICEF Cox’s Bazar emergency field office. Across the two offices, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, EiE operations covered the Rohingya refugee crisis in the Cox’s Bazar district, with UNICEF coordinating programmes targeting children. EiE provisions to the Rohingya people are considered outside the formal Bangladesh education system and delivered under United Nations humanitarian and donor efforts, as well as by national and international non-governmental organizations, with oversight from the government.

As sector co-lead, the UNICEF Cox’s Bazar field office had various EiE processes, plans, tools and resources in place, such as the Emergency Response Plan, Humanitarian Response Plan and Contingency Plan to guide the sector. The 5Ws (‘Who, What’, Where, When and for Whom’) monitoring tool was available for all Cluster actors to monitor activities. These EiE processes, plans and tools were used during the COVID-19 pandemic in Cox’s Bazar.

Additionally, the UNICEF Cox’s Bazar field office reprogrammed donor funds to ensure that all activities, emergency supplies and planning were standardized across all the refugee camps and host areas. For example, it collaborated with partners to support the education sector to move from the Learning Competency Framework Approach (LCFA) to a Myanmar Curriculum Pilot (MCP) and switching the instruction language from English to Burmese. The MCP was piloted across all refugee camps for secondary grades (grades 6–9) once the COVID-19 restrictions were removed. Under the MCP, 10,914 learners were enrolled, with plans to embark on the scale-up phase of the Myanmar Curriculum roll-out with support from the UNICEF Cox’s Bazar field office. This phase aimed at focusing on children in early primary and transitioned learners from LCFA levels 1 and 2 to the Myanmar Curriculum kindergarten grades 1 and 2.

Evidence consistently shows that the UNICEF field office in Cox’s Bazar relied on existing tools, infrastructure and capacities to manage its COVID-19 response. However, it is unclear whether or not these EiE resources were shared with or used by the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office in Dhaka or how the two offices worked together in their response.

Question 3.2: In what ways, and how comprehensively, has UNICEF adapted the EiE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to prepare UNICEF education programmes in different contexts for future global public health emergencies?

Finding 3.2.1 The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Offices has taken positive steps to adapt existing monitoring systems during the pandemic; however, there is very limited evidence on the lessons learned to adapt EiE-related resources to prepare for future emergencies, as the focus has shifted from crisis preparedness and resilience to learning recovery.

As mentioned in section 2.1, the Government of Bangladesh has good systems for predicting and responding to climate-related disasters, given the country’s geography and susceptibility to cyclones and floods in particular. Having learned lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has made efforts to develop similar monitoring and response capacities in the education sector. However, monitoring the results of inputs in schools during the pandemic and other emergencies, including tracking children’s learning progress through remote learning modalities, was a challenge. Therefore, using existing national capacity to develop national

tracking systems, the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office, in partnership with the DPE and EdTech Hub, is working on solutions to track children's learning progress through remote learning modalities. This partnership is working on a digital monitoring system to collect timely data to inform policymakers.

In addition, the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office is working with the DPE's Planning and Development Division to incorporate pre- and post-disaster indicators into the DPE's existing integrated education management information system. The integration of pre- and post-disaster indicators will also improve accuracy and efficiency in the generation of disaster information and timely responses for EiE, as envisaged in the fourth Primary Education Development Programme.

The Government of Bangladesh has good systems for predicting and responding to climate-related disasters, given the country's susceptibility to cyclones and floods. However, there is only limited evidence that the UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office has made any adaptations to EiE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities or tools based on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. Building preparedness and resilience should be an integral part of the Country Office's programming.

5.0 Lessons learned and possible actions

Lesson 1: The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office was successful in supporting the government to generate credible, youth-informed, relevant and timely evidence to inform decision-making to support children's learning continuity. Lessons learned from its well-targeted efforts to reach vulnerable adolescents during the pandemic should be further assessed to inform programming efforts to reach other marginalized populations, including those harder to reach and those affected by the digital divide.

Lesson 2: The UNICEF Bangladesh Country Office's ongoing efforts to further strengthen the government's education monitoring systems and provide technical support for future crisis preparedness and resilience-building of the education system should be informed by lessons learned and existing knowledge and capacity from the UNICEF Cox's Bazar field office's EiE work.

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Annex A: Evaluation questions, approach, and methodology

A.1. Evaluation questions

Objective 1: To examine the role of UNICEF in building the knowledge, research, and global public goods required to mount an effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic Theme 1: Building the evidence and resource base for the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic OECD-DAC criteria: coherence and efficiency	
ToR Evaluation Questions	Final Evaluation Questions
1.1 What is the role and contribution of UNICEF in building the knowledge and tools for combating COVID-19 in the education sector?	1.1 What has been the role and contribution of UNICEF in building the data, knowledge and tools for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?
1.2 To what extent did UNICEF Education teams work coherently and efficiently across different sectors to develop evidence-based education solutions to combat COVID-19 disruptions?	1.2 To what extent have UNICEF Education teams worked across sectors coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?
1.3 To what extent did UNICEF mobilize and work coherently and efficiently with external partners to develop evidence-based education solutions to combat COVID-19 disruptions?	1.3 To what extent has UNICEF mobilized and worked with external partners coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?
Objective 2: To examine the extent to which UNICEF-supported strategies were deployed effectively to enhance government initiatives for continuity of learning during school closures and to reinstate safe and equitable in-school learning opportunities during in the COVID-19 pandemic Theme 2: Reopening schools and reinstating face-to-face learning OECD-DAC criteria: relevance and effectiveness	
ToR Evaluation Questions	Final Evaluation Questions
2.1 How successful were UNICEF-supported education strategies to promote home-based learning and to address the needs of children in a range of contexts?	2.1 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote home-based learning?
2.2 How successful were UNICEF-supported education strategies in enhancing children's safety and protection during re-opening of schools?	2.2 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance children's safety, wellbeing and protection during the re-opening of schools?
2.3 How successful were UNICEF-supported education strategies in reinstating in-school learning and reforming teaching, learning and assessment practices in the context of COVID-19?	2.3 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to reinstate in-school learning?
	2.4 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to introduce reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices?
2.4 How successful were UNICEF-supported strategies in targeting and reaching the different groups of marginalized children and tailoring programmes to their learning needs?	2.5 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported governments during the COVID-19 pandemic to target and reach different groups of marginalized children and adapt programmes to their learning needs?
2.5 What are the key defining characteristics of countries schools that were successful in keep schools open and recovering lost learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic?	2.6 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives to recover learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic?
Objective 3: To examine the extent to which UNICEF Education teams utilized the existing frameworks, infrastructure, capacities ,and tools to mount an effective education response to COVID-19, and whether adjustments are being made to enhance preparedness for future disruptions of a similar scale Theme 3: UNICEF preparedness frameworks, readiness to handle similar future crises OECD-DAC criteria: relevance and effectiveness	
ToR Evaluation Questions	Final Evaluation Questions
3.1 How successful were Education teams in deploying the existing EIE infrastructure, capacities and tools in the education sector response to COVID-19?	3.1 In what ways, and how successfully, did UNICEF Education teams deploy the existing education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools in the education sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic?
3.2 Are the necessary adjustments being made to the education in emergency frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools to prepare UNICEF education programmes in different contexts for future global public health emergencies?	3.2 In what ways, and how comprehensively, has UNICEF adapted the education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to prepare UNICEF education programmes in different contexts for future global public health emergencies?

The evaluation assessed against the OECD-DAC criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and coherence. Each of these is defined below:

- **Relevance:** assess whether the intervention did the right things. It is the extent to which the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries' global, country and partner/institution needs, policies and priorities, and continued to do so as circumstances changed.
- **Efficiency:** how well the resources were used. It is the extent to which the intervention delivered results in an economic and timely way. This evaluation only focused on timeliness.
- **Effectiveness:** extent to which the intervention achieved its objectives and results, including any differential results across groups.
- **Coherence:** compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution and the extent to which other interventions supported or undermined the intervention. Internal coherence addressed the synergies and interlinkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by UNICEF, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which UNICEF adhered. External coherence considered the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This included complementarity, harmonisation and co-ordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention added value while avoiding duplication of effort.

A.2. Evaluation approach

The evaluation used a utilisation-focused and participatory approach, involving key users throughout the evaluation. In particular, primary stakeholders were engaged in validating the findings and recommendations. This approach allowed stakeholders to gain a better understanding of UNICEF contribution to improved teaching and learning thereby increasing ownership and the probability of using the evaluation findings and recommendations to inform their future decisions.

The evaluation adopted a theory-based design, combined with comparative case studies. It was non-experimental and used mixed methods. With an overarching theory-based evaluation design the evaluation predominantly used qualitative research to assess the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, and efficiency of UNICEF COVID response in the education sector.

Using case studies, via selection of specific countries as cases, we were able to compare and contrast which types of strategies, and activities worked well, why, how, for whom, in what type of geographical contexts and in tackling the type of problems that target groups faced. By developing country-based case studies, the evaluation was able to obtain in-depth insights into strategies and activities adopted for responding to the COVID crisis in “natural real-life [and diverse] contexts”. Country-based case studies were designed to leverage both contextual and institutional knowledge from within each of the countries. The case studies provided in-depth analyses of each country and helped to understand the extent to which interventions were aligned to needs of target groups, and the effects of the support, under specific conditions.

The evaluation developed seven unique case studies, using specifically designed selection criteria. In selecting the countries, the evaluation used “literal replication” as a method of case selection which means that the same type of results was predicted for each of the cases, although using diverse interventions in differing contexts. The case study countries varied in terms of contexts, barriers, interventions, structures and geographical location. Variation along these dimensions provided the greatest coverage and best chance of identifying patterns of difference or similarity, in terms of the extent to which UNICEF strategies and interventions were effective and contributed to delivering results. Due to the low number of case studies conducted,

as compared to the scale of the COVID response globally, it is unlikely that the findings can be generalized more broadly. For this reason, they were supplemented by data collected via online survey, desk review, interviews, and analysis of secondary data to incorporate evidence from around the globe.

Whilst each of the geographic case studies differed in terms of context and partners, they enabled similar themes to be explored across the selected contexts. This means the case studies had both geographic and thematic focus. Efforts were made to select themes that allowed a specific topic to be explored in more depth across number of contexts. While geographic case studies functioned as stand-alone studies for each country, the thematic aspects focused on a topic, which enabled analysis and comparison across countries.

A.2.1. Case study countries sampling selection

The sample selection design for the seven country case studies is presented in table A.1, using three essential and nine additional criteria. The specific characteristics for each of the select seven countries is presented in table A.2. The selected case studies provided a broad and diverse profile of countries where UNICEF works on education programming.

Table A1: Case study country selection criteria

Country Selection Criteria	Assessment Method	Sources
Essential criteria		
Availability and interest of UNICEF CO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High: high interest and availability to take an active part sharing secondary documentation and identifying and engaging stakeholders for all primary data collection methods: include in sample - Medium: moderate interest and availability to take part sharing secondary documentation and identifying and engaging stakeholders for partial primary data collection methods: include in sample - Low: no indication of interest nor availability to spend time on either document sharing or stakeholder engagement or both: exclude from sample 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with UNICEF HQ Education team and Reference Group Follow-up consultation with UNICEF country office
Availability of quality data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (include in sample) - No (exclude from sample) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with UNICEF HQ and country offices
Within the top 20 countries in UNICEF expenditure on education programming in 2020 and/or 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (include in sample) - No (exclude from sample) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Annual Results Report – Goal Area 2 for 2020 and 2019
Additional criteria		
Country within a UNICEF regional classification	Countries from a diverse range of UNICEF regions but not necessarily all	UNICEF website
Economic status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low income - lower-middle income - higher-middle income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank classification on website
Population size	Diverse range of countries from large to small population sizes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank data from 2020
Fragile and conflict affected states (FCAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank classification on website
GPE funded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GPE website
Progress towards SDG 4.1.1 (b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most recent UIS data
UNICEF spending on education programming in country (in millions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF 2020 Annual Results Report
Human Development Index Ranking (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP website
Information on school closure and reopening durations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes (eligible for inclusion) - No (eligible for inclusion) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID-19 Global Education Recovery Tracker

Table A2: Selected case study countries

Country	Compulsory criteria			Additional criteria								
	Interest	Data quality	Top 20 expenditure	RO	Econ. status	Pop. size (2020 millions)	FCAS	GPE funded	Progress SDG 4.1.1(b)	Educ spending (in mill.)	HDI ranking	School closure source:
Bangladesh	TBC	TBC	Y	SA	lower-middle	164	N	Y	Maths: 47.3%, Reading: 52.6%	43	133	all schools closed on March 18, 2019 Hybrid model began for all grades except pre-primary in November 2021 Current status unknown
Jordan	Y	Y	Y	MENA	upper-middle	29	Y	Y	Maths: N/A, Reading: N/A	27	102	Frequent school closures and reopening in 2021. No data after Sep 2021
Lebanon	TBC	TBC	Y	MENA	upper-middle	6	Y	N	Maths: 26.8%, Reading: N/A	172	92	No data for 2019 or 2020 Feb - March 2021 school closure April - Jun 2021 hybrid Jun - Nov 2021 open
Nigeria	TBC	TBC	Y	WCA	lower-middle	206	Y	Y	Maths: N/A, Reading: N/A	43	161	Feb - Aug 2021 hybrid Sep - Oct 2021 closed Nov 2021 Hybrid
South Sudan	TBC	TBC	Y	ESA	low	11	Y	Y	Maths: N/A, Reading: N/A	31	185	Feb - May 2021 hybrid Jun - Nov 2021 open
Mongolia	Y	Y	N	EAP	lower-middle	3.27	N	Y	Maths: N/A Reading: N/A	tbc	99	Apr - Aug 2021 closed Sep 2021 – Jan 2022 hybrid Feb 2022 Open
Venezuela	TBC	TBC	Y	LAC	upper-middle	28.00	N	N	Maths: N/A, Reading: N/A	14	113	Mar – Sep 2021 remote Nov – Dec 2021 open Dec – Jan 22 closed Jan – Feb 22 open

A.3. Data collection methods and sampling

This evaluation used a mixed-method approach to address the evaluation questions. Both primary and secondary data were collected to address the evaluation questions.

Primary data collection included individual and group interviews as well as an online survey. Interviews were carried out with UNICEF staff and key informants from strategic partners at the regional and global levels (69 key informant interviews conducted July–October 2022). The online survey was used to gather data from UNICEF Chiefs of Education from UNICEF country offices (74 country offices responded to the survey, which was conducted September–October 2022, signaling a 56 per cent response rate). A sample of seven countries was selected for in-depth data collection and in-depth comparative analyses: Bangladesh, Jordan, Lebanon, Mongolia, Nigeria, South Sudan and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Secondary data collection included a desk review of relevant documentation and data sets from all levels at which UNICEF operates (global, regional and country) and, in particular, from the seven countries selected from in-depth analyses. A total of 338 documents were reviewed, 52 per cent of which were country-level documents, with regional-level documents (related to all seven regions where UNICEF works) and global-level documents accounting for 20 per cent each.

A.3.1 Primary data collection

Primary data collection for the global evaluation was conducted between end July to beginning October 2022. Primary data collection was used to follow up specific areas of enquiry identified through the analysis of the secondary data and documentation. The list of key informants interviewed for this case study are listed in table A3. Interviews were conducted between September 23 and October 07, 2022.

Table A3: List of key informants, Bangladesh case study

Organisation / institution	Key Respondent Information	
	Position	Name
UNICEF CO	Chief of Education	Deepa Sankar
UNICEF CO	Education Specialist	Iqbal Hossain
UNICEF CO	WASH Specialist	Shofiqul Alam
Ministry of Education (Secondary education)	Former Director General, Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE)	Professor Syed Golam Faruk
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education	Deputy Director, Planning and Development Division of the Directorate of Primary Education. Project Director of Project Implementation Unit/COVID-19 School Sector Response Project (CSSR)	Dr. Md. Nurul Amin Chowdhury
National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB)	Member Curriculum	Professor Moshiuzzaman
A2I	Policy Analyst (Education Innovation)	Md. Afzal Hossain Sarwar

A global online survey was administered for completion by UNICEF Chiefs of Education from across UNICEF network of country offices. These were particularly valuable for certain evaluation questions that required information from many country contexts to be adequately addressed. This included evaluation questions related to, for example, interventions deployed

for home-based learning, recovering learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic and where Education teams deployed the existing EIE infrastructure, capacities, and tools in the education sector response to COVID-19.

A.3.2. Secondary data collection

The secondary data was collected predominantly from online sources (organization websites and online libraries) that were authentic and verifiable. Two members of the evaluation team had access to the UNICEF intranet and scanned the database for any relevant documentation that may not have been in the public domain. The evaluation team also made direct requests to people within UNICEF and key stakeholder organizations to share relevant documentation and data sets. UNICEF Education Team also compiled a set of relevant data and documentation for review. The list of secondary data sources is included in table A4.

Table A4: Secondary data sources

Level	Source
Global & Regional	UNICEF publications – strategies, reports, case studies, evaluations, and data sets UNICEF internal monitoring data sets Publications and data sets from technical and delivery partners such as UNESCO, UIS, WHO etc. Publications, webinars, and data sets from global initiatives UNICEF is a part of such as the Global Education Coalition, and GEC Publications and data sets from donors such as World Bank, GPE, ECW, FCDO etc.
Country	In addition to the above sources that may have had information on the seven target case study countries, secondary data was also collected from the following sources: Government documents, publications, and data sets in the public domain Publications and data sets from UNICEF in-country partners such as NGOs/ INGOs, other Donors and UN agencies and the private sector

The following criteria was applied to the process of collecting documents:

- Documents in English, French or Spanish
- Documents and data sets published between March 2020 and December 2021
- Documents with the focus on UNICEF Goal Area 2 – education teaching and learning

A.4. Data analysis

As the primary and secondary data analyses were undertaken, the evaluation team generated a set of robust evaluation statements that answered each evaluation question based on the evidence collected. These statements were tested, elaborated on, and refined through an iterative process as the analysis progressed. The statements also included assessments of the quality of the evidence base. Once the data analysis was completed in full, the evaluation statements were developed into evaluation narratives that provided nuanced answers to each evaluation question. These narratives also included assessments of the overall strength of evidence available for each evaluation question.

The analytical framework used to guide the analysis process was based on the evaluation questions. The methods of analysis included:

- Thematic analysis: A coding framework based on the evaluation questions was developed and data collected from the document review, interviews, group interviews and survey were

coded and analysed. Developing and using a coding framework helped to ensure consistency across the Evaluation Team, therefore providing greater reliability of results.

- The evaluation team used Dedoose, an online and cross-platform app for analysing qualitative data, whether text-based or other data including photos, audio, and videos. All qualitative data collected was uploaded on Dedoose and entire documents or sections were tagged as per pre-defined categorisations linked to the evaluation questions. This allowed for real time collaboration within the evaluation team. It also helped to identify where gaps existed in evidence. It was used directly to write the evaluation report and maintain proximity to the evidence base as evaluation questions were addressed.
- Triangulation, using multiple data sources, was used to corroborate findings and deepen understanding to construct a rich, rigorous, and comprehensive account against the evaluation questions being addressed. In addition, triangulation was used to check for consistency of findings generated by different data collection methods.

A.5. Ethical considerations

The evaluation adheres to the required international norms and standards for evaluations. These include the 'UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation' (as updated by the United Nations Evaluation Group in June 2020), which encompass four guiding principles: integrity, accountability, respect and beneficence. The required norms and standards also include the 2021 'UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis'.⁷ The following were ethical considerations guiding the evaluation:

- Respect for the command and operational capability - remained committed to respect the terms of reference; the additional instructions made at the start of the mission as well as advice received during the performance of the contract.
- Confidentiality: Beyond the transparency that was required in all participatory processes of consultation and communication of results with all stakeholders, the confidentiality of strategic, technical and financial data collected was secured.
- Close collaboration and communication: A highly participatory approach was critical to the success of this evaluation. Regular remote communication via email and the Microsoft Teams platform was scheduled, with the team of external consultants who worked under the supervision of the Evaluation Office evaluation manager.
- Efficient and dynamic management: Among the team of external consultants, the evaluation education experts were attentive to establishing a precise and rigorous management framework, together with a flexible timetable.
- Ethical behaviour: The team of external consultants, interviewed staff, and implementing partners, including government and civil society organization partners, were required to always comply with the highest standards of ethical behaviour in all respects and as reflected in UNICEF mandatory ethics policy and training. A zero-tolerance policy was executed around issues of fraud, bribery, corruption, child and adult safeguarding, and abuse, exploitation and harassment.

A.6. Evaluation users and uses

The primary audience for the evaluation included UNICEF Bangladesh country office staff responsible for the design and implementation of education programmes, the coordination of education responses in emergencies and monitoring of learning; and staff from other sections who collaborate and coordinate with education programme teams. Findings and lessons learned from the evaluation should be used to inform changes in UNICEF education sector

programmatic plans; approaches to support government partners and work with other implementing partners ; and to ensure preparedness for future emergencies.

The secondary audiences of the evaluation included government officials as duty bearers; children as right holders and beneficiaries of education programmes, their parents/guardians and school communities. Additional users of this evaluation are key country-level implementing partners ; and whenever relevant, other donor agencies such as the World Bank, Global Partnership for Education (GPE), UNESCO, Inter-Agency for Education in Emergencies (INEE), Education Cannot Wait (ECW) and other strategic education sector partners.

Annex B. Evaluation framework

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
Objective 1: To examine role of UNICEF in building the knowledge, research, and global public goods required to mount an effective education response to the COVID-19 pandemic				
Theme 1: Building the evidence and resource base for the education response to the COVID-19 pandemic				
OECD-DAC criteria: coherence and efficiency				
1.1 What has been the role and contribution of UNICEF in building the data, knowledge, and tools for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?	Evidence of UNICEF contribution to building the data, knowledge, and tools for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector.	Statement of UNICEF role at global, regional, and country level #/type of evidence and tools developed by UNICEF or in collaboration with other organisations	UNICEF Staff: HQ and regional UNICEF teams with a remit for creating or communicating data, evidence, research, and tools, as well as country office teams, including education, involved in using the tools and knowledge created by HQ/RO as well as creating their own. Partners at HQ, CO (including governments), RO: that UNICEF has worked with who can speak about UNICEF role and contribution Documents: produced documenting design, response, progress, lists of data/tools/evidence produced	Document review (programme and other documents from HQ, RO and CO) Interviews (UNICEF staff and partners at HQ, RO, CO). At CO also includes government personnel Online Survey (UNICEF staff and partners at HQ, RO, CO)
1.2 To what extent have UNICEF Education teams worked across sectors coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?	Coherence: Evidence of co-working/authoring, complementarity, alignments and non-duplications between UNICEF Education teams, other sector teams within UNICEF and (at country-level only) government departments or agencies outside of education at the design stage of solutions Evidence of alignment with the wider policy frameworks and with other interventions in	#/type of staff working on the response # of staff reporting collaborating during response Difference in timing between planned and implementation of activities	UNICEF Staff: including education teams at HQ, RO, CO, and teams from other sectors with UNICEF to develop evidence-based solutions Documents: detailing evidence-based solutions developed, workplans, human and financial resources	Document review (programme and other documents, workplans, financial and staffing information) Interviews (UNICEF Staff at HQ, RO, CO including education and other sector teams) Online survey (UNICEF staff at HQ, RO, CO including education and other sector teams)

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
	the same operating context, how harmonised and complementary these activities were, and if duplication of effort and activities occurred. Efficiency: Evidence of volume of solutions developed as well as the speed and timeliness of their development.			
1.3 To what extent has UNICEF mobilized and worked with external partners coherently and efficiently to develop evidence-based solutions to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector?	Coherence: Evidence of co-working/authoring, complementarity, alignments, and non-duplications between UNICEF Education teams and relevant external (technical) partners at the design stage of solutions Efficiency: Evidence of volume of solutions developed as well as the speed and timeliness of their development.	Difference in timing between planned and implementation of activities # of partnerships developed # of joint working groups Type of collaborate solutions developed # of countries with collaborative programmes	UNICEF Staff: at HQ, RO, CO who may have been involved in working with and mobilising partners to develop evidence-based solutions External partners: at HQ, RO, CO that UNICEF mobilised and worked with to develop evidence-based solutions Documents: detailing information about the partners, ways of working and work carried out by working with them.	Document review (MOUs/partnership agreements, progress reports) Interviews (UNICEF staff and partners at HQ, RO, CO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at HQ, RO, CO)
Objective 2: To examine the extent to which UNICEF-supported strategies were deployed effectively to enhance government initiatives for continuity of learning during school closures and to reinstate safe and equitable in-school learning opportunities during in the COVID-19 pandemic Theme 2: Reopening schools and reinstating face-to-face learning OECD-DAC criteria: relevance and effectiveness				
2.1 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to promote home-based	Evidence of extent to which UNICEF was instrumental (1) in home-based learning happening at all, (2) whether that support was instrumental in	List /type of education strategies used to promote home-based learning # of countries, schools, children using home-based learning strategies Amount/type of support to	Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level: involved in working with government entities within countries RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents detailing support provided to government	Document review (design and implementation documents, strategies, plans, resourcing, progress reports for home leaning Interviews (government

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
learning?	improving the home-based learning initiatives in terms of quantity, reach or quality.	households for home learning	entities as well as progress made etc. in relation to home based learning.	personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO) U- Report (young people and communities)
2.2 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to enhance children's safety, wellbeing, and protection during the re-opening of schools?	Evidence of extent to which UNICEF was instrumental in strengthening the protection, wellbeing, and safety of children through the three phases of school re-opening (prior to re-opening, in the re-opening process and with schools re-opened).	List /type of education strategies used to enhance children's safety and protection during re-opening of schools # of countries with safety and protection protocols and plans	Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level: involved in working with government entities within country RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents detailing support provided to government entities as well as progress made etc. in relation to children's safety, wellbeing, and protection during the re-opening of schools.	Document review (protection protocols, strategies, plans, progress reports, resourcing, in relation to children's safety, wellbeing, protection) Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO) U- Report (young people and communities)
2.3 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to reinstate in-school learning?	Evidence of the extent to which UNICEF was instrumental in (1) schools opening sooner than would otherwise have been the case and (2) schools operating in "business as usual" ways and levels quicker or more completely than would otherwise have been the case (e.g. through addressing any obstacles experienced by teachers, such as vaccinations, unpaid wages, provision of	List /type of education strategies used to re-instate in-school learning # of countries, schools, teachers using UNICEF supported education strategies to re-instate in-school learning Incidences of changes reported in teaching, learning and assessment practices after reinstatement of in school learning # of countries reporting change in teaching, learning and assessment practices after reinstatement of in school learning	Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level: involved in working with government entities within country RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents: detailing support provided to government entities as well as progress made etc. in relation to reinstating in-school learning.	Document review (strategies, plans, progress reports, resourcing, in relation to reinstating school learning) Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO) U- Report (young people and communities)

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
	PPE or handwashing facilities).			
2.4 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic to introduce reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices?	Evidence of the extent to which UNICEF was instrumental in schools and teachers using reformed teaching, learning and/or assessment practices designed to address the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's education, such as lost learning across all children or among particular groups of children.	# of countries reporting reforming teaching, learning and assessment practices to address the negative effects of COVID-19 # of countries reporting using teaching, learning and assessment practices to address the negative effects of COVID-19	Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level: involved in working with government entities within country RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents: detailing support provided to government entities as well as progress made etc. in relation to reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices.	Document review (strategies, plans, progress reports, resourcing, in relation to reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices, reports of classroom/school assessments, monitoring visits) Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO) U- Report (young people and communities)
2.5 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported governments during the COVID-19 pandemic to target and reach different groups of marginalized children and adapt programmes to their learning needs?	Evidence of the extent to which UNICEF was instrumental in the initiatives to identify and reach (provide for learning needs) children in particular the most marginalised groups, e.g. girls, children with disabilities, refugees, minority ethnic/language groups Evidence of whether particular groups of children were omitted or not sufficiently targeted through	Type of targeting strategies used by UNICEF to identify and reach marginalized children disaggregated by group #/type of needs assessments conducted # of programmes designed based on results from needs assessment	Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level involved in working with government entities within country RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents: detailing government entities at national/subnational level, CO/RO UNICEF staff and CO partners identifying target groups, identifying their needs and/or tailoring the approach and support provided to different groups of marginalized children.	Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO) Document review (targeting strategies, reports of identified groups and those reached/not reached)

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
	UNICEF supported interventions.			
2.6 In what ways, and how successfully, has UNICEF supported government initiatives to recover learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic?	Evidence of design and implementation of initiatives to recover lost learning (including assessing the extent of learning lost and progress to recover this)		Government staff: national, subnational government ministries/departments. UNICEF CO staff, partners at CO level: involved in working with government entities within country RO staff: involved in working with Gov at CO level or supporting CO to work with government Documents: detailing support provided to government entities as well as progress made etc. in relation to initiatives to recover learning Secondary education data pre post covid (if available)	Document review (strategies, plans, design documents, progress reports, assessments) Interviews (government personnel, UNICEF staff and partners at CO, RO) Online survey (UNICEF staff and partners at RO, CO). U-Report Analysis of secondary education data pre post covid (if available)
Objective 3: To examine the extent to which UNICEF Education teams utilized the existing frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to mount an effective education response to COVID-19, and whether adjustments are being made to enhance preparedness for future disruptions of a similar scale Theme 3: UNICEF preparedness frameworks, readiness to handle similar future crises OECD-DAC criteria: relevance and effectiveness				
3.1 In what ways, and how successfully, did UNICEF Education teams deploy the existing education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools in the education sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic?	Evidence of extent to which the frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools (FICT) were 1) used in their intended way and to their full extent and 2) used in all circumstances when their use was or would have been appropriate.	# of staff reporting using existing EIE infrastructure, capacities and tools	UNICEF staff: at HQ, regional and country levels Documents: detailing the education team's use of selected, key EIE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools in the COVID response work.	Document review (EIE tools, frameworks, reports) Interviews (UNICEF staff at CO, RO, HQ) Online survey (UNICEF staff HQ, RO, CO)
3.2 In what ways, and how comprehensively, has UNICEF adapted the education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure,	Evidence of adaptations to EIE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools informed by lessons learnt from experience of the	Examples of changes initiated in preparation of future emergency responses	UNICEF staff at HQ, regional and country levels. Documents: including plans, policies, strategies, processes, working group TORs, regarding actual or planned changes to these frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools and/or processes/structures in place for reflection and lesson learning from the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.	Document review (revised EIE tools, frameworks, reports) Interviews (UNICEF staff at CO, RO, HQ) Online survey (UNICEF staff HQ, RO, CO)

Evaluation questions	Judgement criteria	Indicators	Data/Information sources	Data collection methods
capacities, and tools to prepare UNICEF education programmes in different contexts for future global public health emergencies?	COVID-19 pandemic / Evidence of appropriate processes and/or structures in place for the reflection and adaptations to EIE frameworks, infrastructure, capacities, and tools informed by lessons learnt from experience of the COVID-19 pandemic.			

Annex C: Primary data collection tools: Case study

C.1. UNICEF CO Chief of education and other senior education staff

1. Overall, how would you describe UNICEF role overall in regard to supporting children's education during the pandemic? What difference has UNICEF support made?
2. Which activities/initiatives would you highlight as being especially impactful or important? (Probe: why that/those? What impact?)

Joint working with the RO and HQ

3. How would you describe the support you received from HQ and the RO for constructing and delivery of the education response to COVID-19?

(Probes:

- What forms did the support take?
 - What was particularly helpful? What was less helpful? (Prompt: data, research, reports, webinars, EIE specialists, guidance, frameworks)
 - Did you feel this was timely/were there any delays and what was the effect of any delays?
 - What were the challenges and how were these overcome?
 - What did/did you not achieve as a result of working with them?
 - What worked well and what didn't and why?
4. In hindsight what would you have done differently/ What could be improved going forward in terms of working with teams at RO/CO to develop solutions in response to education emergency?
 5. Was there more or less/better or worse collaboration during the pandemic than before? And if so, why was this and what, if any, might be the long-term effects of this?

Different specialist UNICEF teams working together for COVID-19 response in the education sector.

6. Please tell me about how the Education Team worked together with other sections/teams within UNICEF for the COVID response (i.e., when preparing for the response, during the response and up till now).

(Probes:

- Which sections/teams/persons did you work with, why and when?
 - Did you feel this was timely/were there any delays and what was the effect of any delays?
 - What were the challenges in joint working and how were these overcome?
 - What did you achieve as a result of working with them/what did you not achieve?
 - What worked well whilst working across sections/team and what didn't work well and why? (e.g., ways of working, coordination, timeliness, adequate resources/expertise)?
7. In hindsight what would you have done differently/ What could be improved going forward in terms of working with other UNICEF teams/sections to develop and implement education emergency response solutions/interventions during a public health emergency?

Work with external partners

I would like to ask about how UNICEF worked with its external partners for the education response to COVID-19.

8. Which organisations (ask for specific teams/sections) did you partner with, when and what for?

(Probes:

- Were these partners already working with UNICEF (on education and prior to COVID-19) or were they new specifically mobilized for the COVID-19 response in education?

- How did UNICEF mobilize partners (new and old) for the COVID-19 response? Who was involved in mobilizing them? Any challenges faced, how were these challenges overcome?
 - Was mobilization of partners timely? Were there any delays and if so effect of these delays?
 - Why did UNICEF partner with these external organizations/what did it want to achieve by doing so and what are the implications of having these partners for the future? (e.g. avoid duplications, achieve complementarity)
 - What were roles and responsibilities of UNICEF and partners and how did these partnerships complement UNICEF work? Did this avoid duplications/increase complementarity?
 - Can you give examples of work undertaken in partnership with external partners (e.g., solutions developed to address negative effects of COVID-19 in education)?
 - What was the value of working jointly?
9. In hindsight what would you have done differently/ What could be improved going forward in terms of working with teams at RO/CO to develop solutions in response to education emergency?
 10. Was there more or less/better or worse collaboration during the pandemic than before? And if so, why was this and what, if any, might be the long-term effects of this?

To conclude

11. Finally, what are the main lessons you would take away from the past two years? Where has UNICEF been successful and why? How has UNICEF been less successful and why? How can UNICEF improve – whether at country, regional or HQ level – to respond better in future crises?

C.2. UNICEF CO Education in Emergency

[Re EQ3.1] I would like to ask about how UNICEF Education teams deployed the existing education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and extent to which it was successful in doing this.

1. Please describe the education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools (that existed pre-COVID-19)
2. Did UNICEF Education Teams utilise existing frameworks and tools developed by UNICEF for (pre-COVID-19) EIE contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic (what, how, when, where)? Were there any delays?
3. How did UNICEF deploy existing EIE organizational, financial, delivery, and coordination infrastructures and capacities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic? Did this differ across regions, COs, at HQ?
4. To what extent was UNICEF successful in doing so? (Give examples of success)
5. How did Education teams work with EIE teams at HQ, RO, CO? What were the successes, challenges? How were these overcome? (Delays, duplication, complementarity)
6. What was achieved as a result of deploying existing EIE structures etc.? (What was HQ, RO, CO able to do as a result /or couldn't do without?)

[Re EQ 3.2] I would like to ask about how UNICEF has adapted the existing education-in-emergency (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools to better prepare for future global public health, and how comprehensively it has done this.

7. To what extent has UNICEF, as a result of the COVID-19 response, adapted/changed/ developed more (EIE) frameworks, infrastructure, capacities and tools? Examples, who was involved, and why these changes? Are these for global use or specific to contexts?
8. How comprehensive have these changes been? (with examples)
9. What does UNICEF aim to achieve with new/adapted EIE frameworks, tools etc.?
10. At what stage of adaptation/development is UNICEF at and what are the next steps to test/use these?
11. What challenges have there been/or are foreseen/how have these been overcome?
12. Are there lessons to be learned from having used the EIE frameworks etc.? Have these lessons been documented and shared?

C.3. UNICEF CO Other education staff

1. Before we speak about some specific examples of UNICEF initiatives and activities, how would you describe UNICEF role overall regarding supporting children's education during the pandemic? What difference has UNICEF support made?

I would like now to ask specifically about [initiative/activity].

2. This is my understanding of this initiative/activity: outline UNICEF work]. Is that also your understanding? Would you like to add to or correct anything I have said?
3. How was UNICEF support complementary to or in support of the government's strategy and work?
4. What difference did UNICEF support make? (Probe: Why was it needed? What would have happened without UNICEF? How did it lead to change, for example in strategy, direction, approach, thinking about how to respond, outcomes for children, teachers and communities (if known, and where can evidence of those outcomes be found)?)
5. Were there any challenges? If so, how were these overcome?
6. To what extent did UNICEF work with other agencies? How well (or badly) did that go?
7. To what extent did you draw on support or resources (such as data, frameworks, tools, training etc.) from other parts of UNICEF at HQ and regional level in developing or implementing this initiative/activity? (Probe: Which parts of the organisation? Which resources? What difference did it make?)
8. To what extent did the Education team work with other specialists and teams in UNICEF? (Probe: Which teams/specialists? What difference did it make?)
9. How could UNICEF support to the government have been improved? What lessons could UNICEF learn for the future?

[Repeat questions 2-9 for another of UNICEF initiatives/activities to contribute to the education response during the pandemic. Realistically you might get through 2 initiatives in one hour so pick the 2 most significant ones. Capture responses for the other initiatives in the same text boxes above by clearly titling the different initiatives for which the answer is being provided.]

10. Because of time constraints, I have selected only some of your initiatives during the pandemic. Are there any other activities or initiatives that you would want to highlight in which UNICEF has supported the government's education response during the pandemic? If so, what are they and how have they made a difference?

To conclude

11. Finally, what are the main lessons you would take away from the past two years? Where has UNICEF been successful and why? How has UNICEF been less successful and why? How can UNICEF improve – whether at country, regional or HQ level – to respond better in future crises?

C.4. UNICEF CO DAPM staff

I would like to ask about the data, knowledge and tools that were developed by UNICEF (at HQ/RO/CO) for understanding and addressing the negative effects of COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector.

1. What tools did UNICEF develop, for understanding and responding to COVID-19 (in relation to education)? When were these developed, what were these used for and by whom?
2. What data did UNICEF collect, or contribute towards collecting, for understanding and responding to COVID-19 (in relation to education)? When was this collected, what was it used for and by whom?
3. What other knowledge products did UNICEF develop, for understanding and responding to COVID-19 (in relation to education such as reports, webinars)? When were these developed, what were these used for and by whom?
4. Did UNICEF provide any support to other partner organisations (e.g., WB, UNESCO, OECD) for developing data, tools, knowledge products (e.g., reports, webinars etc.)? What was this support,

for whom, when and for what purpose)? (i.e., provided technical support, financial support, coordination)

5. Did you experience any challenges in developing data, tools and knowledge products and how were these overcome (including for supporting/working with partners)?
6. What could have been done differently and what can be improved for the future (for building data, knowledge and tools to respond to public health emergency - in relation to education)?

C.5. Government Entities

We understand that during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 UNICEF supported the government of [country] in the following ways:

(Read out a list of these activities, as specific as possible, perhaps structured around the list of generic activities below)

- Promoting home-based learning
 - Enhancing children's safety, wellbeing and protection during the re-opening of schools
 - Reinstating in-school learning
 - Targeting and reaching different groups of marginalized children and adapt programmes to their learning needs
 - Recovering learning lost during the COVID-19 pandemic
 - Introducing reformed teaching, learning and assessment practices
 - Carrying out research, collecting data, producing reports, guidance and frameworks, running webinars and other learning opportunities
1. Before we speak about some of UNICEF specific initiatives and activities to support you, how would you describe UNICEF role overall in regard to supporting children's education during the pandemic? How important has their role been? What difference has their support made?
 2. I would like now to ask specifically about [initiative/activity].
 3. This is my understanding of UNICEF role: [outline UNICEF work]. Is that also your understanding? Would you like to add to or correct anything I have said?
 4. How was UNICEF support complementary to the government's strategy and work? Was there any duplication with what government or any other agencies were doing?
 5. What was the effect of this support? (Probe: What was achieved as a result? How successful was UNICEF in providing support in above areas?)
 6. (If relevant) How well (or badly) did UNICEF work with other agencies?
 7. Were you aware of UNICEF staff with different expertise working together with their education colleagues on this initiative? If so, what are your observations about this and what difference did it make, do you think?
 8. What were the challenges faced and how were these overcome?
 9. How could UNICEF support to the government have been improved? What lessons could UNICEF learn for the future?

[Repeat questions 2-8 for another of UNICEF initiatives/activities to contribute to the education response during the pandemic. Realistically you might get through 2 initiatives in one hour so pick the 2 most significant ones. Capture responses for the other initiatives in the same text boxes above by clearly titling the different initiatives for which the answer is being provided.]

10. Are there any other ways in which UNICEF has supported the government's education response during the pandemic? If so, what are they and how have they been helpful?
11. UNICEF, especially in the global and regional headquarters, have produced lots of data, reports, guidance, frameworks and learning opportunities for understanding and addressing the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the education sector. Did your government use any of these? Probe: If yes, how did you use these data, reports etc.? What was the effect of this? What did you achieve?

12. Finally, UNICEF would like to learn and improve their work. Are there any examples of what did not work well and should be avoided in the future? Do you have any recommendations for UNICEF on how they work with and support governments in future crises?